

Psychology 347: PERCEPTION



WINTER TERM 2026 HYBRID COURSE

January 5 – March 20, 2026

IN PERSON CLASSES meet on PSU campus (Fariborz Maseeh Hall, B128) Wednesdays, 11:00am – 12:05pm

ZOOM CLASSES meet on Canvas, Mondays, 11:00am – 12:05pm; **TA REVIEWS** and some classes Fridays 11:00am – 12:05pm

STUDENT HOURS ONLINE:

By appointment, ZOOM (Bill & Jeff)

By appointment, ZOOM: (Grad course TA)

Friday review sessions (All course TAs)

Bill Griesar, Ph.D., **Instructor;** griesar@pdx.edu

Jeff Leake, M.F.A., **Instructor;** jleake@pdx.edu

Please use these email addresses, *NOT* Canvas

Autumn Bradford, **Undergraduate Teaching Assistant;** autumnbr@pdx.edu

Jasmine Borland, **Graduate Teaching Assistant;** jborland@pdx.edu

NO TEXTBOOK IS REQUIRED.

ALL REQUIRED RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE.

BOOK (*highly recommended, but not required*): Hallucinations, by Oliver Sacks

ART SUPPLIES (*required*): Sketchbook (standard 11" x 14" drawing, 80 pound weight paper, with at least 24 sheets), colored pencils (basic set, 12 assorted colors), Assorted graphite sticks, Pink pearl eraser, pipe cleaners (though these can be replaced with any found objects). *See Canvas course website for more details on what you'll need.*

GOAL OF THE COURSE: Perception involves the routing, identification, and interpretation of energy and information in our environment, both external and internal. Typically, it begins with detection of stimuli by sensory neurons, and the relay of this information to specific neural networks in the brain.

In this class we will investigate the mechanisms that underlie sensory detection of specific categories of stimuli (e.g., in visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, somatosensory (including touch, proprioception, nociception), and vestibular realms) and the CNS networks involved in perceptual discrimination, interpretation, and complex cognitive responses. We'll also look at how these critical, adaptive networks develop, and how they are influenced by drugs and, ultimately, decay.

We'll also explore how artists have approached, understood and integrated aspects of sensory detection and perception into often extraordinary works that compel, move, inspire, and affect our understanding of ourselves and our world. We'll visit online museums to view art with an eye towards the neural mechanisms involved in perception, and we'll create objects designed to help reflect on and understand the concepts we'll discuss.

GRADES: Grades are based on a point scale: 90 points and above = A; 80 – 89 points = B; 70 – 79 points = C; 60 – 69 points = D; 59 points or below = F. ***An A or B is ABOVE AVERAGE, a C is AVERAGE, and a D is BELOW AVERAGE.*** You can earn points (a maximum of 100) in the following ways.

******* DEADLINES ARE IMPORTANT: Late work earns half credit. It's difficult in a large class to track late assignments, so after one week ALL late assignments will be zeroed out. *** No late assignments are accepted after Week Ten of term.**

QUIZZES (40 points): *Each timed, online, one attempt, available for several days*

Quiz One: Psychophysics, neurons, and synapses (10 points)

Quiz Two: Gustation, olfaction, and somatosensation (10 points)

Quiz Three: Visual system (10 points)

Quiz Four: Auditory and vestibular systems (10 points)

ART PROJECTS (25 points)

Art Project 1: Neuron model building (5 points)

Art Project 2: Neuron metaphor drawing (5 points)

Art Project 3: Tactile Drawings (5 points)

Art Project 4: Grid Drawing (5 points)

Art Project 5: Sensory neuron model (5 points)

DISCUSSION FORUMS (30 points)

Students are required to post *their own responses* to questions in our ten weekly discussion forums, which cover topics we'll be learning about in Zoom class meetings, online video lectures and other resources and links on Canvas. **AI use = zero points.**

Each post must be at least 100 words (~300 max) and you must respond to TWO peers in at least 50 words each. FORUM POSTS ARE DUE THURSDAYS (by 11:59pm); peer responses DUE by SUNDAY (by 11:59pm).

FINAL ART PROJECT (10 points)

The final gestalt poster project consists of two parts.

