

San José State University

Department of Psychology

PSYC 158 – Perception, Section 01

Spring 2026 Course Syllabus

Instructor:	Dr. Cary S. Feria
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Office Hours:	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday 1:30-2:00pm 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, Wednesday 10:30-11:45am
Classroom:	HGH 122
Course Section:	01

Course Description

SJSU Course Catalog Description: Empirical and theoretical approaches to the psychology of perception with an emphasis on vision. Topics include the perception of form, color, depth and motion as well as the effects of attention and experience. Prerequisite: PSYC 001.

Specific Course Description: Our senses are the source of all of our experiences and knowledge about the outside world. Seeing the expression on a loved one's face, hearing your favorite song, and tasting a delicious meal are all only possible because of your sensory and perceptual processes. In this course we will ask "How do we know about the world around us?" and "Why does the world appear the way it does?" We will explore the major findings and theories in relation to these questions, as well as the experimental methods used to research them. We will cover the biology of the human body and brain that makes perceptual processing possible, and examine the relationship between the physical world and our perceptual experiences. This course will focus most on the sense of vision, but will cover some other senses, too.

Learning Outcomes

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

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

CLO1 – know the biological parts of the sensory systems, 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 – use experimental evidence as a tool for critically assessing theories about perception.

Additional course objectives:

- To help students improve their ability to present scientific findings in writing.
- To inspire interest in perception research.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

Upon successful completion of the psychology major requirements...

PLO1 – Knowledge Base of Psychology – Students will be able to identify, describe, and communicate the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.

PLO2 – Research Methods in Psychology – Students will be able to design, implement, and communicate basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretations.

PLO3 – Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology – Students will be able to use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and a scientific approach to address issues related to behavior and mental processes.

PLO4 – Application of Psychology – Students will be able to apply psychological principles to individual, interpersonal, group, and societal issues.

PLO5 – Values in Psychology – Students will value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and recognize their role and responsibility as a member of society.

Required Materials

Textbook

The required textbook for this class is: Wolfe, J. M. and others. (2024). *Sensation & Perception* (7th Edition). Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press. However, students need to purchase access to the online textbook in a specific way, because we will be using some of the online Oxford Insight activities that you get with the access code. Dr. Feria will provide a weblink to directly purchase the textbook access, in a Canvas Announcement.

Computer

Students are required to have an electronic device (laptop, desktop, or tablet), and access to the internet. SJSU has a free equipment loan program available for students and Wi-Fi options on campus, which are described on [SJSU's Learn Anywhere](#) website. To borrow a laptop, go to the website of [SJSU's Information Technology Equipment Loan](#) program. If you believe that you may have difficulties with accessing the internet or having a computer or other device to use for class work, please let me know immediately!

Course Requirements and Assignments

Exams:

There will be 5 non-cumulative exams. The exams will be given in class on the class days listed on the schedule on p. 7 of this syllabus. Exams will cover material from lectures and from the textbook. (A tip: Information that is in both the book and lecture is most likely to appear, followed by information from lecture only, then information from the textbook only.) Exams will be mostly multiple-choice, but may also include short-answer and/or diagramming questions. Exams are closed-book and closed-notes. A study guide will be given out before each exam.

If you miss Exam 1, 2, 3, or 4 for any reason, you may take a make-up exam on Wednesday May 20 (SJSU's official Final Exam Make-Up Day) (time to be determined). If a student has a valid excused illness or emergency, for which the student provides documentation, they may be considered for taking a sooner make-up exam. (Dr. Feria reserves the right to decide if the excuse is valid.) If a student arrives late (by more than 5 minutes) to Exam 1, 2, 3, or 4, they will not be able to take the exam at that time, and instead will be allowed to take a make-up exam on Wednesday May 20. However, for Exam 5 (the final exam) students must be present and on time, as Exam 5 cannot be made-up unless the student has a verified illness or emergency, for which the student provides documentation. (aligned with CLO 1, 2, 3; PLO 1, 2)

Lab Reports:

Over the course of the semester, you will perform several lab activities giving you hands-on experience with the type of research that is carried out in the field of sensation and perception. Each lab report requires participation in the lab activity. Each lab activity will include instructions about the product (calculations, graphing, write-up, etc.) that should be turned in. There will be 5 lab activities for which you will be expected to write lab reports.

The first lab activity will be done in class. The date of this in-class activity is listed on the schedule on p. 7. Because the lab report requires participation in the lab activity, attendance on the day of the in-class lab activity is mandatory. If you are absent on the day of the in-class lab activity, you cannot receive credit for Lab Report 1. The lab activities for all the other lab reports (Lab Reports 2-5) will be completed outside of class time, individually from home.

Out of the 5 lab reports, your 1 lowest scoring lab report will not count toward your grade, so 4 lab reports will count toward your grade. (This policy of dropping the lowest lab report helps in case students have life events that interfere with doing a lab activity, or have a technical issue with a given lab activity, because if a student misses a lab activity for any reason, then that lab report will be dropped from their grade.) Lab reports will be turned in by each student individually. You will lose 10% of the point value of a lab report for each day it is late. If the lab reports are returned to the class before you hand in your lab report, you will receive no credit. (aligned with CLO 2, 3, 4; PLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Introduction Assignments:

You will be doing two short introduction assignments at the beginning of the semester. The first introduction assignment is to help me get to know the students better. For this, each student will answer a short survey, which will be turned in individually. The second introduction assignment is a discussion board to help students get to know their classmates. For this, each student will write 1 post on the discussion board introducing themselves, and comment on 2 of their classmates' posts. More specific instructions will follow. (aligned with PLO 5)

Grading Information

	<u>Points</u>	<u>Grade</u>
Exam 1	80	16%
Exam 2	80	16%
Exam 3	85	17%
Exam 4	90	18%
Exam 5	80	16%
Lab Reports (total)	80	16%
4 x 20 points each		
Introduction Assignments	5	1%
Total possible	500	100%

Final course grades will be based on the scale below:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
A plus	97% or higher
A	93 to 96%
A minus	90 to 92%
B plus	87 to 89%
B	83 to 86%
B minus	80 to 82%
C plus	77 to 79%
C	73 to 76%
C minus	70 to 72%
D plus	67 to 69%
D	63 to 66%
D minus	60 to 62%
F	59% or lower

Extra Credit Opportunity: Bonus Quizzes

There will be an optional bonus quiz at the end of some class periods. The bonus quizzes are designed to help you and me evaluate your progress on understanding the material. They may cover any material from class or the book. Each bonus quiz will contain 3 questions. If you get at least 2 of the questions correct, you will receive 1 bonus point!

Classroom Protocol

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 hour times, 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.

Canvas

Canvas is our course website, and many course materials will be posted on Canvas throughout the semester. Please make sure that the email address you have listed in Canvas is the one you usually use, so that you will receive Canvas Announcements directly to your email. Information on how to use Canvas is found here, <https://www.sjsu.edu/learnanywhere/how-tos/canvas/index.php>.

Attendance

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

Class Courtesy

Cell phones are not permitted in class. Please turn off your cell phone and put it away in your backpack before the beginning of class.

Posting Materials Online, Artificial Intelligence, Cheating, Plagiarism, and Academic Dishonesty

Students are not allowed to post any materials on CourseHero or any other website or app. This applies to my materials and also to students' answers on assignments. Thus, students are not allowed to post my quiz questions, my powerpoint slides, etc. And students are not allowed to post their answers to a quiz, their lab report that they wrote, etc. Students are also not allowed to utilize a material that another student had posted on a website or app.

Students are not allowed to use writing generated by ChatGPT or any other artificial intelligence (AI) or computer program. And students are not allowed to cheat, plagiarize, or commit academic dishonesty by any other method.

