



# Sensation and Perception

## PSY 522, Spring 2014, CRN#31066

**INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Michael C. Hout**

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Office hours: Mondays and Tuesdays, 2:30 – 4 pm (or by appointment)

Classroom: Science Hall, room 216; MWF, 1:30 – 2:20 pm

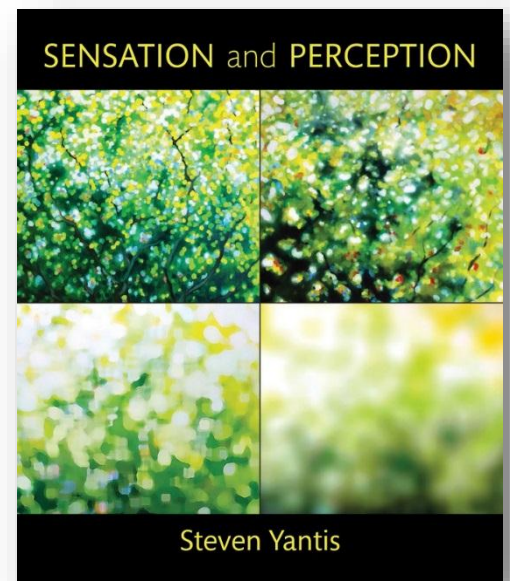
**Please review this syllabus and Canvas before you send an email.** Most of your questions can be answered using this document.

### **COURSE MATERIALS:**

**1) Textbook:** Sensation and Perception by Steven Yantis. ISBN-13: 978-0-7167-5754-2. ISBN-10: 0-7167-5754-0. I will also periodically assign other research articles or readings, which will be posted on Canvas.

**2) Canvas:** Everything you need to know about this course can be found on Canvas at <https://learn.nmsu.edu>. This includes the syllabus, grades, readings (other than the book), and all other course material. I will also post announcements occasionally. Content on the Canvas site will be updated constantly as we progress through the course. It is your responsibility to check Canvas on a regular basis! That means once per day (preferably in the morning, especially on days when you have class).

**3) Study Resources:** I very strongly encourage you to make friends in this course. Other students can often be helpful study partners, and can provide you with notes in case you need to miss class. I will NOT repeat lectures for you if you are absent, so you must acquire notes from another student if you are to miss class. If you encounter any difficulties keeping up with the course content, come to meet with me sooner (rather than later). I'm happy to help



out, but be prepared to meet with me, and leave adequate time before the next exam, end of semester, etc.

### **COURSE GOALS:**

The goal of this course is to provide you with a broad overview of the history, theories, and methods of the area of psychology known as Sensation and Perception (S&P). This course will cover the main sensory modalities, and will pay special attention to vision. We will spend some time talking (periodically) about different models of perception, including ecological psychology, and embodied psychology. At the end of this course, you should be able to 1) Describe, explain and compare the basic theories, concepts and psychological mechanisms related to S&P; 2) Understand the variety of methodologies utilized in S&P research, and apply them to your own class project; and 3) Successfully take part in a research team to design, execute, analyze, and present a pilot S&P study aimed at future publication.

### **COURSE FORMAT:**

This class will take a split model of traditional lectures, group work, and class presentations / discussions. Typically, I will lecture on Mondays. My lectures will largely follow the material in the book, but will not be an exhaustive review of the topics. I will just touch on some of the more important topics, or will try to introduce some of the more difficult material each week. That being said, you will be responsible for reading the chapters in their entirety. It will be up to you to learn the basic material, through reading the book. That makes this a reading-heavy course, though I think it is reasonable. And it is NOT a writing-heavy course.

On Wednesdays, you will most often engage in group work. I elaborate on this more below. But the basic gist is that each Wednesday will be an opportunity for you to get together with your group and work on your projects. I will be there to facilitate the group work, answer questions about the material, help guide the projects, and so on. But typical Wednesdays will be simply an opportunity for you to get together with one another and make some progress during class periods (it is, after all, hard to find time for everyone to meet outside of class).

On Fridays, we will discuss the non-book readings. Each week, I will ask one group to present a set of 2-3 research articles to the class. These articles have to be relevant to your group project. You will need to make them available to the class by the Monday of the week you present (give them to me, and I will post them on Canvas). It will be everyone's responsibility to read the articles by Friday, so that they can understand your presentation.

The idea is to get the whole class on the same page regarding your projects. The papers do not need to be terribly lengthy, but should demonstrate some new or interesting information from S&P, related to your research projects. This can take the form of an interesting research tool / methodology, a classical finding, or a contemporary one. Try to keep this entertaining and helpful to your fellow classmates by finding good articles! Presentations should last 15 minutes or so (per article) and may include Powerpoint or any other demonstration deemed necessary. Then there will be time for questions and discussion. You will do this twice throughout the semester. Grading is all or none.

I'll need volunteers to sign up for Discussion sections, as outlined in the calendar (below).

Each week (roughly) you will be given a short quiz on the material covered in lecture and in the book (but not the outside readings). These will be assigned on Fridays through Canvas, and will not be due until 5pm the following Monday. They will be simple multiple-choice questions, designed to make sure you are keeping up with the material. They will be open-book, but you may NOT collaborate.

Finally, the biggest section of this course will be the group projects. I will organize you into 4 groups (of 2-3 people). Each group will be expected to design 3 research studies (across at least 2 sensory modalities). The idea is to design research studies that are aimed at future publication. These cannot be a simple extension or tweak on an existing study. Rather, they should represent a novel contribution to the field.

Each group will present a mid-semester update to the class, during which time you will pitch your 3 ideas to the class, and get feedback from classmates and myself. This should allow you the chance to choose the best of the 3, tweak your design, and execute it accordingly (before the final project is due). Grading on the mid-semester update is all or none, and will include a 1-2 page written summary of each project.

My hopes are that these projects will result in a publication for some (all?!) of you, and perhaps a fruitful avenue for future research. As a graduate student, that was very much my experience in a course that was designed in this way.

At the end of the semester, you will present your chosen project to the class. Each group will have one full class period in which to present their project. This presentation should include a short literature review, discussion of the research question, explanation of the methods, presentation of the results, and time for discussion and questions. This presentation will be graded on a rubric (to be provided later). You will also, on the last day of class, turn in individual research papers. Each group should write up a full empirical report on their work, in APA style. This will also be graded on a rubric (to be provided

later). Writing a single paper as a group should give you practice learning to write collaboratively. This is a skill that will be very useful to you later on in your careers!

Now, because it takes time to get IRB approval for proper studies, it is unreasonable to expect everyone to have a polished study by the end of the term. Think of this as a pilot project that will inspire and inform a future, complete experiment(s). Because you are unlikely to have IRB approval by the end of the term, you should simply conduct your study on your classmates, friends, and anyone else you can get to volunteer. I do not expect large sample sizes, but a sample N of 1 will clearly be unacceptable. Try to get 10-15 or more people in your study, depending on the design.



### **SOME NOTES ON THE LECTURES & READINGS:**

Prior to each class, I will post my lecture slides online. Most of the time, they will be posted the night before (or sooner if I am able), but they should always be up no later than 9am the day of class (unless unforeseen circumstances arise). Class isn't until 1:30pm, so that should give you time to print the slides out for yourself or download them to your computer. I will do my best to get them up on Canvas the night before, to allow for extra prep time for you.

Coming to class is critically important, but is not mandatory (I will NOT take attendance). If you miss a class, you must get the notes from another student; I will not repeat lectures individually. You can, if you choose, use a tablet or laptop computer to take notes. This will save trees, by preventing you from having to print out the slides. But don't abuse this privilege.

**One final note: reproducing my slides on any note-hosting website constitutes (a) copyright infringement and (b) a violation of the student code of conduct. If I find out my slides are reproduced, shared, or copied, I will take full legal action on the student in question. Please don't make me do this!**

### **GRADING POLICIES:**

Everyone should get an A or B in this course, hopefully. I'd be happy if everyone got an A. Truly. That'd be super cool. If you come to class regularly, participate, pay attention, and put time into your project, there is no reason you should not get a decent grade. I have no interest in failing students, or intentionally making this class difficult. I'd rather it be fun, and that you... you know, learn something.

**Grade calculation:** Each research article presentation is worth 5% of your grade, and your project update is worth 15%. Both are all or none, so think of that as a (more or less) free 25% of your grade. The average of your quiz scores will take up 25% of your grade. The group presentation and paper will each be worth 25% of your grade (based on rubrics). So:

Final grade = Disc1 (5%) + Disc2 (5%) + Project Update (15%) + Quiz Avg (25%) + Group Presentation (25%) + Individual Paper (25%)

Final letter grades are assigned as follows:

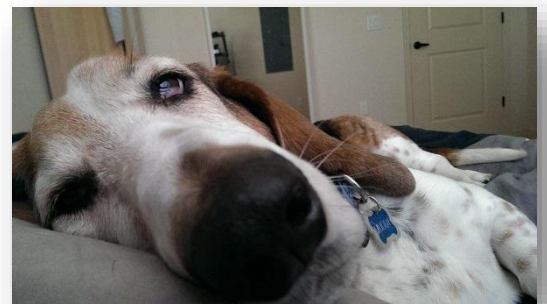
Percentage	Letter Grade
> 90%	A
79.6 – 89.5%	B
69.6 – 79.5%	C
59.6 – 69.5%	D
< 59.5%	F

Incompletes (I Grades): The grade of I (incomplete) is given for passable work that could not be completed due to circumstances beyond the student’s control. The “I” grade will not be used to avoid a student receiving a D or F grade.

