GEORGIA TECH PSYCHOLOGY 3040 / 3041 / 6014
SENSATION AND PERCEPTION

Short Paper: Historical Figure: Views, Methods, and Impact
Due: Friday, February 01, 2008

Format
The first paper will be related to history, philosophy, and techniques of research in perception. The topics are provided below. The paper will be submitted in hard copy before the start of class on the due date in APA format and style, and is not to exceed 8 pages (double-spaced, with APA margins and font size). A title page with your name is required, however an Abstract will not be required. References are not included in the page limit. Late short papers will not be accepted. Note that Wikipedia and other similar online sources are very useful starting points, but may not be cited in your paper. You need to use and properly cite primary or secondary sources. See the article entitled, “Why you can’t cite Wikipedia in my class” by Neil L. Waters (available on the class web site) for some interesting thoughts on this issue. Also note that strict ethical guidelines will be followed regarding plagiarism, and inappropriate attribution of ideas and content. Having said that, we are most interested in your ideas, which should be the result of considering and digesting the views of several other authors’ ideas.

Topic Options (choose one of the following topics)

1. Choose a method or technique used in sensation and perception research, and teach me all about it. Discuss the origins, history, and evolution of the method. Discuss what questions it is used to address, the details of how it is used, and some examples of findings or results that have come from its use. Make sure to include enough detail on the technique so that I could actually consider implementing it, given the right tools or resources. For example, if you cover signal detection theory, include the formulas and worked examples as part of your presentation. If you cover TCMS, for example, discuss the equipment as well as the experimental methods one might choose. Some other examples include, but are certainly not limited to: reaction time studies; signal detection theory; magnitude estimation; PET; fMRI; EEG; TCMS; ablation/lesions; introspection; hypnosis; “false memory” paradigms; eye tracking; etc. Note that you must concentrate on the uses for a technique or method in sensation and perception research.

2. Evaluate one “early” psychologist-philosopher of your choosing, in terms of his (or her) views on sensation and perception, the questions that he (she) found most relevant, the methods that were used to attempt to answer those questions, the findings or theories or teachings that the person produced, and the impact these teachings and techniques have had on modern perceptual science. Choose one of the scholars from before about A.D. 1900. Provide some historical context (brief and relevant biographical points, dates, locations, education, prevailing societal environment, schools or groups memberships), and summarize the person’s perspectives on the existence of, utility of, functioning of, importance of, and (if appropriate) their primary methods of studying sensation and perception. Don’t forget to point out the person’s legacy and impact (or lack thereof) on modern thought and science.

Some of the persons (and their general groups) you might consider:
Pre-Socratics: The Ionians e.g., Parmenides, Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Anaximander, Heraclitus
Sophists e.g., Meno, Protagoras
Socrates e.g., Socrates
Plato
Hippocrates
Aristotle
Stoics e.g., Zeno, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius
Epicureans e.g., Epicurus, Lucretius, Democritus
Patristic Psychologists e.g., Epictetus, Origen, Plotinus, Augustine
Middle Ages e.g., Peter Abailard, Thomas Aquinas
Scholastic Psychology e.g., Roger Bacon, Robert Grosseteste, William of Ockham
“Renaissance” and Humanistic Psychology e.g., Petrarch, Ficino, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Leonardo da Vinci
(Rationalism e.g., Francis Bacon, John Locke, George Berkeley, David Hume, Thomas Reid
Materialism e.g., Rene Descartes, Benedict de Spinoza, Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz; see also Immanuel Kant (antirationalist)