San José State University  
Department of Psychology  

PSYC 256 – Seminar in Perception (Graduate)  
Fall 2013 Course Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Cary S. Feria  
Office Location: DMH (Dudley Moorhead Hall), Room 312  
Telephone: (408) 924-5620  
Email: cary.feria@sjsu.edu  
Office Hours: Monday 2:45-3:05pm, Tuesday 4:15-4:35pm, Wednesday 2:45-3:45pm, Thursday 10:15-11:30am  
You are welcome to schedule an appointment with me for a different time, if you are unable to make these times.  
Class Days/Time: Monday 9:00-11:45am  
Classroom: DMH 308

Course Description

SJSU Course Catalog Description: Selected issues in visual sensation and perception. Topics include the perception of color, form, depth and motion. Emphasis on the relationship of perception to sensory physiology. Prerequisite: PSYC 158 (or equivalent).

Specific Course Description: This course is intended to provide students with a graduate-level overview of perception research, with a focus on the sense of vision. We will cover the biology of the eye and brain that makes perceptual processing possible, and examine the relationship between the physical world and our perceptual experiences. Students will read and critically evaluate journal articles reporting research studies. Class meetings will include lectures and discussions, so student participation is an important component of the class. Finally, students will compose an original research proposal. The course will provide basic broad knowledge of perception, as well as in-depth examination and critical analysis of specific topics within perception.

Course Goals and Learning Objectives

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

CLO1 – know the biological parts of the visual system, and the functions of those parts.
CLO2 – understand how our senses and perceptual processes work, and what factors affect our perceptions.
CLO3 – understand the experimental methods that are used to study sensation and perception.
CLO4 – critically evaluate research studies.
CLO5 – discuss research orally with colleagues.
CLO6 – synthesize several research studies and draw conclusions, in written format.
CLO7 – understand the applications of perception research (to disorders, human factors, etc.).
Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

Goal 1. Advanced Knowledge – Graduates of our program will have advanced understanding of the major theoretical perspectives in psychology. Students completing the MA in Psychology program will...

Outcome 1.1 – Understand the major theoretical perspectives and research methods across areas of experimental psychology, i.e., Developmental, Social, Cognitive, and Physiological.

Goal 2. Research Methods & Scholarship – Graduates of our program will possess an advanced level of competence in research methods, statistical techniques, and technical writing skills. Students completing the MA in Psychology program are required to complete a thesis. The thesis will...

Outcome 2.1 – demonstrate creative problem-solving in the design, implementation of empirical research.
Outcome 2.2 – demonstrate project management skills in the implementation of empirical research.
Outcome 2.3 – demonstrate advanced competency in the statistical analysis and interpretation of empirical research findings.
Outcome 2.4 – be able to communicate (oral and written) their research findings at a professional level.

Goal 3. Career Enhancement – Graduates of our program will experience career enhancement resulting from the receipt of a master’s degree in psychology. Students completing the MA in Psychology program will...

Outcome 3.1 – achieve career enhancement through placement in a doctoral program or acceptance of a position requiring a master’s in psychology in the public or private sector

Required Texts/Readings

Textbook

Other Readings
Journal article readings for the course will be made available on the course’s Canvas website.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Exams:
There will be 2 exams (one midterm and a final). Exams will cover material from lecture and readings. (aligned with CLO 1, 2, 3, 7; PLO 1.1)

Research Proposal:
Each student will individually write a research proposal describing an original experiment examining a particular issue within the field of perception. This assignment is intended to provide you with the opportunity to explore a particular topic of interest to you in greater depth. The proposal should be a maximum of 10 pages long (double-spaced), and have at least 10 journal article references. Further information on the proposals will be provided later.

To facilitate timely progress, the progression of your proposal will be divided into 5 Proposal Steps. The timeline on page 6 of this syllabus gives the due dates for each step. You will lose 10% of the point value of the proposal for each day it is late. (aligned with CLO 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; PLO 1.1)

Step 1: Submit 2 possible research topics
Step 2: Submit a brief abstract describing your final research topic, along with 3 references of articles that you have read as background for your proposal
Step 3: Submit your completed research proposal
Step 4: Give a brief oral presentation of your proposal to the class
Participation in Class Discussions:
Class discussion is an integral part of the course. Everyone is expected to participate. To participate effectively, it is necessary to read the assigned readings before class and bring the relevant readings to class to refer to them.

For each article we discuss, one student will be responsible for leading the class discussion. The job of the discussion leader is to summarize the article and to facilitate discussion of the article. For an article reporting an empirical study, the discussion leader should be sure to briefly summarize the purpose, method, and findings of the study. In facilitating discussion of the article, it will be helpful to use the questions and discussion points turned in by the other students. The discussion leader may also come up with other key issues to discuss in addition to the issues suggested by their classmates.

Topics to be discussed include: the significance of the study, debate over proposed theories, shortcomings of the study, possible follow-up studies that should be done, applications of the research that should be investigated, and other relevant issues brought up by the class. (Note that not all of these topics will be appropriate for every article.) (aligned with CLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; PLO 1.1)

Article Critiques:
For each assigned article, you are responsible for turning in an article critique. The purpose of the critique is to encourage you to critically evaluate the article, and to promote thoughtful discussion of the article in class.

Each article critique should consist of 2 questions and/or discussion points about the article. (The critique will probably be around ½ to 1 page in length. You do not need to summarize the article.) When writing your critique, see the “topics to be discussed” above for some things to think about. You may also include any other thoughtful discussion questions, critiques, or general comments you have about the article.

The article critiques are to be submitted by email to both the student who is discussion leader for that article, and to Dr. Feria, no later than 5:00pm on the Thursday before the article is to be discussed. This is so the discussion leader can incorporate the critiques into the class discussion of the article. (When emailing them to Dr. Feria, please put all of your critiques for that day into a single document attachment, so Dr. Feria won’t have a huge number of things to download. Please have the subject of the email be “psyc 256 critiques.”) Each student also needs to bring a printed copy of each article critique they wrote to turn in to Dr. Feria in class, on the day the article is to be discussed.

Note: Late critiques will not be accepted for credit. If you are discussion leader, you do not have to submit a critique of that particular article. (aligned with CLO 2, 3, 4; PLO 1.1)

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in University Policy S12-3 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf.

Grading Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exams (total)</th>
<th>200 points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Proposal (total)</strong></td>
<td>155 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal Step 3 (written proposal)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal Step 4 (oral presentation)</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Participation in Class Discussions (total)</strong></td>
<td>75 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion leader</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>General discussion participation</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Article Critiques (total)</strong></td>
<td>70 points</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>500 points</td>
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Final course grades will be based on the scale below:
**Extra Credit Opportunity: Application Paper**

You may choose to write a paper discussing a practical application of vision research (3-4 pages) for extra credit. For instance, the paper could discuss the study of a particular disorder, the study of a specific area of human factors, etc. You will need to use APA-form citations and reference page. The paper should discuss at least 4 journal article references. If you choose to write an application paper, you need to have your topic approved by me no later than Thursday November 14. Depending on the quality of the paper, you may receive up to 8 bonus points. The paper must be submitted to turnitin.com (a website that checks for plagiarism) as well as turning in a printed copy to me. The paper may be turned in at any time during the semester, but not later than the start of the final exam.

**Classroom Protocol**

**Attendance**

*Missed Classes.* If you are absent, you should consult a classmate to get the lecture notes and to find out about any announcements made in class.

*Missed Exams.* I strongly discourage make-up exams. No make-up exams will be given unless the student presents a valid excuse. I reserve the right to decide if the excuse is valid. I will be more likely to allow you to make up an exam if you make every effort possible to contact me before the scheduled date of the exam. The fastest way to contact me is often by e-mail.