**DISABILITIES:**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) cover issues relating to disability and accommodations. If a student has questions or needs an accommodation in the classroom (all medical information is treated confidentially), contact:

Trudy Luken  
Student Accessibility Services (SAS) - Corbett Center,  
Rm. 244  
Phone: 646.6840 E-mail: [sas@nmsu.edu](mailto:sas@nmsu.edu)  
Website: [www.nmsu.edu/~ssd/](http://www.nmsu.edu/~ssd/)



**DISCRIMINATION:**

NMSU policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, retaliation, serious medical condition, sex, sexual orientation, spousal affiliation and protected veterans status.

Furthermore, Title IX prohibits sex discrimination to include sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment and retaliation.

For more information on discrimination issues, Title IX or NMSU's complaint process contact:

Gerard Nevarez or Agustin Diaz  
Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) - O'Loughlin House  
Phone: 646.3635 E-mail: [equity@nmsu.edu](mailto:equity@nmsu.edu)  
Website: <http://www.nmsu.edu/~eeo/>

### **CHEATING/PLAGIARISM POLICY:**

Plagiarism is using another person's work without acknowledgment, making it appear to be one's own. Intentional and unintentional instances of plagiarism are considered instances of academic misconduct and are subject to disciplinary action such as failure on the assignment, failure of the course or dismissal from the university. The NMSU Library has more information and help on how to avoid plagiarism at <http://lib.nmsu.edu/plagiarism/>

### **IMPORTANT DATES:**

- Monday, January 20<sup>th</sup>: No class, Martin Luther King Holiday
- Tuesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>: Last day to drop the course with “W”
- Monday, March 14<sup>th</sup>: No class, I will be out of town
- Monday – Friday March 24<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>: No class, Spring Break
- Friday, April 18<sup>th</sup>: No class, Spring Holiday
- Friday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>: Final papers due
- Tuesday, May 13<sup>th</sup>: Final grades will be entered

### **DISCLAIMER:**

This syllabus is subject to change without notice!

### **EMAIL / CONTACT POLICY:**

My typical response time to emails is between 24 and 72 hours. If you don't get a reply, please double check that you have the correct address ([mhout@nmsu.edu](mailto:mhout@nmsu.edu)) and try emailing me again (or stop me in class).

**TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Lecture Topic</b>	<b>Readings / Quiz</b>
1/17/14	Class intro, policies, expectations, etc.	Syllabus
1/20/14	No class! – Martin Luther King Day	
1/22/14	Foundations	Chapter 1
1/24/14	Group Work	Quiz 1
1/27/14	Light and the Eyes	Chapter 2
1/29/14	Group Work	
1/31/14	Discussion	Quiz 2
2/3/14	The Visual Brain	Chapter 3
2/5/14	Group Work	
2/7/14	Discussion	Quiz 3
2/10/14	Recognizing Visual Objects	Chapter 4
2/12/14	Group Work	
2/14/14	Discussion	Quiz 4
2/17/14	Perceiving Color & Depth	Chapter 5 & 6
2/19/14	Group Work	
2/21/14	Discussion	Quiz 5
2/24/14	Perceiving Motion (and Action)	Chapter 7
2/26/14	Group Work	
2/28/14	Discussion	Quiz 6
3/3/14	Attention and Awareness	Chapter 8
3/5/14	Group Work	
3/7/14	Discussion	Quiz 7
3/10/14	Sound and the Ears	Chapter 9
3/12/14	Group Work	
3/14/14	No class! – Mike out of town	
3/17/14	Group Project Updates	
3/19/14	Group Project Updates	
3/21/14	Discussion	Quiz 8
3/24/14	No class! – Spring Break	
3/26/14	No class! – Spring Break	
3/28/14	No class! – Spring Break	
3/31/14	The Auditory Brain	Chapter 10
4/2/14	Group Work	
4/4/14	Discussion	Quiz 9
4/7/14	Perceiving Speech and Music	Chapter 11
4/9/14	Group Work	
4/11/14	Guest Lecture (??)	Quiz 10
4/14/14	The Body Senses	Chapter 12
4/16/14	Group Work	
4/18/14	No class! – Spring Holiday	
4/21/14	The Chemical Senses	Chapter 13
4/23/14	Group Work	

4/25/14	Group Presentations 1	Quiz 11
4/28/14	Group Presentations 2	
4/30/14	Group Presentations 3	
5/2/14	Group Presentations 4	Final papers due

\*\*\* Please note: This schedule of topics is tentative and subject to change, according to class demands! \*\*\*