

# Philosophy 451: Advanced Epistemology (Perception)

## Tentative Outline of Topics, Lectures and Discussions, etc.

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### Texts:

- Plato, *Theaetetus*
  - available online from the UVic Library
- Aristotle, *De anima*  
[https://antilogicalism.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/aristotle\\_anima\\_final.pdf](https://antilogicalism.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/aristotle_anima_final.pdf)
- Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* 1:78 ff.  
<https://www.ccel.org/ccel/a/aquinas/summa/cache/summa.pdf>
- Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Point of View*
  - available online from the UVic Library
- Lecturer's notes on Brightspace

It is not expected that the student will read the relevant works completely: only the sections indicated and referenced in lectures.

### Important Notice:

This tentative outline does not indicate the precise date on which specific topics will be addressed because such time depends on the depth to which a particular topic will be considered and the amount of time that will be required for appropriate class discussion. It is therefore recommended that students attend lectures so as not to miss relevant material.

### Course description

This is a senior course that deals with the nature of perceptual awareness. It essentially has two parts: one is historical, the other is constructive (original). The historical part will acquaint students with several seminal theories of perception, beginning with Plato and ending with twentieth-century sense-datum and percept theories, and will point out their similarities and differences and illustrate in what sense they shared the same intentional model of perceptual awareness. That model was explicitly analysed and extensively dealt with by Franz Brentano, whose influence on theories like sense-datum theory and percept theory will be explored. The constructive part will develop a model of perceptual awareness that allows for cognitively significant multi-modal perceptual awareness in one and the same perceiver without using the intentional model. The approach in this constructive part of the course will be based on a mind-body identity metaphysics. The justification for doing so will be explored with particular reference to Hameroff's and Penrose's analysis of the functioning of the human brain.

The instructor's lecture notes will be made available on Brightspace, as will the slides that are used in the conduct of the course. Suggested reading materials and texts will either be placed on reserve or netlinks for accessing the relevant materials will be posted.

### **Course Requirements**

1. Attendance at and participation in discussions, as well as appropriate preparation by becoming familiar with relevant parts of the suggested readings as explained by the instructor. While there will be no formal grade for class attendance and participation, the instructor will refuse to accept papers from students who, in the estimation of the instructor, have not attended sufficient lectures to become familiar with the material being presented.

2. Two (2) papers on topics to be decided by the student in consultation with the instructor.

—Paper # 1 (40% of course mark): due February 28 (length commensurate with subject)

—Paper # 2 (60% of course mark): due on last day of lecture (length commensurate with subject)

- The papers are to be uploaded electronically to the instructor's e-mail using an MS-Word format.

Exceptions to these course requirements will be allowed only in accordance with published University Rules and/or Guidelines.

## **Course Outline**

### **Part A: Historical Theories**

#### **I. Plato**

text: *Theaetetus*, especially 155D - 177C

#### **II. Aristotle**

text: *de Anima*, especially Bk 2.

#### **II. Medieval interpretation and modifications of Aristotle**

text: Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* I:78 , 80 et pass

Possible readings:

- Day S. *Intuitive Cognition: A key to the significance of the later scholastics* (St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1947)

-Copleston FC, *History of Philosophy* vol. II:1 &2 and vol. III:1

#### **III. Franz Brentano**

- Material on Brightspace

- Suggested reading: Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Point of View* (any translation)

#### **IV. Sense Datum theories**

- Material on Brightspace

- suggested reading:
  - R. Firth, “Sense Data and the Percept Theory” in RJ Swartz, ed. (1965) *Perceiving, Sensing, and Knowing*
  - R. Chisholm, *Perceiving*

## **V. Percept Theorists**

- Material on Brightspace
- suggested reading:
  - R. Firth, “Sense Data and the Percept Theory” in RJ Swartz, ed. (1965) *Perceiving, Sensing, and Knowing*
  - R. Chisholm, *Perceiving*

## **Part B: Construction**

There are no assigned readings for this section. Lecture notes will be made available on Brightspace as they are prepared by the instructor. The following rubrics are merely indicative of the topics that will be considered

### **I. From Brentano to Sense-datum and Percept Theories**

This section deals with the intentional model of perceptual awareness that was advanced by Brentano as well as with later sense-datum and percept theories.

- Reading: Material on Brightspace

### **II. Causal Systems**

This section addresses the problem of how the causal antecedents of perception in the material world give rise to and are related to perceptual awareness. A significant part of the presentation will be devoted the issue of the necessary and sufficient conditions that must be met in order for perceptual awareness to be grounded in a material system.

- Reading: Material on Brightspace

### **III. Attention**

The focus of this section is the question what constitutes perceptual attention as distinct from phenomenal focus, clarity, conceptual significance and related factors.

- Reading: Material on Brightspace

### **IV. Combined Theory of Perception**

This section integrates the concepts that have been developed in the preceding sections and presents a theoretical framework for multi-modal unified perceptual awareness that does not use the historical intentional model.

- Reading: Material on Brightspace

## **Academic Integrity and Professional Conduct**

It is each student's responsibility to know the University's regulations on Academic Integrity is published in the [University Calendar](#). Students can also consult the Libraries' [plagiarism guide](#) or the [Tri-Faculty Standards for Professional Behavior for Students](#), which draws together a number of existing UVic policies in one place for ease of reference. Professionalism is expected from all students enrolled in courses in the Faculty of Humanities. As part of professionalism, students, faculty and staff are expected to be familiar with University policies, including the Tri-Faculty Standards.

Inappropriate behaviour and violations of standards of academic integrity as defined in the University Calendar will be dealt with in accordance with University Regulations.

The following link may provide students with resources that may help them in their studies:  
[https://www.uvic.ca/vpacademic/\\_assets/docs/initiatives/course-outline-senate-memo-2023.pdf](https://www.uvic.ca/vpacademic/_assets/docs/initiatives/course-outline-senate-memo-2023.pdf)

## **Grading**

Grades will be assigned on a percentile basis with letter grade equivalents as follows: F=0-49; D=50-59; C=60-64; C+=65-69; B-=70-72; B=73-76; B+=77-79; A-=80-84; A=85-89; A+=90-100. The criteria for assigning grades may be found in the University Calendar. Students are encouraged to discuss their examinations with the instructor.

## **Acknowledgement**

We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen-speaking peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.