Part One: prepare four collages or drawings that are examples of gestalt grouping principles followed by a written explanation of how those principles are working.

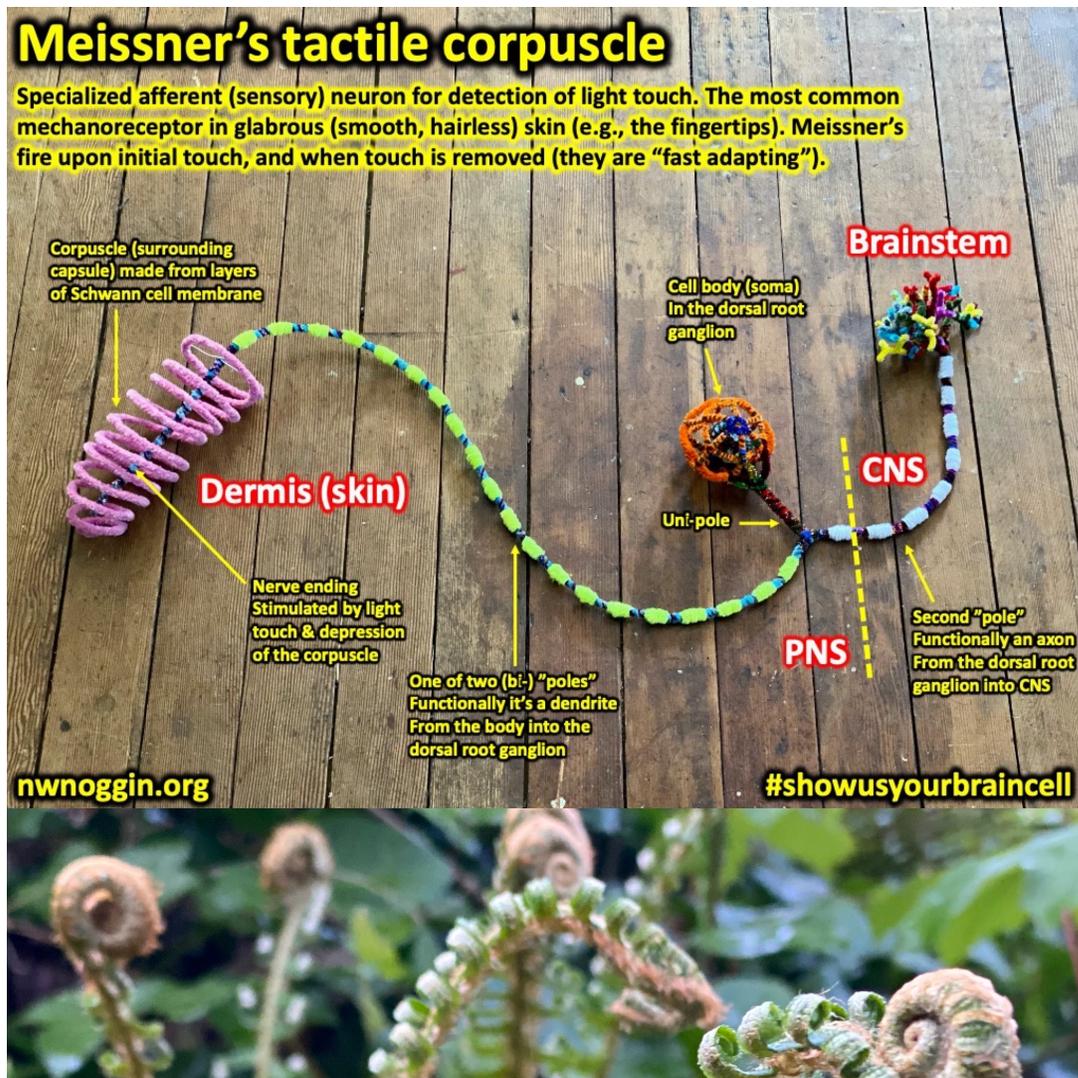
Part Two: prepare a formal analysis of a well-known work of art, identifying the principles you chose for your collages or drawings within the image and clearly stating where and how those are operating within that work of art. The gestalt collages, famous artwork, and written descriptions for both will be fixed to an 18"x24" (minimum size) poster and submitted online as a *.jpg or *.pdf file.

