



UNIVERSITY OF  
**TORONTO**  
SCARBOROUGH

THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO SCARBOROUGH  
Department of Psychology

**PSYD51: Current Topics in Perception, Winter 2014**

**1.0 CALENDAR DESCRIPTION**

The course provides an intensive examination of selected topics in recent research on perception. Topics may include research in vision, action, touch, hearing and multisensory integration. Selected readings will cover psychological and neuropsychological findings, neurophysiological results, synaesthesia and an introduction to the Bayesian mechanisms of multisensory integration.

**2.0 COURSE INFORMATION**

Prerequisite: PSYB51H3

Class meeting time: Tuesdays between 11 am and 1 pm, Room MW 264

**3.0 INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION**

Instructor: Professor Jonathan Cant

Office: SW411

Email: [jonathan.cant@utoronto.ca](mailto:jonathan.cant@utoronto.ca) (Please put PSYD51 in the subject line of any e-mails).

Office Phone Number: 416-208-2963

Office hours: Wednesdays between 11 am and 1 pm

**4.0 ONLINE COURSE RESOURCES**

Blackboard: <https://portal.utoronto.ca/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>

Peer Scholar: <http://peerscholar.utsc.utoronto.ca/>

Blackboard and Peer Scholar will be used as the main online resources for this course. All important course-related information (e.g. announcements, syllabus, class schedule, assignment information, message boards, grades) will be available via Black Board. Peer Scholar will be used as an online peer assessment tool, and part of your final

grade will come from writing assignments done via this website (see below for more detailed information).

## **5.0 DETAILED COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The purpose of this seminar course is to introduce you to a select number of research areas that are currently receiving a great deal of attention in the visual cognitive neuroscience/psychology community. We will be focusing on research conducted using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), a modern brain-imaging technique used to study the structure and function of the brain (although, time permitting, we may cover research using neuropsychological and behavioural techniques as well). Specifically, we will be covering the following topics: a) visual object perception/recognition, b) visual face perception/recognition, c) visual body perception/recognition, and d) visual scene perception/recognition. The knowledge gained in these four research areas will be used as a springboard to review research in a final topic, that of visual cortical organization. Specifically, we will examine research focusing on whether the visual system is organized in a category-specific (i.e. one brain area is specialized for one type of visual processing) or distributed manner (i.e. multiple brain areas take part in multiple types of visual processing).

Class discussions and presentations of research in these areas will focus mainly on the following topics:

- a) What is the research hypothesis of each experiment?
- b) What is the experimental design(s) and data analysis technique(s) used in each experiment? What are some strengths and weaknesses of these designs and techniques?
- c) Are the claims made in each experiment justified by the data used to support them?
- d) What are some of the main theories dominating each research area?
- e) What are some strengths and weaknesses of each theory?
- f) What are some future directions for each research area?

It should be noted that cognitive neuroscience/psychology is a continually evolving discipline, and as such no one theory can adequately explain all phenomena within a given sub-discipline (e.g. object perception/recognition). Thus, students will be expected to think critically about the research in each topic area, and, based on the available evidence, to form their own opinion about how the brain represents various types of visual stimuli (i.e. objects, faces, bodies, and scenes).

As a student in this course, you can expect to develop and improve upon the following types of skills, all of which are important for future academic or work-related endeavors: critical reasoning, problem solving, public speaking, public debate, constructive peer evaluation, and effective scholarly writing. Moreover, you will have developed knowledge in current topics of interest in visual cognition, perception, and memory, and will be able to relate this knowledge to the broader question of how information is represented in the human brain. Finally, you will have expanded upon your core

knowledge of basic principles in experimental design and data analysis, and will have learned how to critique and interpret brain-imaging studies that use fMRI.

### **Class Schedule:**

**January 7:** Introduction to the course; Introduction to brain anatomy and fMRI  
**January 14:** Introduction to object perception/recognition; class discussion  
**January 21:** Presentations and continued class discussion on object processing  
**January 28:** Introduction to face perception/recognition; class discussion  
**February 4:** Presentations and continued class discussion on face processing  
**February 11:** Introduction to body perception/recognition; class discussion  
**February 18:** NO CLASS, READING WEEK  
**February 25:** Presentations and continued class discussion on body processing  
**March 4:** Introduction to scene perception/recognition; class discussion  
**March 11:** Presentations and continued class discussion on scene processing  
**March 18:** Introduction to visual cortical organization; class discussion  
**March 25:** Presentations and continued class discussion on visual cortical organization  
**April 1:** Finish presentations, and course recap

### **Required Readings**

#### **January 14: Object Processing**

a) Malach, R., Reppas, J.B., Benson, R.R., Kwong, K.K., Jiang, H., Kennedy, W.A., Ledden, P.J., Brady, T.J., Rosen, B.R., & Tootell, R.B.H. (1995). Object-related activity revealed by functional magnetic resonance imaging in human occipital cortex. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, USA*, 92: 8135 – 8139.

<http://www.pnas.org/content/92/18/8135.full.pdf+html>

b) Grill-Spector, K., Kushnir, T., Edelman, S., Avidan, G., Itzchak, Y., & Malach, R. (1999). Differential processing of objects under various viewing conditions in the human lateral occipital complex. *Neuron*, 24, 187 – 203.

<http://vpnl.stanford.edu/papers/grillspectorNeuron99.pdf>

#### **January 28: Face Processing**

a) Kanwisher, N., McDermott, J., & Chun, M.M. (1997). The fusiform face area: a module in human extrastriate cortex specialized for face perception. *The Journal of Neuroscience*, 17, 4302 – 4311.

<http://web.mit.edu/bcs/nklab/media/pdfs/KanwisherMcDermottChunJNeuro97.pdf>

- b) Gauthier, I., Skudlarski, P., Gore, J.C., & Anderson, A.W. (2000). Expertise for cars and birds recruits brain areas involved in face recognition. *Nature Neuroscience*, 3, 191 – 197.

<http://gauthier.psy.vanderbilt.edu/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Gauthieretal2000NN.pdf>

- c) Yovel, G., & Kanwisher, N. (2004). Face perception: domain specific, not process specific. *Neuron*, 44, 889 – 898.

<http://web.mit.edu/bcs/nklab/media/pdfs/YovelKanwisher04.pdf>

### **February 11: Body Processing**

- a) Downing, P.E., Jiang, Y., Shuman, M., & Kanwisher, N. (2001). A cortical area selective for visual processing of the human body. *Science*, 293, 2470 – 2473.

[http://pages.bangor.ac.uk/~pss811/page6/assets/Science\\_01.pdf](http://pages.bangor.ac.uk/~pss811/page6/assets/Science_01.pdf)

- b) Peelen, M.V., & Downing, P.E. (2004). Selectivity for the human body in the fusiform gyrus. *The Journal of Neurophysiology*, 93, 603 – 608.

[http://pages.bangor.ac.uk/~pss811/page6/assets/P\\_D\\_JNEurophys.pdf](http://pages.bangor.ac.uk/~pss811/page6/assets/P_D_JNEurophys.pdf)

- c) Taylor, J.C., Wiggett, A.J., & Downing, P.E. (2007). Functional MRI analysis of body and body part representations in the extrastriate and fusiform body areas. *The Journal of Neurophysiology*, 98, 1626 – 1633.

<http://jn.physiology.org/content/98/3/1626.full.pdf+html>

### **March 4: Scene Processing**

- a) Epstein, R., & Kanwisher, N. (1998). A cortical representation of the local visual environment. *Nature*, 392, 598 – 601.

<http://web.mit.edu/bcs/nklab/media/pdfs/EpsteinKanwisher98.pdf>

- b) Epstein, R., Graham, K.S., & Downing, P.E. (2003). Viewpoint-specific representations in human parahippocampal cortex. *Neuron*, 37, 865 – 876.

