

Philosophy 358 (A01): Theory of Perception
SPRING 2021 [22300]

Scheduled class times

Monday & Thursday, 10:00-12:20

Professor

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Office Hours: TBA

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***Provisional Draft:** This outline is intended to give students a sense of what the course is like. It is not the final, official course syllabus*

Course Format

This course combines synchronous and asynchronous elements. The lecture materials will be delivered asynchronously – posted at the start of a given week on the course web site, along with any other teaching materials. The scheduled *Thursday* course slot will be used for on-line discussion sessions, via Zoom, hosted by the instructor. (This is the synchronous element of the course.) Students will be divided into groups; those groups will rotate through the Thursday slot. Depending on the enrollment numbers, students can expect to be required to attend (virtually) approximately one third of these sessions. Details and final plan will be announced at the start of term.

Course Description

Perception is among our principal sources of information about the world. It's something we tend to take for granted: we do it all the time, and generally do it very well, without having to think about it. This course is designed to introduce students to issues and questions that arise when we step back and try to understand perception, and to the major philosophical positions that have been staked out in trying to do so. Some of the issues addressed are epistemological – having to do with what entitles us to form the perceptual beliefs that we do. Others are psychological – having to do with how perception works, how we are to conceive of perceptual states and processes, and so on. There are also important connections between philosophical issues and theories and developments and theories in the various cognitive sciences. Towards the end of the course we will consider some of these as well.

Texts

- 1) *Philosophy of Perception: A Contemporary Introduction*, William Fish (Routledge 2010), ISBN 978-0415999120. Available through the UVic Bookstore,¹ from the publisher,² or via online retailers. (You can also access the book electronically via UVic library (<https://tinyurl.com/yyzw8g58>). However, there are restrictions on downloading, and purchase of the text, as either paperback or e-book, is recommended.)
- 2) Several additional readings will be made available via the course's web page (Brightspace). Students are responsible for acquiring copies of these.

¹ <https://www.uvicbookstore.ca/text/>.

² <https://www.routledge.com/Philosophy-of-Perception-A-Contemporary-Introduction/Fish/p/book/9780415999120>.

Evaluation

Students' grades will be based on:

- a) A take-home, open-book midterm exam. (30%)
- b) A paper. 8-10 pages long. Some topics will be suggested. Students may write on a topic of their own design, but only if they obtain the instructor's permission in advance. (30%)
- c) A take-home, open-book final exam. (30%)
- d) Participation in Thursday discussion sessions, with an emphasis on attending (virtually) the minimum number of such sessions. Details to be announced at the start of term. (10%)

Expectations

Students are expected to do the readings for a given week ahead of time, to watch/read the posted lecture materials as they are made available, and to be prepared to talk and ask questions about the course material (either directly, or in the scheduled discussion sessions).

Three quick tips for doing well in the course

1. *Keep pace with the class materials.* Watch/read the posted lecture materials as they are made available.
2. *Do the readings ahead of time, and read 'actively'* – pay attention to what you're reading, ask yourself what point(s) the author(s) is trying to make, why this matters, what questions you'd like to ask the author, and so on.
3. If you're having difficulty with any of the course material (readings or lecture content), speak to the instructor – *take advantage of office hours (TBA) and discussion sessions.*

Beyond the student's having adequately addressed the topic question(s) on which he/she writes, evaluation of the short assignments and term paper will be based on: evidence of comprehension of the materials and issues addressed; evidence of original and critical thought with regard to that material; the extent to which the student stakes out a position and provides good reasons and arguments for it; the extent to which the student communicates his/her ideas clearly (using complete and grammatical sentences, correct terms, a clear essay structure, and so on). For the short assignments and term paper, *the use of outside materials (i.e., any readings not assigned for the course) is permitted only if you have received the instructor's permission ahead of time.* Any materials used for the short essays (i.e., any course readings) must be properly cited in the standard way.

The standard University grading scheme will be used. Here is an excerpt from it (the full version is here:

<https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/S1AAgoGuV?bc=true&bcCurrent=14%20-%20Grading&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcItemType=policies.>)

Grade	Point Value	Percentage	Description
A+	9	90 – 100	An A+, A, or A- is earned by work which is technically superior, shows mastery of the subject matter, and in the case of an A+ offers original insight and/or goes beyond course expectations. Normally achieved by a minority of students.
A	8	85 – 89	
A-	7	80 – 84	
B+	6	77 – 79	A B+, B, or B- is earned by work that indicates a good

B	5	73 – 76	comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student’s full engagement with the course requirements and activities. A B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application of the course material. Normally achieved by the largest number of students.
B-	4	70 – 72	
C+	3	65 – 69	A C+ or C is earned by work that indicates an adequate comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and/or participating in class activities.
C	2	60 – 64	
D	1	50 – 59	A D is earned by work that indicates minimal command of the course materials and/or minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree.
F	0	0 – 49	F is earned by work, which after the completion of course requirements, is inadequate and unworthy of course credit towards the degree.

Plagiarism and other forms of cheating will not be tolerated. It is each student’s responsibility to know the University’s regulations in this regard. The Policy on Academic Integrity is published on the University website:

https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/policy/Sk_0xsM_V?bc=true&bcCurrent=08%20-%20Policy%20on%20Academic%20Integrity&bcGroup=Undergraduate%20Academic%20Regulations&bcItemType=policies.

Intellectual property of materials on the LMS website

Please note that all assignments for this course and all materials posted to the LMS website are the intellectual property of myself and the University of Victoria. Do not circulate this material or post it to note-sharing sites without the instructor’s permission. Posting course materials to note-sharing sites or otherwise circulating course materials without the permission of your instructor violates the Policy on Academic Integrity (link above). Any evidence that you are circulating materials without permission will be referred to the Chair of the Philosophy Department for investigation.

Schedule of Topics and Readings: TBA as the start of term approaches. Students who wish to get a head start can begin perusing the required texts.

Some important administrative dates: <https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/dates/>.