



PSYCHOLOGY 2115A (570)
Introduction to Sensation and Perception
Fall/Winter 2025-2026

Instructor: Dr. Sandra Hessels
Email: shessel@uwo.ca

Course Information

Calendar Description:

An introduction to the study of the human senses and higher order perceptual processes. Data gathered from psychophysical research and studies of the nervous system in both humans and other animals will be discussed. The course will review the mechanisms and principles of operation of vision, hearing, touch, taste and smell.

Prerequisite(s): A mark of at least 60% in 1.0 credits of Psychology at the 1000 level.

Antirequisite(s): [Psychology 2015A/B](#).

Extra Information: 4 lecture hours.

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category A

Subject Code: PSYCHOL

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE at
THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
Department of Psychology

Psychology 2115A Section 570
Introduction to Sensation and Perception

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COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor: Dr. Sandra Hessels (she/her)

Office Hour: by appointment

Contact through email anytime: shessel@uwo.ca (please include the course number in the Subject line).

If at all possible, responses will be returned within 24 hours (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

Zoom meetings can be scheduled upon request.

Mode of instruction: in-person

WEBSITE: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/d2l/home>

All course announcements, lectures slides, and grades will be posted on Brightspace. Please check your account frequently.

TEXTBOOK

Goldstein, E.B. & Cacciamani, L. (2022). *Sensation and Perception*, 11th Edition. Cengage.

The textbook can be purchased from the Western Bookstore (price in link):

https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=KC&term=W2025A&courses%5B0%5D=570_KC/PSY2115A

The paper copy is \$173.35 and the eBook (365-day rental) is \$80.00.

Second-hand or older editions are acceptable.

If you have a copy that you are unsure about, ask Dr. Hessels.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students should have:

- Knowledge of the basic theories and principles of sensation and perception.
- Exposure to basic areas of research in sensation and perception.
- Developed critical thinking skills
- Understanding of how principles of sensation and perception apply to everyday events.

TEST AND EXAMINATION SCHEDULE

| Evaluative Component | Worth | Deadline |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Class Activities/Assignments | 2.5% each (10% total) | During class times |
| Course Capstone | 5% | December 9 |
| Midterm 1 | 25% | September 25 |
| Midterm 2 | 30% | October 30 |
| Final Exam | 30% | December TBD |

ACTIVITIES/ASSIGNMENTS

There will be 5 short class activities/assignments. They may involve a quiz, a summarization of the material, participating in discussion, generating questions, critical thought exercises, etc.

All details will be provided during class time.

You will only need to complete 4 of 5.

To complete the assignment, you will be required to attend class.

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial).

The use of generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT) is *not permitted* for any submitted coursework.

COURSE CAPSTONE

The final submitted component of the course will be a small project on a topic chosen by you.

All details will be provided several weeks in advance of the deadline.

MIDTERMS & FINAL EXAM

The midterms and final exam will be composed of multiple choice and constructed response questions. The first midterm will cover chapters 1,2,3, the second midterm will cover chapters 4,5,6,9, and the final exam will cover chapters 11,14,15,16.

Note that chapter coverage is tentative; the tests will be non-cumulative and will cover as far as we've come in the lectures.

Further details will be provided ahead of time.

POLICY ON MISSED ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS

Students are expected to meet the deadline for each of the evaluative components outlined above.

Accommodation will be considered for medical, religious, or compassionate reasons (when appropriate).

In fairness to all students, special consideration will not be given to personal commitments that conflict with scheduled dates, nor will extensions be given to support an individual student's ability to meet a deadline in another course.

Requests for accommodation must be accompanied by appropriate supporting documentation from the Academic Counseling Office of the student's home Faculty.

If you must miss a deadline, please contact Dr. Hessels as soon as possible, ideally before the date in question. Failure to contact Dr. Hessels within one week of the missed deadline will result in a score of zero for that component of the course.