[http://www.psych.upenn.edu/epsteinlab/pdfs/Epstein\\_et\\_al\\_2003\\_Viewpoint-specific\\_scene\\_representations\\_in\\_human\\_.pdf](http://www.psych.upenn.edu/epsteinlab/pdfs/Epstein_et_al_2003_Viewpoint-specific_scene_representations_in_human_.pdf)

- c) Epstein, R.A., Parker, W.E., & Feller, A.M. (2007). Where am I now? Distinct roles for the parahippocampal and retrosplenial cortices in place recognition. *The Journal of Neuroscience*, 27, 6141 – 6149.

[http://www.psych.upenn.edu/epsteinlab/pdfs/Epstein\\_et al. 2007 Where am I now Distinct roles for parahippocampal.pdf](http://www.psych.upenn.edu/epsteinlab/pdfs/Epstein_et_al_2007_Where_am_I_now_Distinct_roles_for parahippocampal.pdf)

### **March 18: Visual Cortical Organization**

- a) Haxby, J.V., Gobbini, M.I., Furey, M.L., Ishai, A., Schouten, J.L., & Pietrini, P. (2001). Distributed and overlapping representations of faces and objects in ventral temporal cortex. *Science*, 293, 2425 – 2430.

<http://haxbylab.dartmouth.edu/publications/HGF+01.pdf>

- b) Op de Beeck, H.P., Haushofer, J., & Kanwisher, N.G. (2008). Interpreting fMRI data: maps, modules, and dimensions. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 9, 123 – 135.

[http://web.mit.edu/bcs/nklab/media/pdfs/OpdeBeeck\\_etal\\_NatRevNS2008.pdf](http://web.mit.edu/bcs/nklab/media/pdfs/OpdeBeeck_etal_NatRevNS2008.pdf)

## **6.0 EVALUATION**

Summary of required readings: 20%

Class Participation: 10%

Class presentation: 20%

Peer assessment: 10%

Final Essay: 40%

### **Summary of Required Readings (20%)**

During the weeks where I will be introducing a research topic (i.e. object processing, face processing, body processing, scene processing, and visual cortical organization), you are expected to come to class having read the required readings for that particular topic. You will be required to submit a two-page summary (two pages total, not two pages for each article) of the required readings for that week, which will be due in paper form at the beginning of class. This two-page summary should include a brief description of the study (i.e. motivation, general findings, general conclusion), followed by a more detailed analysis of the study guided by the six questions listed in the “DETAILED COURSE DESCRIPTION” section above (i.e. points a – f). You should bring an additional copy of your summary to class to use when taking part in the in-class discussions for each research topic.

### **Class Participation (10%)**

You are required to take part in the in-class discussions for each research topic. This makes up 10% of your final mark, and does not represent free marks simply for attending class. Attendance will be taken at each class, and you are expected to contribute to the discussion of each research topic, either in the form of contributing new

ideas/questions to the discussion, answering questions submitted by other students, or both. Credit will be awarded if you actively contribute to the online message boards (via Blackboard). Failure to engage in class discussions will result in you losing a percentage of your final grade.

### **Class Presentation (20%)**

You will be required to give one presentation in class (using presentation software like PowerPoint or Keynote), based on an original research article from one of the five research topics covered in the course. On the first day of class I will solicit volunteers for presentations for each of the five research topics. If we cannot fill all of the available slots, I will randomly assign students to present on a particular research topic. This presentation is worth 20% of your final grade, and should be no longer than 10-12 minutes in length. Once you have selected your research topic, you will need to conduct a literature search to find an original research article (i.e. not one of the articles we discussed in class) to present to the class. Your presentation should be similar in structure to the summary of required readings, but there certainly is flexibility in how you choose to present your article to the class (as long as you cover the most important points in the article). You are required to obtain the instructor's approval for your selected article. This can be done by emailing the instructor with a link to your article, or by emailing the article as a .PDF attachment. Importantly, one week before your presentation (i.e. the Tuesday before your presentation), you are required to submit, via Peer Scholar, a rough draft containing a summary of what you are going to be presenting (one page maximum; can be in point form), along with a rough draft of your slides (these do not have to be very polished, but must contain enough information to give someone a sense of what you are going to be talking about). These rough-draft materials will be used for the peer assessment component of the course (see below for more detail), and will make up a small percentage of your presentation mark (5% of the total 20%). Note that since you need to submit these materials to Peer Scholar one week before your actual presentation date, you should be seeking approval for your article well in advance of the rough draft deadline. For example, if you are presenting on Tuesday January 21, your rough-draft materials are due on Tuesday January 14, and you should be seeking approval of your article around January 9 or 10.