EXTRA CREDIT (2 points max): Occasionally there are opportunities to join research studies and/or attend coursework-related talks for extra credit. We will let you know about these options. You can earn an extra 2 points for participating in one study or event. Research studies and events are not always open or accessible to everyone; however, it is our goal to offer multiple opportunities throughout the term.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Any evidence of cheating or plagiarism **or use of AI** will lead to serious academic consequences, including possible failure of the course and/or dismissal from school. Plagiarism is also a violation of the PSU Code of Student Conduct. For more information see: <http://www.pdx.edu/dos/psu-student-code-conduct>

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: If you are a student with a documented disability and registered with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), please contact the instructor immediately to facilitate arranging academic accommodations. If you have a disability and have not yet registered with the DRC, please contact the DRC.

INCOMPLETES: Incompletes are rarely given, and are based on criteria described in the university catalog. **Incompletes are not appropriate when less than ¾'s of the course work has been scored.** No incomplete will be assigned without a written formal agreement and timeline related to course completion.



CHALLENGES: *Look over the course requirements in our syllabus, and on Canvas. If you are unclear about what's expected for an assignment, or assessment, please let me know.* Life DEFINITELY has ups and downs, and everyone struggles sometimes with family, work, and other personal concerns and commitments. But not everyone has access to the same resources, or experiences the world in the same way ❤️. If there is a serious, unexpected, documented and significant emergency, please get in touch! But be aware that we are obligated to treat all students fairly, and that means each of you should ask questions, think ahead and plan for when assignments are due. *Everyone is subject to the same course expectations.*

THE CLASSES

WEEK ONE (1/5 – 1/9): Introduction

***MEET:** ONLINE Monday/Friday, IN PERSON Wednesday, all 11:00am – 12:05pm

***POST:** Discussion FORUM by THURSDAY; student responses by SUNDAY

Introductions, syllabus; History of perception; philosophical considerations; Psychophysics, measuring the threshold, signal detection theory

WEEK TWO (1/12 – 1/16): Sensory detection

***MEET:** ONLINE Monday/Friday, IN PERSON Wednesday, all 11:00am – 12:05pm

***POST:** Discussion FORUM by THURSDAY; student responses by SUNDAY

* ART PROJECT 1: Neuron model (pipe cleaners - or any found objects)

Neurons carry information-rich electrical messages and communicate with each other by releasing chemical messengers (neurotransmitters). Neurons, membranes, protein machines, forces, resting potentials, the action potential, synapses

WEEK THREE (1/19 – 1/23): Chemical senses

***NO CLASS MONDAY, JANUARY 19: Happy MLK Junior Day!**

***MEET:** ONLINE Friday, IN PERSON Wednesday, all 11:00am – 12:05pm

***POST:** Discussion FORUM by THURSDAY; student responses by SUNDAY

* ART PROJECT 2: Neuron metaphor (drawing supplies)

Gustation and olfaction; taste and smell versus flavor; differences with other senses (ipsilateral projection, limbic targets); taste receptor cells, taste buds and papillae; basic tastes; labeled line vs. pattern coding; a few receptor mechanisms gustatory pathways); Olfaction (smell); flavor is so much more than taste; olfactory neurons, glomeruli, bulb, and CNS projection targets; vomeronasal organ and the Flehmen response

WEEK FOUR (1/26 – 1/30): Neuroesthetics

***MEET:** ONLINE Monday/Friday, IN PERSON Wednesday, all 11:00am – 12:05pm

***POST:** Discussion FORUM by THURSDAY; student responses by SUNDAY

** **QUIZ ONE:** History, psychophysics, neurons and synapses

- AVAILABLE 1/28 – 2/1

** ART PROJECT 1 DUE BY SUNDAY

Neuroesthetics (the biology of beauty and art)

