

Phil 611

Philosophy of Perception

MWF: 11:10-12:00
HUM 386

Instructor: **Dr. I. Peschard**
Office: **HUM 421**
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Office hours: **Monday: 10- 11 am; 3:30-4:30 pm**
Wednesday: 3:30-5:30 pm

WARNING: Some of the Friday classes will be online classes. You will be asked to take part in an online forum discussion on some specific questions related to the readings.

Course Objectives:

To introduce the students to some of the main issues in Philosophy of Perception, as well as to some of the main actors in these debates.

The course will be divided in 4 parts each focusing on different, even though related, central themes in the philosophy of perception, with a special emphasis of *visual* perceptual experience:

- distinction and relation between sensation and perception
- relation between content of perception and object of perception (difference/similarities between perception and hallucination)
- role of bodily activity and abilities in perception
- perception and consciousness

Material

Textbook: *Vision and Mind. Selected Readings in the Philosophy of Perception.* Alva Noe and Evan Thompson (eds.), MIT Press, 2002.

Lecture notes, outlines, reading guide handed out or posted on ilearn before or after class.

Requirements:

- Attendance to on-campus classes and Participation in online forums **is required**.

Students may however miss up to three classes and one online forum activity with no penalty and no justification.

You are expected to come to class prepared, having read the papers assigned for the class.

Assignments

- Online forum: Your contribution to online forum discussion will be part of your grade.
- Essays: You will need to submit three essays in order to pass the class:

First and final essays are ‘*at home*’ essays (length: 1700 - 2200 words [5/6 pages]);

The second essay, mid-term exam, is an *in class* written exam.

Papers should be submitted on time. Late paper will be accepted for 7 days with a penalty. Beyond 7 days, they may not be accepted and you would not be able to pass the class.

While working on your essay, make regular backup copies on disc or USB key in case of computer problems: *computer problems will not be accepted as a reason for essay extension.*

Grading:

Online Forum: 20%

Essay 1: 25%

Mid-term: 25%

Final essay: 30%

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Disability: You are strongly invited to communicate with me at the outset of the course or at your discretion about any disabilities or medical conditions that may affect your course participation, so that we can make the course as accessible as possible for you. You can also contact the Disability Resource Center at 338-2472 (Voice/TDD)

Dual **submission:** any assignment for which work is found to have been submitted to another class, whether here or elsewhere, will receive an “F” grade.

Plagiarism: occurs when someone misrepresents the work of another as his or her own, whether by copying or inserting text without appropriate acknowledgement, or by improper reliance on someone else’s work or results. Any assignment found to be plagiarized will be given an "F" grade, and will be reported to the Dean of the College. See www.sfsu.edu/~collhum/plagiarism.html.

Tentative Schedule

- **Part I: Sensation --Perception**

Week 1 (08/25-27)

Introduction of the content and methods of the course

P.F. Strawson: "Perception and its Object" (first part of the paper) [Textbook]

Week 2 (08/30-09/01)

Maurice Merleau-Ponty: "The Sensation as a Unit of Experience" (from *Phenomenology of Perception*) [Textbook]

Suggested Additional Readings On the idea of sensuous given/sense-data

A. J. Ayer; excerpt from *Central Questions in Philosophy*

C.I. Lewis: "The given in experience" excerpt from *Mind and the World*, 1929

* 09/03: *Online assignment 1 on sensation*

Week 3 (09/08-10)

C. Peacocke: "Sensations and the Content of Experience" [Textbook]

Suggested Additional Reading:

Thomas Reid: excerpt "Of Perception", in *Essays on the Intellectual Powers of Man*

A, Byrne, 2001: Intentionalism Defended. *Philosophical Review* 110:199-240.

B, Nickel, 2007: Against Intentionalism. *Philosophical Studies*.

Week 4 (09/13-15)

G.E.M. Anscombe: "The Intentionality of Sensation" [Textbook]

Suggested Additional Readings:

G. Berkeley: excerpt from *An Essay towards a New Theory of Vision* [on iLearn; from *Perception*, Schwartz (ed.) 2004]

* 09/17: *Online assignment 2 on sensation*

- **Part II: Content of Perception- Object of Perception**

Week 5 (09/20-22-24) [Hallucination, Illusion, Perception]

T. Crane: "Is there a Perceptual Relation?" [on iLearn; from *Perceptual Experience*, Gendler & Hawthorne (eds) 2006]

Suggested Additional Readings

J. Locke: excerpt from *Essays Concerning Human Understanding*.

M, Sollberger: Naïve realism and the problem of causation. *Disputatio*, vol.III (25).

Tim Crane: excerpt on intentionalism

09/26: deadline to submit ESSAY 1

Week 6 (09/27-29)

Bill Brewer (2008) 'How to account for illusion' In Adrian Haddock & Fiona Macpherson (eds.), *Disjunctivism: Perception, Action, Knowledge*. Oxford University Press.

* 10/01: Online assignment 3 on hallucination/illusion/perception

Week 7 (10/04-06-08) [Direct vs Indirect Theory of Perception]

P.F. Strawson: "Perception and its Object" [part 2 and 3] [Textbook]

R.L.Gregory: "Perceptions as Hypotheses" [Textbook]

Suggested Additional Reading

A. Byrne: Causation and perception

N.M.L Nathan: Proximate causation and the missing object

Week 8 (10/11-13-15)

J.J Gibson: "A Theory of Direct Visual Perception" [Textbook]

Suggested Additional Reading

J.J Gibson: exc. from *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* [In *Perception* Schwartz (ed.) 2004]; exc. from *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems* [Perception Schwartz (ed.) 2004]

W. Epstein: "'Why Do Things Look as They Do?' What Koffka Might Have Said to Gibson, Marr and Rock" [In *Perception*, Schwartz (ed.) 2004]

* 10/15: Online assignment 4 on direct vs. indirect perception

• **Part III: Embodiment of Perception**

Week 9 (10/18-20-22)

J.A.Fodor and Z.W. Pylyshyn: "How Direct is Visual Perception?" [sections 1 & 2] [Textbook]

J.J.Gibson: Theory of Affordances (link)

A. Chemero: "An outline of a theory of affordances" Part 1

Week 10 (10/25-27-29)

A. Chemero: "An outline of a theory of affordances" Part 2

A.Noë: "Experience Without the Head" (section 1-4)[from *Perceptual Experience*, Gendler & Hawthorne (eds) 2006]

Suggested Additional Reading

A. Chemero (2009) *Radical Embodied Cognitive Science*

* 10/29: Online assignment 5 on embodied perception

Week 11 (11/01-03-05)

11/01: MID-TERM EXAM

A. Noe: "Experience Without the Head" (section 4-7)[from *Perceptual Experience*, Gendler & Hawthorne (eds) 2006]

• **Part 4: Perception and Consciousness**

Week 12 (11/08-10-12)

A. Noe & J.K. O'Regan: "On the Brain-Basis of Visual Consciousness" [Textbook] [1 - 2]

A. Noe & J.K. O'Regan: "On the Brain-Basis of Visual Consciousness" [Textbook] [3 - 4]

Suggested Additional Readings

Alva Noe: "[Experience without the head](#)" (interpretation of change blindness and amodal perception in terms of enaction)

Week 13 (11/15-17-19)

F. Dretske: 'Conscious Experience' [Textbook]

Fred Dretske: "[Perception without awareness](#)"

* 11/19: *Online assignment 6 on perception and consciousness*

RECESS: 11/22-26

Week 14 (11/29-12/01-03)

D. Chalmers: What is a Neural Correlate of Consciousness? [Textbook]

Alva Noe & Evan Thompson "[Are there neural correlate of consciousness?](#)" ([LINK](#)) (Sections 1, 2 and 3 ONLY)

Week 15 (12/06-08-10)

A. Noe & J.K. O'Regan: "On the Brain-Basis of Visual Consciousness" [Textbook]

D. Dennett: "Seeing is Believing--Or is it?" [Textbook]

Monday, Dec, 13th: Wrap up.

12/04: Draft final

12/17: FINAL ESSAY DUE