### **Peer Assessment (10%)**

In this course you will be required to evaluate other students' presentations (but you will not be giving them a grade). This makes up 10% of your final grade, and includes evaluations of both the rough-draft materials the presenters submit online, as well as a brief evaluation of the presentation itself after the student has presented. The entire peer assessment component of this course will take place via Peer Scholar. The goal of the assessment of the rough-draft materials is to give the presenter constructive feedback with which to improve upon their presentation, before they have actually presented (e.g. constructive feedback on the clarity of their slides, the design of their slides, and the content in both the slides and the one page rough draft). The presenter can then use this feedback to give a more polished presentation in class the next week. Your feedback to the presenter must be submitted to Peer Scholar no later than 6 pm the Friday after they submitted their rough-draft materials online (to ensure that they

have enough time to go over the feedback and incorporate any valuable suggestions into their presentation for the following Tuesday). After the student has presented, you are required to provide a brief assessment of the presentation, again via Peer Scholar. This assessment will be due by no later than 6 pm the Friday after the student gave their presentation in class. Please keep these evaluations limited to one short paragraph in length, and be sure to include both positive comments about what was good about the presentation, and constructive feedback on what could be improved for future presentations. The goal of this second peer assessment is to ensure that students have the opportunity to learn from their experience and subsequently improve upon their presentation skills for the future. Note that as a student in this course you will be evaluating other student presentations, and other students will be evaluating your presentation. Thus, please provide the type of feedback that you yourself would like to receive. Your peer assessment grade will be based on all of the assessments that you submit to Peer Scholar.

**Note:** You are not required to provide peer assessment to the students who are presenting on the same day as you (i.e. you are not required to evaluate the rough-draft materials or the in-class presentations of these students).

### **Final Essay (40%)**

The final component of this course is a 2000 word essay, which will be due the final day of class (April 1). The theme of this essay will combine the first four research topics we covered in class (object, face, body, and scene processing), with that of the final research topic, visual cortical organization. Using any combination of the first four research topics, you will evaluate the evidence for either a category-specific or distributed visual cortical representation. You are expected to pick one of the two types of cortical organization, and, using a well-formed thesis statement, argue why the evidence is more compelling for this type of cortical organization over the other type. You can use the articles we discussed in class as references, but you are expected to include as many new as old articles in the reference list of your essay. In fact, in addition to exploring the fMRI literature, you are encouraged to use references that fall outside the field of neuroimaging when developing your argument (e.g. neuropsychological experiments, behavioural experiments, transcranial magnetic stimulation, or TMS, experiments). Students should bring a paper copy of their essay to class on April 1, and should also submit an electronic copy of their essay to the instructor (send to [jonathan.cant@utoronto.ca](mailto:jonathan.cant@utoronto.ca)).

