

Sensation & Perception

Last Updated: Tue, 07/29/2025

Course prefix: PSYC

Course number: 3040

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):
83493

Instructor First Name: Dobromir

Instructor Last Name: Rahnev

Semester: Fall

Academic year: 2025

Course description:

Perception seems easy: we simply open our eyes and see the world. However, this apparent simplicity is illusory. Perception is one of the computational masterpieces produced by the brain. Just ask computer scientists who trains computers to recognize even the simplest natural images. So, how does the brain accomplish the feat of perceiving the world? While the answer to this question likely won't be fully known in our lifetime, this course will survey what we do know about perception. We will cover the different senses – vision, hearing, touch, taste, and smell – with a particular focus on vision. We will explore relevant anatomy and brain organization (that are relatively well understood) and discuss the underlying computational principles (that are much less understood).

Course learning outcomes:

By the end of this course, you should have:

- A thorough appreciation of the fact that we don't simply see exactly what is out there but that we construct our perceptual reality. You should be able to give multiple examples of how the finished product deviates from reality.
- A broad understanding of how the senses work from the biology of the sensory organs to the relevant brain processing.
- Knowledge of the many ways in which perception can fail, especially as a result of different types of brain damage.

Required course materials:

Sensation & Perception, 10th edition by E. Bruce Goldstein and James R. Brockmole. (Note: 9th or 11th edition are acceptable too.)

Grading policy:

Each assignment will be weighted as follows:

Weekly reflection:	10%
Course project:	15%
Quizzes:	20%
Midterm 1:	15%
Midterm 2:	15%
Final Exam:	25%

Final grades are assigned as follows:

A = 90% - 100%

B = 80% - 89.99%

C = 70% - 79.99%

D = 60% - 69.99%

F = 59.99% and below

Attendance policy:

This is a fully in-person class. Lectures will not be streamed or recorded. All exams will be given in class and students are expected to attend most lectures.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help students master course

content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?
- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change.
- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies: