

**PSYC 309**  
**Sensation & Perception**  
**Spring 2017**  
**last updated 1/6/2017**

**Section 001:** 10:30- 11:45am Tuesday & Thursday

**Location:** Robinson Hall A247

**Instructor:** Dr. Matt Peterson

**Office:** 2058 David King Hall

Ph: 703-993-4255

email: mpeters2 at gmU dot edu

(please put PYSC 309 in the subject header)

**Office Hours:** 12:30-1:20 Tuesdays (*tentative*) or by appointment.

I fully encourage you to contact me by email if you have any questions about the class.

**Text:** Sensation & Perception **10th** Edition, E. Bruce Goldstein & James R. Brockmole, Thomson-Wadsworth, ISBN-13: **9781305580299** (**You only need the text, not the access card or other add-ons**)

**Article:** Macknik SL, King M, Randi J, Robbins A, Teller, Thompson J, Martinez-Conde S. (2008). Attention and awareness in stage magic: turning tricks into research. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*. 9(11), 871-879.

[http://smc.neuralcorrelate.com/files/publications/macknik\\_martinez-conde\\_nrn08.pdf](http://smc.neuralcorrelate.com/files/publications/macknik_martinez-conde_nrn08.pdf)

**Prerequisites:** Psych 300 AND Psyc 301 (C- or better) or permission of instructor.

Students who fail to attend the initial meetings of both lecture and lab sections may be dropped from the course.

**Course Description** This course is an introduction to how the brain receives and processes information from the environment. Course deals with sensation -- information must be received in a manner in which our nervous system can respond to it. We will also discuss perception - how the brain interprets information and attaches meaning to it. The study of sensation and perception is one of the earliest areas of study in Psychology.

**Official Communications via GMU E-mail:** Mason uses electronic mail to provide official information to students. Examples include communications from course instructors, notices from the library, notices about academic standing, financial aid information, class materials, assignments, questions, and instructor feedback. Students are responsible for the content of university communication sent to their mason e-mail account, and are required to activate that account and check it regularly. I will communicate only through GMU email accounts.

**Technology Requirement** Students are expected to be competent in word processing skills, Internet use, compiling of bibliographies, literature review searches, and downloading pictorial material from computers.

**Attendance Policy:** I expect (barring unforeseen circumstances) to see you in class each week.

Keep in mind that many of the topics discussed in class are not discussed (or at least not in as much detail) in your textbook. Although I occasionally put some lecture notes on the web, they will not be complete and will not match the presentation given in class. If you miss a class, it is up to you to learn the missed information. **NO CELL PHONES.**

**Cancellation Policy:** This course follows GMU cancellation policy for inclement weather, and GMU will send an alert to your GMU email account and/or cell phone if any of their facilities are closing for inclement weather. If I need to cancel a class meeting, I will email the class about the cancellation.

**GMU Honor Code:** George Mason University has a code of Honor that each of you accept by enrolling as a student. My expectation is that all of the work you do for me in this class will be the work of one individual. **Plagiarism or any other violation of the honor code will be taken very seriously and reported to the Honor Committee.** Having said that, I fully encourage you to discuss the readings and topics raised in this class with your fellow students.

**Disabilities:** If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office."

A+	97+	<b>Grading</b>	Attendance	3
A	93-96		Lab	33
A-	90-92		<u>Exams (4)</u>	<u>65</u>
B+	87-89			
B	83-86			101 points total
B-	80-82			out of 100
C+	77-79			
C	73-76			
C-	70-72			
D	60-69			
F	0-59			

**Exams (65%):** There will be 4 exams, consisting of multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, and/or short answers. You may take an exam after (or before) the scheduled date only if you receive my permission before the day of the test. If you miss an exam, your grade will be based on the remaining 3 exams. Keep in mind that the 4th exam is mandatory, and if not taken, will count as a zero, and all 4 exam grades will be used to determine your final exam grade (i.e. the lowest is not dropped). If you miss more than one exam (or the 4th exam), then the exam can only be made up if you receive my permission before the day of the exam or (b) have a valid excuse (note from a doctor, judge, sergeant, etc.). Papers will not be accepted beyond the due date.

**Lab (33%):** The lab will account for 33% of your total grade in Psychology 309. Late assignments will receive partial credit. *This course fulfills all/in part the Writing-Intensive requirement in the Psychology Department.*

**Attendance Grade:** 3% of your grade will be based on attendance. The attendance grade is not only my way of encouraging you to come to class, but it is also my tiebreaker for those students whose course grade is close to the edge. For example, for a student who has a coursework grade of 68.9 (D), that translates to 67.52 points (coursework is 98% of the course grade, so multiply the coursework grade by 98%). If that student then received 3

attendance points (add 3 to the 67.52), then that student's grade for the entire course would be a 70.52 (C-). Likewise, if another student had an 89.3 coursework grade and received 2 attendance points, then that student would receive an 89.5 ( $2 + [89.3 \times 98\%]$ ) for the course, or an A-. Keep in mind that my spreadsheet rounds to the nearest whole number, so a grade of 89.5 is displayed as a 90 (A-).

I will randomly sample throughout the semester. If you are here most of the time (80%+), you will receive 3 points. If you are here at least 60% of the time you will receive 2 points. Otherwise, you receive 0.

### Calendar:

Note: The schedule below is tentative, and though I will try to follow it as closely as possible changes may occasionally be necessary. In the event that an exam date is changed, you will be notified at least one week in advance.

Note that **January 30th** is the last day to add this class and **February 24th** is the last day to drop this class.

Date	Day	Chapter	Topic
24-Jan	Tues	1	Intro + Psychophysics
26-Jan	Thurs	Appendix, 2	Signal Detection, Physiology
31-Jan	Tues	2	Physiology
2-Feb	Thurs	3	Neurons
7-Feb	Tues	3	Neurons
9-Feb	Thurs	4	Review for Test 1
14-Feb	Tues		<b>TEST1</b>
16-Feb	Thurs	4	Organized Brain
21-Feb	Tues	5	Perceiving Objects
23-Feb	Thurs	5	Perceiving Objects
28-Feb	Tues	6	Visual Attention
2-Mar	Thurs	6	Visual Attention
7-Mar	Tues	6 + Article	Visual Attention
9-Mar	Thurs		<b>Test 2</b>
14-Mar	Tues	SPRING BREAK	
16-Mar	Thurs	SPRING BREAK	
21-Mar	Tues	9	Perceiving Color
23-Mar	Thurs	9	Perceiving Color
28-Mar	Tues	8	Perceiving Movement
30-Mar	Thurs	8	Perceiving Movement
4-Apr	Tues	10	Perceiving Depth and Size
6-Apr	Thurs	10	Perceiving Depth and Size
11-Apr	Tues	7 (215-223)	Action / Review
13-Apr	Thurs		<b>Test 3</b>
18-Apr	Tues	11	Sound and Auditory System
20-Apr	Thurs	11	Sound and Auditory System
25-Apr	Tues	12	Sound Localization
27-Apr	Thurs	12	Sound Localization
2-May	Tues	13	Speech Perception
4-May	Thurs	13	Speech Perception
16-May	Tues		<b>Test 4</b>