## Due Dates

- January 14:** - Summary of required reading for object perception/recognition  
- Rough-draft materials for students presenting on January 21
- January 17:** - Peer assessments of rough-draft materials (students presenting exempt)
- January 21:** - Object perception/recognition presentations
- January 24:** - Peer assessments of presentations (students who presented exempt)
- January 28:** - Summary of required reading for face perception/recognition  
- Rough-draft materials for students presenting on February 4
- January 31:** - Peer assessments of rough-draft materials (students presenting exempt)
- February 4:** - Face perception/recognition presentations
- February 7:** - Peer assessments of presentations (students who presented exempt)
- February 11:** - Summary of required reading for body perception/recognition  
- Rough-draft materials for students presenting on February 25
- February 14:** - Peer assessments of rough-draft materials (students presenting exempt)
- February 25:** - Body perception/recognition presentations
- February 28:** - Peer assessments of presentations (students who presented exempt)
- March 4:** - Summary of required reading for scene perception/recognition  
- Rough-draft materials for students presenting on March 11
- March 7:** - Peer assessments of rough-draft materials (students presenting exempt)
- March 11:** - Scene perception/recognition presentations
- March 14:** - Peer assessments of presentations (students who presented exempt)
- March 18:** - Summary of required reading for visual cortical organization  
- Rough-draft materials for students presenting on March 25
- March 21:** - Peer assessments of rough-draft materials (students presenting exempt)
- March 25:** - Visual cortical organization presentations
- March 28:** - Peer assessments of presentations (students who presented exempt)
- April 1:** - Final essays due

## Late Assignments

Late assignments will lose 10% for each day past the deadline that they are not handed in. Extensions will only be granted with proper documentation (i.e. UTSC medical certificate). Please note, according to UTSC policy, I am not permitted to extend the deadline for any assignment past the last day of classes for the semester (April 4).



## **7.0 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Help With Writing**

If you would like help with academic writing, the following resources are available to you:

- The Centre for Teaching and Learning (AC312) Writing Centre offers students one-to-one appointments and supplementary materials to help improve upon their writing skills.

<http://ctl.utsc.utoronto.ca/home/>

<http://ctl.utsc.utoronto.ca/twc/>

- The English Language Development Centre offers support and specialized writing programs for students who do not speak English as their primary language.

<http://ctl.utsc.utoronto.ca/eld/>

- Advice on academic writing

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice>

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is taken very seriously at UTSC, as it is important to maintain our community which honours the values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, and the responsibility to protect students within this community, and the value of the degree towards which they are all working towards.

Students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the University of Toronto's *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters*, which can be found at the following website:

<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>

According to Section B of the *Code*, it is an offence for students:

- To use someone else's ideas or words in their own work without acknowledging that those ideas/words are not their own with a citation and quotation marks, i.e. to commit plagiarism.
- To include false, misleading or concocted citations in their work.
- To obtain unauthorized assistance on any assignment.
- To provide unauthorized assistance to another student. This includes showing another student completed work.
- To submit their own work for credit in more than one course without the permission of the instructor
- To falsify or alter any documentation required by the University. This includes, but is not limited to, doctor's notes.
- To use or possess an unauthorized aid in any test or exam.

There are other offences covered under the *Code*, but these are by far the most common. Please respect these rules and the values which they protect.

The final essay may be subject to submission for textual similarity review using the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University (<http://www.turnitin.com>). All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system.

### **AccessAbility Services**

If you are a student with a disability (e.g. physical, learning), you are encouraged to contact AccessAbility Services (S302, 416-287-7560) to arrange accommodation for the course. After you have provided the appropriate documentation, staff in AccessAbility Services assess your needs and determine appropriate and reasonable accommodations, and I liaise with them where appropriate. All information that AccessAbility Services collects from students about their disabilities is kept in strict confidence as prescribed by law.

<http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/ability>

### **Literature Searches**

Students can use the following resources when conducting literature searches to find relevant articles for their presentation and final essay:

The UTSC Library (AC235)

<http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utsc/>

PubMed

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed>

PsychINFO

<http://www.apa.org/pubs/databases/psycinfo/index.aspx>

Google Scholar

<http://scholar.google.ca/>

### **For Your Health**

The Health and Wellness Centre (SL270, 416-287-7065) provides diagnostic, treatment and referral services for all illnesses ranging from the medical to psychological to health promotion. The professional staff of physicians, nurses and counselors provides personal advice and assistance with family issues, eating disorders, depression, stress, drug and alcohol abuse, relationship issues, a positive space for gender/sexuality issues, and more.

<http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/wellness>