Instructor: Dr. Emily Balcetis  
Office: Meyer 751  
Phone: 212-998-3993  
Email: emilybalcetis@nyu.edu  
Office Hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION
People tacitly assume perceptions are veridical representations of reality. Research, new and old, calls this supposition into question and instead suggests our vantage is clouded at best. With this class, we will debate an emerging field that combines the interests of social, personality, and cognitive psychology. This new and developing area of research offers evidence that visual perception is malleable. Perceptual experiences change with the perceiver's cognitions, emotions, goals, motivations, culture, surroundings, and other variables that have been traditionally considered exclusive to social, personality, and cognitive psychology. We will investigate the ways in which and reasons why the visual system does not represent the surrounding world in a complete and accurate manner. We will discuss work from leading experts in the field of social cognitive neuroscience explore the neurological mechanisms behind these effects.

REQUIREMENTS
Readings will be assigned each week and should be completed by Monday’s class. In addition:

1. CLASS DISCUSSION: Given that this is a seminar, a large part of your grade is based on your participation in class discussions. The presentations and questions are meant to encourage discussion. This should be taken seriously and will serve as the major portion of your final grade. As a heads up, there should be no single paper that you do not comment on during class discussion.

2. PRESENTATIONS: Each student (individually, or in groups of 2 or 3) will lead the class discussion several times during the semester. This entails explaining the main points of each assigned reading, and generating questions and issues for discussion. You can use the questions that you will receive the day before class to structure the discussion.

3. PREPARE COURSE MATERIALS: Consider this like show-and-tell. The final project for this class will be a cumulative effort. All students will work together collectively throughout the quarter to gather and create course materials appropriate for undergraduate or introductory graduate student courses on this topic. Each week, discussion leaders and one student not leading that discussion will bring materials that elucidate the core concepts associated with or only loosely related to that week’s topic. These materials will be collected throughout the quarter and combined at the end. All students in the class will receive copies of all materials to use as a basis for prepping a course related to motivation in the future. Show-and-tellers for that week should prepare the following materials:
   a. TERMS: List, definitions, and citations for relevant concepts and terms. Format in Excel.
   b. CLASSIC STUDIES: Prepare cheat sheet including citation, methods, and results for classic studies related to topics.
   c. MEDIA & AV: Find relevant, exemplary videos or demos that could be used in courses and/or examples in the media of the topics being discussed.

4. TALKING TO THE MEDIA: One of the most challenging aspects of our science is communicating our research findings to the outside world. The easiest way to reach the largest audience is by communicating with the media and using them to disseminate our findings. Doing this, though, is an art. You will take one article either listed on the syllabus or that you came across that is directly relevant to this class, and prepare to disseminate it to the mainstream media. In addition, you will find public discourse about an article and discuss your reaction to the media attention it received. Detailed description of this assignment to follow.

5. RESEARCH PROPOSAL: You will develop a 20 page research proposal for an original project inspired specifically by the readings that you complete for this class. To receive a grade in the class within the normal timeframe, the paper needs to be turned in by the end of the semester. However, you may also make use of the “incomplete” option.

6. NO REACTION PAPERS – NO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: The purpose of weekly reaction papers is to help organize your thoughts in advance of the class discussion and to provide external motivation to ensure you complete the readings by class time. I trust that you will take class discussion seriously and will complete the readings in advance of the discussion. Because I believe you understand the importance of this to the quality of all of our educational experiences, I will not use this type of external motivator. Please come prepared to discuss the articles and realize that the quality of your preparation will be reflected in your class discussion grade.
GRADED

Class discussion 25%
Presentation 20%
Course materials 20%
Talking to the Media 10%
Research Paper 25%

COURSE SCHEDULE

Papers listed in each section are ordered in a completely random manner—well, actually in the order I thought of them.

WEEK 1
NO CLASSES HELD ON MONDAY

WEEK 2 25-Jan
COURSE OVERVIEW

WEEK 3 1-Feb
WHAT IS PERCEPTION?


WEEK 4 8-Feb
THE CONTROVERSY: MODULARITY VS CONTINUITY OF MIND 1


WEEK 5 15-Feb
THE CONTROVERSY: MODULARITY VS CONTINUITY OF MIND 2

### WEEK 6  22-Feb  READINESS, DEFENSE, & VIGILANCE 1

| --- |

### WEEK 7  1-Mar  READINESS, DEFENSE, & VIGILANCE 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sechrest, L., &amp; Wallace, J. (1964). Figure drawings and naturally occurring events: Elimination of the expansive euphoria hypothesis. <em>Journal of Educational Psychology, 55,</em> 42-44.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### WEEK 8  8-Mar  PERCEPTION FOR ACTION

| --- |

### WEEK 9  SPRING BREAK

### WEEK 10  22-Mar  ECOLOGICAL APPROACH TO PERCEPTION

| --- |
WEEK 11
29-Mar
NEUROLOGICAL BASES OF SOCIAL VISUAL PERCEPTION

Discuss “talking with the media” assignment. Turn in document in class and be prepared to discuss.


WEEK 12
5-April
EMBODIED PERCEPTION


WEEK 13
12-April
PERCEPTUAL EXPERIENCE AS AN EMOTIONAL PRODUCT


WEEK 14
19-April
PERCEPTUAL EXPERIENCE AS A CULTURAL CONSTRUCT


### WEEK 13

#### 26-April

**PERCEPTION FOR SELF-REGULATION 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veltkamp, M., Aarts, H., &amp; Custers, R.</td>
<td>Perception in the service of goal pursuit: Motivation to attain goals enhances the perceived size of goal-instrumental objects.</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td><em>Social Cognition</em>, 26</td>
<td>720-736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veling, H., &amp; Aarts, H.</td>
<td>Putting behavior on hold decreases reward value of need-instrumental objects outside of awareness.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td><em>Journal of Experimental Social Psychology</em>, 45</td>
<td>1020-1023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weber, F., &amp; Sassenberg, K.</td>
<td>I can't take my eyes off of it: Attention attraction effects of implementation intentions.</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td><em>Social Cognition</em>, 24(6)</td>
<td>723-752</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### WEEK 13

#### 3-May

**PERCEPTION FOR SELF-REGULATION 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hare, B., Call, J., &amp; Tomasello, M.</td>
<td>Do chimpanzees know what conspecifics know?</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td><em>Animal Behavior</em>, 61</td>
<td>139-151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richardson, D. C., Dale, R., &amp; Tomlinson, J. M.</td>
<td>Conversation, gaze coordination, and beliefs about visual context.</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td><em>Cognitive Science</em>, 33</td>
<td>1468-1482</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 7-May

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE**