

Course Syllabus

Synopsis

The purposes of this course are a) to give you some introduction to standard psychophysical methods and their use in the study of perceptual processes and b) to give you first-hand experience in conducting original research. As part of these activities you will learn to write experimental reports and to think critically about the relation between theory and experiment. You will also be exposed to the use of computers in sensory research. Indeed, there will be considerable use of computers in the course, with part of the goal being to provide you with basic computer skills.

Course Information

Course meets Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30-11:20, 6 Washington Place, Room 157. Lectures are short, essential, and almost always happen at the beginning of class, so please come to class on time!

Requirements

[Human subjects training module](#) - no grade but required to pass the course.

6 lab reports - roughly 80%

Final Exam - roughly 20%

Lab reports are due one week after the lab is completed. All lab reports should be submitted as .rtf files via the Blackboard Assignments page (use "Save As" in Word to create your .rtf files).

Schedule

1/17: Organizational Meeting
1/22 - 1/31: Experiment 1: Müller-Lyer Illusion
2/5 - 2/14: Experiment 2: Visual Search
2/19: President's Day
2/21 - 3/5: Experiment 3: Auditory Threshold
3/7 - 3/26: Experiment 4: Motion Aftereffect
3/12 - 3/14: Spring Break
3/28 - 4/11: Experiment 5: Brightness Illusions
4/9: fMRI Demonstration Lab
4/16 - 4/30: Experiment 6: Of Your Own Devising
4/30: In-class Final Exam

Supplies

You will be collecting and analyzing data in the computer lab. However, you may wish to complete your lab writeups at home or at other NYU computer facilities. You will likely want to carry your results (data, graphs) with you at the end of each lab session. It would be a good idea to bring blank floppy disks (PC-format) or better yet bring a USB memory stick to the labs so that you can take your data with you.

Lab Groups

In this course, you will work with one or more lab partners on each experiment. Because you will be graded individually, the following is our policy with regard to working together on lab reports. You may work with your partner on data collection, analysis, and making graphs. You must, however, write your lab report on your own. In addition, if you and your partner do not agree on what the data mean or what conclusions to draw, it is fine for you each to report different conclusions in your individual reports.

DO NOT WRITE YOUR LAB REPORT WITH YOUR LAB PARTNER OR ANYONE ELSE! IT MUST BE YOUR OWN INDIVIDUAL WORK. CASES WHERE STUDENTS WRITE THEIR REPORTS TOGETHER WILL BE REPORTED TO THE DEAN OF CAS.

We will rotate lab groups throughout the semester, so that you will have worked with several different lab partners by the end of the course. If for some reason you have difficulties with your lab partner, please speak with the instructor.

Plagiarism

It is not acceptable to copy any portion of your lab report verbatim from any source (published work, internet, etc.) If you would like to do background research for a lab report and include what you have learned, that is fine. But you should try to put the information in your own words and you must provide a reference to the source of the information. If you do end up quoting material from another source, be sure to put it in quotation marks and provide a reference to the source from which it came. If you wish to copy a figure or illustration from some source and use it in your report, again be sure to provide a reference saying exactly from whence it came.

DO NOT PLAGIARIZE! CASES WHERE STUDENTS WRITE THEIR REPORTS TOGETHER WILL BE REPORTED TO THE DEAN OF CAS.

Faking Data

Sometimes an experiment does not work out for one reason or another. (This is true in real life as well as in this course.) There are two weeks for each experiment, and usually there is time to try the experiment again, or modify it to

fix any design problems. If you are having trouble making sense of your data, talk to the instructor or TA as early as possible. If worse comes to worst, present your actual data in your lab report and state honestly that you can't make sense of it.

DO NOT MAKE UP DATA TO COME OUT THE WAY YOU THINK THE "EXPERIMENT" IS SUPPOSED TO! CASES OF FAKED DATA WILL BE REPORTED TO THE DEAN OF CAS.

Late Policy

Lab reports for each lab are due by the end of the week following the last lab session (i.e., by Friday afternoon). Late reports will be accepted. A small penalty will be deducted from the grade for late reports, with the size of the penalty increasing the later the report is turned in. You must hand in all six lab reports to pass the course. Again, to ensure that credit is received for all lab reports, you *must* hand in all lab reports using the Assignments page of the Blackboard site.