WEEK FIVE (2/2 – 2/6): Somatosensation

***MEET:** ONLINE Monday/Friday, IN PERSON Wednesday, all 11:00am – 12:05pm

***POST:** Discussion FORUM by THURSDAY; student responses by SUNDAY

* ART PROJECT 3: Tactile Drawings

** ART PROJECT 2 DUE BY SUNDAY

Mechanical senses (touch, proprioception) vs. protective senses (temperature, pain, itch, deep sensual touch); mechanoreceptor physiology & mechanisms (e.g., Meissner's, Pacinians, Ruffini's, Merkel's receptors, muscle spindle receptors, Golgi tendon organs); Dorsal column/trigeminal nerve for CNS delivery of mechanoreception; Anterolateral system for detection, delivery and mapping of emotionally salient stimuli; receptors/receptor mechanisms (nociceptors, thermoreceptors, itch-sensitive neurons, deep touch receptors), pathways (spinothalamic, spinoreticular, spinomesencephalic); Hypothalamic detection/response, cortical networks for somatosensory integration (S1/S2 (parietal lobe), insula, anterior cingulate)

WEEK SIX (2/9 – 2/13): Gestalt

***MEET:** ONLINE Monday/Friday, IN PERSON Wednesday, all 11:00am – 12:05pm

***POST:** Discussion FORUM by THURSDAY; student responses by SUNDAY

** **QUIZ TWO:** Gustation, olfaction, somatosensation

- AVAILABLE 2/11 – 2/15

** ART PROJECT 3 DUE BY SUNDAY

Lecture on Gestalt (important for final project)

WEEK SEVEN (2/16 – 2/20): Vision

***MEET:** ONLINE Monday/Friday, IN PERSON Wednesday, all 11:00am – 12:05pm

***POST:** Discussion FORUM by THURSDAY; student responses by SUNDAY

* ART PROJECT 4: Grid Drawing

Nature of the stimulus (narrow range of electromagnetic energy), eye anatomy (cornea, pupil, iris, lens, retina); presbyopia, myopia; retinal network physiology (e.g., photoreceptors, bipolar cells, ganglion cells, horizontal and amacrine cells); rods vs. cones (S, M, L), Ishihara testing; Intrinsically photosensitive ganglion cells, circadian cycles; sensitivity vs. acuity, center/surround receptive fields, parvocellular vs. magnocellular pathways; central visual targets (LGN to V1, superior colliculi, hypothalamus, pre-tectal region); visual hemifields, nerves vs. tracts; Optimal stimuli, receptive fields; columnar organization of neocortex; functional organization of V1 (orientation specificity); P pathways & object recognition in ventral temporal lobe, visual agnosia, prosopagnosia; M pathways & spatial mapping in parietal lobe

WEEK EIGHT (2/23 – 2/27): Audition, Review and Catch Up

***MEET:** ONLINE Monday/Friday, IN PERSON Wednesday, all 11:00am – 12:05pm

***POST:** Discussion FORUM by THURSDAY; student responses by SUNDAY

** ART PROJECT 4 DUE BY SUNDAY

Physical features of stimulus (frequency, amplitude, complexity) vs. perceptual experiences of sound (pitch, loudness, timbre); ear anatomy (outer, middle, inner; pinna, tympanic membrane, ossicles, oval window, cochlea); structure and function

(e.g., pinna size vs. frequency/amplitude detection); acoustic reflex; Physiology of cochlea; inner/outer hair cells; stimulus transduction mechanism; frequency coding (tonotopy); physical coding of frequency, amplitude and complexity in the cochlea; central pathways for audition; sound localization

WEEK NINE (3/2 – 3/6): Audition & Vestibular Function

***MEET:** ONLINE Monday/Friday, IN PERSON Wednesday, all 11:00am – 12:05pm

***POST:** Discussion FORUM by THURSDAY; student responses by SUNDAY

**** QUIZ THREE:** Visual system

- AVAILABLE 3/4 – 3/8

Physiology of vestibular organs (semicircular canals, otolith organs); vestibulo-ocular reflex; detection for three vestibular “modalities” (angular motion/acceleration and semicircular canals, gravity/tilt and linear acceleration and otolith organs); anatomy of vestibular organs (canals, vestibules, ampullae, cristae, hair cells; utricle/sacculae and macula, otolithic membrane, otoconia); CNS pathways for vestibular perception

WEEK TEN (3/9 – 3/13): Hallucinations & Museum Tour

READ (highly recommended): Oliver Sack’s “Hallucinations”

***MEET:** ONLINE Monday/Friday, IN PERSON Wednesday, all 11:00am – 12:05pm

***POST:** Discussion FORUM by THURSDAY; student responses by SUNDAY

**** QUIZ FOUR:** Auditory and vestibular systems

- AVAILABLE 3/11 – 3/15

**** ART PROJECT 5 DUE BY SUNDAY**

*** VIRTUAL MUSEUM TOUR MONDAY**

Hallucinations, drug effects, and other sources of perceptual distortion; Charles Bonnet Syndrome; Musical Ear Syndrome, sensory deprivation experiments.

