

PSY471H5F – Special Topics in Cognition: Visual Cognition

Delivery Method: IN-PERSON

Schedule: MO 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Room Location: MN3160 (Maanjiwe Nendamowinan)

Contact Information

Dr. Anna Kosovicheva
a.kosovicheva@utoronto.ca

Office Hours: Meeting time slots are available for booking at <https://tinyurl.com/ProfK> (you can choose between an in-person or Zoom meeting when booking). If the available times do not work for you, please send me an email.

Office Location: 4063 CCT

Email policy: Emails should be sent to the email addresses listed above. Please include “PSY471” in the subject line, and allow up to 48 hours for the instructor or the TA to reply to your email (not including weekends). If you have a longer question (e.g., if you’re having trouble understanding the material), please see one of us in office hours rather than sending an email.

Teaching Assistant:
Nursima Ünver
nursima.unver@mail.utoronto.ca
Office hours: By appointment

Course Description

When we look around the world, we have the impression that we represent our environment effortlessly and accurately – we simply open our eyes and see. However, what we see is a product of our brains forming a mental representation of the world around us. This involves a complex set of high-level visual processes, including recognizing objects, identifying faces, selecting relevant information, acting on the environment, and making predictions about the future. How do we accomplish this? How does perception support other cognitive processes? How does it constrain them? How do cognitive processes affect visual perception? This class will introduce you to concepts, theories, and controversies that deal with how we use and interpret visual information in the world around us. As part of this course, you will also learn to read, interpret, and critically evaluate primary scientific literature through class discussions and written assignments.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify and analyze major questions in the study of visual cognition
- Read and interpret primary scientific literature in cognitive psychology
- Assess the strengths and weaknesses of different methodologies, experimental designs, and analytic approaches within cognitive psychology
- Communicate scientific ideas, procedures, and results, verbally and in writing

Reading Material

There will be no assigned textbook for the course. Instead, you will be assigned a paper to read before each class (see Course Outline). These readings will be posted on Quercus.

Course Evaluation

Assessment	Date	Grade percentage
Weekly writing assignments	Due on Quercus at the beginning of class each week (Mondays at 9:10 am). You may complete up to a total of 10 assignments (one for each week you are not presenting). Your highest 8 scores will count towards 65% of your course grade.	65%
Presentation	Date individually assigned	15%
Attendance & Participation	Ongoing	20%

Term tests and final exam: There will be no term test or final exam for this course.

Weekly writing assignment (65%): A major component of this course is learning to read and critically evaluate scientific studies. For each week's reading, you will write a short response paper to the assigned reading by summarizing its main findings and explaining, in your opinion, its strengths and limitations. More details will be provided on Quercus and in class. You will complete a minimum of 8 written assignments, but no more than 10 in total (1 per week, except for the week that you are presenting). 65% of your course grade will be based on the average of your 8 highest scores. If you complete more than 8, only the highest 8 will count towards your grade. Each writing assignment will be due on Quercus by the beginning of class (Mondays at 9:10 am).

Presentation (15%): To supplement the assigned readings, you will also pick a paper related to one of the weekly topics (that is not one of the assigned readings), and present the main paper to the rest of the class in a 12-15 minute presentation. You will need to email me your chosen paper for approval no later than one week before your presentation. A schedule for the presentations will be set after the first class meeting, and a list of suggested papers will be posted on Quercus.

Attendance and Participation (20%): An important part of this advanced seminar course is engaging in discussions about the material with your classmates. This includes being prepared for class by completing the assigned readings, contributing your opinions, and responding thoughtfully to your classmates. The attendance and participation component of the class (20%) will be based on 10% attendance + 10% participation. Participation grades will be split evenly between participation in groups and discussions involving the whole class. To facilitate assignment of participation grades, you will be asked to complete a team reflection and feedback survey in class each week. To allow some flexibility across everyone's schedules, you are allowed one free absence without penalty.

Written assignments submitted through Quercus will be screened for possible plagiarism using the University's plagiarism detection tool. Please note the following:

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

In accordance with university policy, you may opt out of using the University's plagiarism detection tool. If you plan to opt out of the University's plagiarism detection tool, please notify the instructor in writing **at least two weeks before the assignment is due** so that alternate arrangements can be made (e.g., providing notes and a draft or outline to support the originality of your work).

Course Webpage

The website associated with this course is accessible via <http://q.utoronto.ca>

Note: You don't need to create a new login for Canvas; it already knows who you are. You just need your UTORid and password. This is the same login that gets you onto the wireless network with your laptop, and the same one that you use to check your email. If you're confused about your UTORid or don't remember your password, go to: <https://www.utorid.utoronto.ca/>

In order to access course material, monitor course information, and view your grades you must log into Canvas. If you have any general questions regarding Canvas, please visit the following help site: <https://library.utm.utoronto.ca/faculty/canvas>

IMPORTANT COURSE POLICIES ****PLEASE READ****

Extension of Time Special Consideration Request Process

Students who seek to be granted more time to complete their term work beyond the due date without penalty, owing to circumstances beyond their control (e.g., illness, or an accident), must do so by submitting a request **directly to the Instructor** for the period up to and including the last day of the term. The decision as to whether or not to apply a penalty for the specified period rests with the Instructor.

Students who seek to be granted more time to complete term work beyond the last day of the term must submit their request directly to the Department. This request covers the period following the last day of classes and ends the last day of the exam period. This is done by submitting a request via the online Special Consideration Request form at <https://utmapp.utm.utoronto.ca/SpecialRequest>. You are advised to seek advising by the departmental Undergraduate Counsellor prior to the deadline.

Supporting Documentation

The University is temporarily suspending the need for a doctor's note or medical certificate for any absence from academic participation. However, you are required to use the Absence Declaration tool on ACORN found in the Profile and Settings menu to formally declare an absence from academic participation. The tool is to be used if you require consideration for missed academic work based on the procedures specific to our campus/department.

Missed Final Exam or Extension of Time beyond exam period

Missed final exams or for extensions of time beyond the examination period you must submit a petition through the Office of the Registrar. <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/registrar/current-students/petitions> and follow their procedures.

Penalties for Lateness

A penalty of 10% per calendar day (i.e., including weekends and holidays, during which students are not able to submit term work) up to and including the last day of classes, will be applied by the Instructor. After the last day of classes, the penalty of 10% per calendar day will be applied by the Undergraduate Counsellor on behalf of the Department. No penalty will be assigned if request for special consideration, described above, was successful.

Academic Guidelines

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have met all prerequisites listed in the UTM Calendar for this course. If you lack any prerequisites you WILL BE REMOVED from the course up until the last day to add a course. Further information about academic regulations, course withdrawal dates and credits can be found in the University of Toronto Mississauga Calendar at: <http://www.erin.utoronto.ca/regcal/>.

You are encouraged to read this material. If you run into trouble and need advice about studying, preparing for exams, note taking or time management, free workshops and advice are available from the Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre at 905-828-5406.

AccessAbility Services

The University provides academic accommodations for students with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the University's courses and programs. Students requiring academic accommodations for learning, physical, sensory, or mental health disabilities or medical conditions should contact the AccessAbility Office (2037B Davis Building), 905-828-3847.

<http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/accessability/>

Notice of video recording and sharing (Download permissible; re-use prohibited)

This course, including your participation, will be recorded on video and will be available to students in the course for viewing remotely and after each session. Course videos and materials belong to your instructor, the University, and/or other source depending on the specific facts of each situation, and are protected by copyright. In this course, you are permitted to download session videos and materials for your own academic use, but you should not copy, share, or use them for any other purpose without the explicit permission of the instructor. For questions about recording and use of videos in which you appear please contact your

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Academic integrity is essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship in a university, and to ensuring that a degree from the University of Toronto Mississauga is a strong signal of each student's individual academic achievement. As a result, UTM treats cases of cheating and plagiarism very seriously.

The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters outlines behaviours that constitute academic dishonesty and the process for addressing academic offences. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments:

1. Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
2. Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
3. Making up sources or facts.
4. Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.

On tests and exams:

1. Using or possessing unauthorized aids.
2. Looking at someone else's answers during an exam or test.
3. Misrepresenting your identity.

In academic work:

1. Falsifying institutional documents or grades.
2. Falsifying or altering any documentation required, including (but not limited to) doctor's notes.

With regard to remote learning and online courses, UTM wishes to remind students that they are expected to adhere to **the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters** regardless of the course delivery method. By offering students the opportunity to learn remotely, UTM expects that students will maintain the same academic honesty and integrity that they would in a classroom setting. Potential academic offences in a digital context include, but are not limited to:

Remote assessments:

1. Accessing unauthorized resources (search engines, chat rooms, Reddit, etc.) for assessments.
2. Using technological aids (e.g. software) beyond what is listed as permitted in an assessment.
3. Posting test, essay, or exam questions to message boards or social media.
4. Creating, accessing, and sharing assessment questions and answers in virtual “course groups.”
5. Working collaboratively, in-person or online, with others on assessments that are expected to be completed individually.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. If you have questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information on academic integrity from your instructor or from other institutional resources.

Academic Rights

You, as a student at UTM, have the right to:

- Receive a syllabus by the first day of class.
- Rely upon a syllabus once a course is started. An instructor may only change marks’ assignments by following the University Assessment and Grading Practices Policy provision 1.3.
- Refuse to use turnitin.com (you must be offered an alternative form of submission).
- Have access to your instructor for consultation during a course or follow up with the department chair if the instructor is unavailable.
- Ask the person who marked your term work for a re-evaluation if you feel it was not fairly graded. You have up to one month from the date of return of the item to inquire about the mark. If you are not satisfied with a re-evaluation, you may appeal to the instructor in charge of the course if the instructor did not mark the work. If your work is remarked, you must accept the resulting mark. You may only appeal a mark beyond the instructor if the term work was worth at least 20% of the course mark.
- Receive at least one significant mark (15% for H courses, 25% for Y courses) before the last day you can drop a course for H courses, and the last day of classes in the first week of January for Y courses taught in the Fall/Winter terms.
- Submit handwritten essays so long as they are neatly written.
- Have no assignment worth 100% of your final grade.
- Not have a term test worth more than 25% in the last two weeks of class.
- Retain intellectual property rights to your research.
- Receive all your assignments once graded.
- View your final exams. To see a final exam, you must submit an online Exam Reproduction Request within 6 months of the exam. There is a small non-refundable fee.
- Privacy of your final grades.
- Arrange for representation from Downtown Legal Services (DLS), a representative from the UTM Students’ Union (UTMSU), and/or other forms of support if you are charged with an academic offence.

Equity Statement

The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As a course instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns you may contact the UTM Equity and Diversity officer at edo.utm@utoronto.ca or the University of Toronto Mississauga Students' Union Vice President Equity at vpequity@utmsu.ca.

Course Outline

Please note that this outline is subject to change depending on the needs of the class (we may need additional time to cover a topic). Any changes to the syllabus will be announced in class one week before.

Date	Topic	Papers to read before class (will be posted on Quercus)	Due (please submit on Quercus by the beginning of class: Mondays at 9:10 am)
9/12	Introduction & Overview		Presentation sign-up (in class)
9/19	Intro to top-down visual processing: How might cognition influence perception?	Paper #1	Response paper #1
9/26	Object recognition: Do we have a unified representation of objects across sensory modalities?	Paper #2	Response paper #2
10/3	Face perception: How does context affect face perception?	Paper #3	Response paper #3
10/10	THANKSGIVING – No Class		
10/17	Contextual effects in time: How does the past affect perception of the present?	Paper #4	Response paper #4
10/24	Scene perception: What information can we get in a single glance?	Paper #5	Response paper #5
10/31	Individual differences and expertise: Do artists see the world differently than non-artists?	Paper #6	Response paper #6
11/7	Higher-order judgments: How do we perceive causality and events?	Paper #7	Response paper #7
11/14	Action: How do perception and action interact?	Paper #8	Response paper #8
11/21	Mental imagery: How does visual imagery differ between people?	Paper #9	Response paper #9
11/28	Visual search: How do we find what we're looking for?	Paper #10	Response paper #10
12/5	Awareness: What limits our visual awareness?	Paper #11	Response paper #11