**Class Courtesy**

- Please be certain to turn off all cell phones, pagers, and any other devices that produce distraction prior to entering the classroom.
- If you must arrive late or leave early, please do so quietly and with a minimum of distraction.

**Canvas**

Article readings, lecture slides, exam grades, and other materials will be posted on the course Canvas website. Please do not email me through Canvas – email me at cary.feria@sjsu.edu instead.

**Turnitin.com**

Students will be required to turn in certain papers (as specified by the instructor) to turnitin.com, in addition to submitting a printed copy to the instructor. This website will check your paper for plagiarism.

**Checking Your Email Account**

I will from time to time send email messages to the class, using your email address listed in MySJSU.

**Getting Help**

If you are having difficulties with any aspect of this course, please come to my office hours, and I will do my best to help you. If you are unable to come to my office hours, you can contact me to make an appointment for a different time. If you have just a short question, you also can send it to me by e-mail.

**Lecture and Discussion**

Questions are welcome at any time. Please do not hesitate to ask questions during lecture to help clarify the material. If you have any concerns/fears about participating in class discussions, please see me at the beginning of the semester.
Note
The procedures and schedule in this course syllabus are subject to change at the instructor’s discretion.

University Policies
Dropping and Adding
Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester’s Catalog Policies section at http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the Academic Calendars webpage at http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/. The Late Drop Policy is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the Advising Hub at http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material
University Policy S12-7, http://www.sjsu.edu/ senate/docs/S12-7. pdf, requires students to obtain instructor’s permission to record the course.
• “Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor’s permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.”
• “Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.”

Academic integrity
Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2 at http://www.sjsu.edu/ senate/docs/S07-2. pdf requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The Student Conduct and Ethical Development website is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include your assignment or any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Integrity Policy S07-2 requires approval of instructors.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act
If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 at http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03. pdf requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Accessible Education Center (AEC) at http://www.sjsu.edu/aec to establish a record of your disability.

In 2013, the Disability Resource Center changed its name to be known as the Accessible Education Center, to incorporate a philosophy of accessible education for students with disabilities. The new name change reflects the broad scope of attention and support to SJSU students with disabilities and the University's continued advocacy and commitment to increasing accessibility and inclusivity on campus.
Note: This schedule is subject to change. Book and article reading dates and topic dates are approximate. I will announce any changes of proposal step or exam dates in class and by email.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lesson Topic</th>
<th>Articles Topic</th>
<th>Proposal Steps Due</th>
<th>Book Reading Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mon. 8/26</td>
<td>research, signal detection</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mon. 9/2</td>
<td>Holiday -- No class</td>
<td>Ch. 1, 2 (review)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Mon. 9/9</td>
<td>signal detection, eye</td>
<td>Ch. 8, 9</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Mon. 9/16</td>
<td>eye, brain</td>
<td>Ch. 10 (pp. 313-337)</td>
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<td>Mon. 9/23</td>
<td>color</td>
<td>Ch. 11</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Mon. 9/30</td>
<td>object</td>
<td>color</td>
<td>Ch. 10 (pp. 337-350)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Mon. 10/7</td>
<td>object</td>
<td>PS 1 (topics)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Mon. 10/14</td>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>Mon. 10/21</td>
<td>depth</td>
<td>Ch. 12</td>
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<td>Mon. 10/28</td>
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<td>Ch. 13</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Mon. 11/4</td>
<td>attention</td>
<td>motion</td>
<td>PS 2 (abstract)</td>
<td>Wolfe chapter</td>
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<td>Mon. 11/11</td>
<td>Holiday -- No class</td>
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<td>Mon. 11/18</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Mon. 12/2</td>
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<td>applied</td>
<td>PS 3 (proposal)</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Mon. 12/9</td>
<td>oral presentations</td>
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<td>PS 4 (presentation)</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Wed. 12/11</td>
<td>Final Exam (7:15-9:30am) in DMH 308</td>
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