FINAL PROJECT DUE ONLINE BY WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18th

(Maximum DRC extensions to Thursday 3/19)

A REMINDER: We are obligated to treat all students fairly, and that means each of you should ask questions, think ahead and plan for when assignments are due. *Everyone is subject to the same course expectations.* Note that sometimes, for a myriad of reasons, life intervenes to create ongoing difficulties with class attendance, and meeting academic requirements. *In these cases, it’s often best to withdraw from the course, and perhaps re-enroll at a less stressful time.*

TITLE IX REPORTING OBLIGATIONS

Portland State is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment (sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, gender or sex-based harassment and stalking). If you have experienced any form of sexual harassment, know that help and support are available. PSU has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, providing academic support and more. Information about PSU's support services on campus, including [confidential services](#) and [reporting options](#), can be found on PSU's [Sexual Misconduct Response website](#) or you may call a Confidential Advocate at 503.894.7982 or by scheduling [online](#). You may also report any incident of discrimination or discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, to the **Title IX Coordinator**, [Office of Equity and Compliance](#), or the [Office of the Dean of Student Life](#).

Please be aware that all PSU faculty members and instructors **are required to report** information of an incident that may constitute prohibited discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual and relationship violence. This means that if you tell me about a situation of sexual harassment or discrimination, I have to share the information with the University's Title IX Coordinator or the Office of the Dean of Student Life. However, the information will be kept private and only those with a need to know will be provided with what you disclose.

Please complete the required student module [Understanding Sexual Misconduct and Resources](#) in Canvas, which provides information about PSU policy and resources. You may also report sexual and relationship violence to law enforcement on campus with [Campus Public Safety Office \(CPSO\)](#).

Or you may file an [anonymous report with Campus Public Safety Office](#) or a [Bias Incident report](#) with the [Bias Review Team \(BRT\)](#). PSU does not typically investigate the reports that are made through these two avenues. These reports help PSU understand what students and employees are experiencing on and around campus and provide support where needed.

The Center for Student Health & Counseling (SHAC)

Think SHAC First! [The Center for Student Health & Counseling \(SHAC\)](#) provides high quality, accessible, [medical](#), [counseling](#), [dental](#), and [health promotion services](#) to all PSU students taking 5+ credit hours, regardless of the type of insurance coverage. Office visits at SHAC are FREE!

Students taking 1+ credit hours can access [SHAC Dental Services](#). SHAC has an incredible staff of health care professionals who are dedicated to keeping you healthy

so you can stay in the classroom and focus on learning. For a full list of services and more information visit pdx.edu/health-counseling.

Medical Excuse Notes: [The Center for Student Health and Counseling \(SHAC\)](#) does not provide medical excuse notes for absences from classes, labs, studios or exams, or for missed deadlines due to short-term illness, injury, or other clinical appointments. Visit the [SHAC Medical Excuse Policy](#) at pdx.edu/health-counseling/our-policies for more information.

Mental Health Emergencies: If you are having a mental health emergency and need to speak with someone immediately, come in to SHAC at ANY time during SHAC [hours of operation](#). After hours and weekends call the Multnomah County Crisis Line 503.988.4888 or use the 24/7 [mySSP mental health support resource](#) 866.743.7732.

Recordings in Zoom classes

We use technology for virtual meetings and recordings in this course. Use is governed by FERPA, the [Acceptable Use Policy](#) and PSU's [Student Code of Conduct](#). A record of all meetings and recordings is kept and stored by PSU, in accordance with the Acceptable Use Policy and FERPA. Your instructor will not share recordings of your class activities outside of course participants, which include fellow students, TAs/GAs/Mentors, and any guest faculty or community based learning partners that we may engage with. **You may not share recordings outside of this course.** Doing so may result in disciplinary action.