If accommodation is granted for a missed midterm, the remaining components of the evaluation will either be re-weighted based on the other midterms or a makeup exam will be scheduled.

EXTRA NOTES

- Questions (during and outside of class time) are always welcome! For questions about the course, please take a quick look at this course outline first to make sure the answer is not here.
- Class time starts at 2:30pm. There will be a grace period of 5 minutes. *Please be sitting down and ready to go at 2:35pm.*
- There will be no extra credit assignments. Please don't ask.

TOPIC SCHEDULE (tentative)

| Class Date/Assignment Due | Topic | Reference |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| September 4 | Introduction | Ch. 1 |
| September 11 | Sensory Physiology | Ch. 2 |
| September 18 | Eye and Retina | Ch. 3 |
| September 25 | MIDTERM 1 | |
| October 2 | Visual Cortex and Beyond | Ch. 4 |
| October 9 | Perceiving Objects and Scenes | Ch. 5 |
| October 16 | Visual Attention | Ch. 6 |
| October 23 | Perceiving Colour | Ch. 9 |
| October 30 | MIDTERM 2 | |
| <i>November 6</i> | <i>FALL READING WEEK</i> | |
| November 13 | Hearing | Ch. 11 |
| November 20 | Speech Perception | Ch. 14 |
| November 27 | The Cutaneous and Chemical Senses | Ch. 15, 16 |
| December 4 | Catch-up | |

Department of Psychology Policies Related to AI Tools

1. Policy on the Use of Generative AI Tools

The Department of Psychology expects that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial).

The use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT) is not permitted for any submitted coursework unless express permission has been granted by your instructor.

Students **should not have AI tools write any part of their assignments or papers, either by copying and pasting or by paraphrasing the output.** Unauthorized use of AI constitutes an academic offence and will be subject to academic discipline.

Additional information: Students can use AI tools to clarify questions they have about course content (e.g., you can ask ChatGPT about a course concept to help with your understanding), but students should be aware that the response may be inaccurate or inconsistent with the course content. Asking your instructor is a more effective strategy. Students should note that information provided by AI tools such as ChatGPT can include mistakes, inaccuracies, biases, and outdated information. Whenever these tools are used, students should cross-verify the information provided to them. This means verifying that the sources used by AI exist and have been accurately summarized, consulting multiple original and reputable up-to-date sources to verify information, and being cautious of bias that could be present in the information provided.

2. Policy on Use of Translation Tools*

The Department of Psychology views the unapproved use of translation or language applications as an academic offence.

Any usage of translation applications or language generation by students to complete specific assigned work for this course **must be approved** by the instructor **prior** to submitting the work **and noted by the student in the submitted work** itself.

Writing text and then feeding it into a computer application to improve or translate your own words, changing a few words, and then submitting this text as if it was your own **constitutes plagiarism.** You must compose text, choose words, construct logic flow, structure sentences and paragraphs to organize, synthesize, interpret information with your own mind. When you borrow language or ideas from another person or from a machine this must be acknowledged with quotation marks and/or citations.

Why do we have this policy?

- Translation is intellectual work and produces intellectual property, thus any text which is translated must cite the translator.
- Psychology endeavors to advance students' linguistic, analytic, and reasoning competencies – this can not happen outside of specific language competencies.
- Earning a university degree signals that an individual has advanced literacy and communicative skill in the language of instruction at the university; this is English at King's University College at Western University. If translation machines are used by students without regulation, we will have no way of certifying whether these competencies exist and fewer mechanism for encouraging students to do the hard work to develop them.

** Based on the policy developed by the Department of Child and Youth Studies*

KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

GENERAL COURSE POLICIES

2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams_and_tests/S_MC-Feb-2025.pdf.

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

For further information, please see:

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:

https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/

Academic Support Services at King's University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

GBSV Support:

King's is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by [email](#) or by calling 519-661-3568.

Further supports can be found on this website: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with you instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. 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; see

<https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality Reports - TurnItIn.html>.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.