

Course Syllabus  
**PHIL 360: *Philosophy of Perception***  
UW Milwaukee, Spring 2009  
11:00 - 12:15 PM, CRT 309

**Course Description:** Perception seems a simple matter. It is the way that we take in the world around us. But is the world at all like it seems to us through perception? Many philosophers have argued that the world is nothing like our perception of it, with the result being that perception is in fact much more complicated than we might at first believe. In this class we'll consider questions about the nature of perception and how it fits into our experience more generally. We'll also consider questions about how perception can give us knowledge, or if it even can at all. By course's end, students will have a good grounding in these important and central philosophical questions.

**Required Texts:**

- (1) [SS] *Sense and Sensibilia*, J. L. Austin (Oxford, 1962).
- (2) [QR] *The Quest for Reality Subjectivism & the Metaphysics of Colour*, Barry Stroud (Oxford, 2002).
- (3) [AP] *Action in Perception*, Alva Noë (MIT Press, 2005).

All of these books are available at Panther Bookstore (located just East of campus at 3132 N Downer Ave).

**Instructor:** Aaron Schiller, schillea@uwm.edu; OH: MW 5-6 and by appointment, CRT 613.

**Grading:** The final course grade will be out of 1000 points and breaks down as follows:

Attendance	200 points
1 <sup>st</sup> Short Paper	250 points
2 <sup>nd</sup> Short Paper	250 points
Final Paper	300 points

**Attendance:** At the start of each class I will hand around a roll-sheet for you to sign. There are 28 class meetings. You can miss 3 classes and still receive all 200 points, but after that you will be docked 1/28<sup>th</sup> of 200 points (approx. 7 points) for each class missed.

**Short Papers:** The Short Papers should be around 4 (double-spaced) pages long. The goal of these papers will be to clearly lay out an argument as found in one of the course readings and to offer an analysis and reply. I will supply a list of topics for these assignments.

**Final Paper:** The final paper should be around 7 (double-spaced) pages long. The final paper will be similar to the Short Papers except that you will be asked to consider a more in-depth argument as well as to consider possible objections to your views.

**In-Class Participation:** There are no formal in-class participation points. But students who are on the line between grades at the end of the semester and have a history of regularly contributing to classroom discussions will have their grades bumped to the higher grade.

## Course Schedule:

Meeting	Reading and Topic	
1/26	Intro to Course / Course Mechanics	
1/28	Intro to the Philosophy of Perception	
2/2	SS Chs. 1 & 2 – The Argument from Illusion	
2/4	SS Ch. 3 & 4 – Illusions, Delusions, Etc. / Looks, Appearances, and Seemings	
2/9	SS Ch. 5 – The Argument that We Always Perceive Sense Data	
2/11	SS Ch. 6 – Ayer’s Evaluation of the Argument of Sense Data	
2/16	SS Chs. 7 & 8 – A Natural Language Analysis of the Nature of “Reality” and “Appearance”	
2/18	SS Ch 9 – What Are the Proper Objects of Perception?	
		<b>[1<sup>st</sup> Short Paper Topics Handed Out]</b>
2/23	SS Ch. 10 – Some Epistemological Issues	
2/25	SS Ch. 11 – Berkeley / Conclusion of SS	
3/2	QR Ch 1. – “The Quest for Reality”	<b>[1<sup>st</sup> Short Papers Due]</b>
3/4	QR Ch. 2 – Making Sense of an Independent Reality	
3/9	QR Ch. 3 – Physical Reality	
3/11	QR Ch. 4 – Unmasking Explanations	
3/16	SPRING BREAK	
3/18	SPRING BREAK	
3/23	QR Ch. 5 – The Explanandum (the “Facts” of Perception, Language, and Psychology)	
3/25	QR Ch. 6 – Facts about Color	
3/30	QR Ch. 7 – The Implications of a Direct Connection Between Perception and Belief	
4/1	QR Chs. 8, 9, and 10 – Failure and Implications of the Unmasking Project For Color	<b>[2<sup>nd</sup> Short Paper Topics Handed Out]</b>
4/6	AP Ch. 1 – Introduction to the “Enactive Approach”	
4/8	AP Ch. 2 – The Picture Theory	
4/13	AP Ch. 2 – Cont.	<b>[2<sup>nd</sup> Short Papers Due]</b>
4/15	AP Ch. 3 – The Enactive Account of Perceptual Content	
4/20	AP Ch. 3 – Cont.	
4/22	AP Ch. 4 – Enacting Color	
4/27	AP Ch. 4 – Cont.	
4/29	AP Ch. 5 – Perspectives	
5/4	AP Ch. 6 – The Relation of Thought to Perception	
5/6	AP Ch. 7 – What About Physicalism?	<b>[Final Paper Topics Handed Out]</b>
5/15	FINAL PAPERS DUE	

*Note that this is subject to change at the instructor’s discretion, but that every attempt will be made to stay on schedule.*