

# Philosophy 136

## Philosophy of Perception

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12.30-2 pm, Fall Semester 2005, 110 Wheeler

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is perception? What is the nature of perceptual consciousness? Can we really be aware of the world around us? The problem of perception is one of the oldest aspects of philosophical debate. The questions raised are central to our understanding of the nature of mind and consciousness and of the ways we have of knowing of the world around us. In this course we will start by reviewing some of the oldest and most intractable puzzles about the nature of perceptual awareness before focusing on questions about the nature of perceptual consciousness and how those questions bear on our knowledge of the world around us.

The aim of this seminar is to explore these problems. This is a lecture course designed primarily for upper division undergraduate students who have taken at least one course in philosophy. Students in the cognitive sciences (psychology, neuroscience, computer science/robotics, philosophy) are welcome.

### REQUIREMENTS

You will be required to write a short paper and a long term paper (in lieu of a final exam) for this course. In addition, students are required to attend lectures and also a one hour discussion section directed by a graduate student instructor. Students should plan to spend approximately 12 hours a week on work related to this course.

To receiving a passing grade in this course students must (1) complete all assignments on time [late work will not be accepted unless by prior arrangement with the instructor] and (2) attend discussion section. Grades will be a function of performance on written work as follows: Final paper (65%), mid-term paper (35%).

### READINGS

There is a reader for this course.

In addition, reading is drawn from:

J.L. Austin, *Sense & Sensibilia*, (OUP, 1962).

### SCHEDULE

The course is divided into five blocks:

1. Direct versus Indirect Perception (6 lectures)

Essential Readings:

Frank Jackson, *Perception: A Representative Theory*, (CUP, 1977), Ch. 1

Thompson Clarke, 'Seeing Surfaces and Physical Objects', in Max Black, ed., *Philosophy in America*, (George Allen, 1966)  
(Both in reader).

Follow up reading:

P.F. Snowdon, 'How to Interpret "Direct Perception"', in Crane, ed., *The Contents of Experience* (CUP, 1992)

Christopher Peacocke, *Sense & Content*, (OUP: 1983) Ch. 4

Tom Baldwin, *G.E. Moore*, (Routledge: 1990) Ch. VIII

## 2. The Arguments from Illusion and Hallucination (6 lectures)

David Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, (OUP), sec. XII, pt.I

John Foster, *A.J. Ayer*, (Routledge: 1986), Ch. II sec. X

G.E.M. Anscombe, 'The Intentionality of Sensation', in Noë and Thompson

M. Burnyeat, 'Conflicting Appearances', in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 1979

All in reader

J.L. Austin, *Sense & Sensibilia*, Chs. 4-5, (OUP: 1962)

Follow up reading:

J.J. Valberg, 'The Puzzle of Experience', in Crane, ed., *The Contents of Experience* (CUP: 1992)

A.D. Smith, *The Problem of Perception*, (Harvard: 2002)

## 3. Sense-Data and Representation (6 lectures)

G.E. Moore, 'Visual Sense-Data', in Swartz, *Perceiving, Sensing & Knowing*, (University California Press, 1966)

F. Jackson, *Perception: A Representative Theory*, Ch. 3, (CUP, 1977)

M. Tye, 'The Adverbial Approach to Visual Experience', *Philosophical Review*, 1984

J. Searle, *Intentionality*, (CUP, 1980) Ch.2

G. Harman, 'The Intrinsic Quality of Experience', *Philosophical Perspectives*, 4, 1990

All in reader

Follow up reading

P.F. Strawson, 'Perception and its Objects'

Fred Dretske, 'Conscious Experience',

Both in Noë and Thompson, *Vision & Mind* (MIT Press: 2002)

H. Robinson, *Perception*, (Routledge: 1995) in particular Chs. III, VI & VIII

## 4. Defending Naïve Realism (6 lectures)

P.F. Snowdon, 'Perception, Vision & Causation', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, 1980-1

John McDowell, 'Criteria, Defeasibility & Knowledge', in his collected papers, *Meaning, Knowledge & Reality* (Harvard: 1998)

Both in reader

J.L. Austin, *Sense & Sensibilia*, Ch. X

Follow up reading:

Howard Robinson, *Perception*, (Routledge: 1995) Ch. VI

## 5. The Nature of Perceptual Warrant (5 lectures)

Fred Dretske, *Seeing & Knowing*, Ch.1

James Pryor, 'The Sceptic and the Dogmatist', *Noûs* 34 (2000), 517-49