Note

The procedures and schedule in this course syllabus are subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

University Policies

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](https://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf) at <https://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](http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/) 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.

Prohibition of Students Recording the Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

Students are prohibited from recording class activities (including class lectures, office hours, advising sessions, etc.), distributing class recordings, or posting class recordings. Materials created by the instructor for the course (syllabi, lectures and lecture notes, presentations, etc.) are copyrighted by the instructor.

This university policy (S12--7) is in place to protect the privacy of students in the course, as well as to maintain academic integrity through reducing the instances of cheating. 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.

Students who record, distribute, or post these materials will be referred to the Student Conduct and Ethical Development office. Unauthorized recording may violate university and state law. It is the responsibility of students that require special accommodations or assistive technology due to a disability to notify the instructor.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the [Academic Calendars webpage](https://www.sjsu.edu/provost/resources/academic-calendars/) at <https://www.sjsu.edu/provost/resources/academic-calendars/>. The [Late Drop Policy](http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/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](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>.

Technology Requirements

Students are required to have an electronic device (laptop, desktop or tablet). SJSU has a free equipment loan program available for students. Students are responsible for ensuring that they have access to reliable

Wi-Fi during tests. If students are unable to have reliable Wi-Fi, they must inform the instructor, as soon as possible or at the latest one week before the test date to determine an alternative. See SJSU's Learn Anywhere website for current Wi-Fi options on campus.

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 https://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/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 their disability.

University Policies

The [University Policy S16-9](#), Course Syllabi (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>) requires the following language to be included in the syllabus: "Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus."

[University policy S17-1](#) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S17-1.pdf>) states that "Faculty members are required to have a culminating activity for their courses, which can include a final examination, a final research paper or project, a final creative work or performance, a final portfolio of work, or other appropriate assignment."

Per [University Policy S16-9](#), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

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Note: This schedule is subject to change. Reading due dates and topic dates are approximate. I will announce any changes of exam or assignment due dates in Canvas.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading Due	Assignments Due
1	Mon. 1/26	Introduction to Course		
	Wed. 1/28	Res. Meth. in Perception	Ch. 1	Intro Survey
2	Mon. 2/2	Res. Meth. in Perception		Intro Disc. Post
	Wed. 2/4	<i>In-Class Lab Activity</i>		Intro Disc. Comments
3	Mon. 2/9	The Eye	Ch. 2	
	Wed. 2/11	The Eye		Lab Report 1
4	Mon. 2/16	Exam 1		
	Wed. 2/18	Vision and the Brain	Ch. 3	
5	Mon. 2/23	Vision and the Brain		
	Wed. 2/25	Object Perception	Ch. 4	Lab Report 2
6	Mon. 3/2	Object Perception		
	Wed. 3/4	Exam 2		
7	Mon. 3/9	Color Perception	Ch. 5	
	Wed. 3/11	Color Perception		
8	Mon. 3/16	Seeing a 3D World	Ch. 6	
	Wed. 3/18	Seeing a 3D World		
9	Mon. 3/23	Seeing a 3D World		
	Wed. 3/25	Exam 3		Lab Report 3
10	Mon. 3/30	<i>Spring Break -- No Class</i>		
	Wed. 4/1	<i>Spring Break -- No Class</i>		
11	Mon. 4/6	Visual Attention	Ch. 7	
	Wed. 4/8	Visual Attention		
12	Mon. 4/13	Visual Attention		
	Wed. 4/15	Hearing	Ch. 9-11	
13	Mon. 4/20	Hearing		
	Wed. 4/22	Hearing		Lab Report 4
14	Mon. 4/27	Hearing		
	Wed. 4/29	Exam 4		
15	Mon. 5/4	Touch	Ch. 13	
	Wed. 5/6	Taste	Ch. 15	Lab Report 5
16	Mon. 5/11	Taste		
Final Exam	Wed. 5/13	Exam 5 (10:45am)		