PSYC422 / PSYC970: Selected Topics in Attention  
Fall session, 2015  
Syllabus

Instructor: Daryl Wilson  
Office: Humphrey Hall, room 347  
Email: daryl.wilson@queensu.ca  
Office Hours: by appointment  
Class Time: Wednesday 1:00-2:30pm and Friday 11:30-1:00pm  
Class Location: Humphrey Hall 223

What is attention?  
“Everyone knows what attention is. It is the taking possession by the mind, in clear and vivid form, of one out of what seem several simultaneously possible objects or trains of thought. Focalization, concentration, of consciousness are of its essence. It implies withdrawal from some things in order to deal effectively with others” (James, 1890)

Why Study Attention?  
Our perceptual systems can process an incredible amount of information. But do we actually want to experience all of the information arriving at our perceptual receptors? Attention functions to select the information that we want to perceive. In fact, many researchers suggest that without attention, we cannot perceive. Attention then, may be the process that underlies our conscious awareness of the world.

Course Objectives  
- To develop an understanding of the classic and current issues within the field of attention.  
- To learn how to effectively evaluate and communicate research concepts within the field of attention.  
- To learn how to research in depth a question you have regarding one of the issues regarding attentional control.

Course Format  
- The first week will provide an introduction to the history of attention research.  
- The next eight weeks will focus on a particular attentional topic. Readings and weekly reflection papers must be done 24 hours prior to the Wednesday class. The reflection papers will be used to spur discussion during the Wednesday class. Presentations of articles related to each week’s topic will be done during the Friday class.  
- The last three weeks will consist of poster-style presentations of research proposals.
**Workload**

**Participation**
Participation will be evaluated at the end of the term by both your peers and the professor.

**Weekly Reflection Papers**
For each of eight weeks, you will be required to submit a reflection paper. You have a great deal of flexibility as to what you write about. The goal is to provide evidence that, one you did the readings, and two that you thought about the readings. Do not simply provide a summary of the readings. Rather any ideas, questions, or criticisms you had with the readings would be useful. The maximum length is 1 page single-spaced. These reflection papers will be discussed during the Wednesday class. They are due 24 hours prior to the Wednesday class. That is, they are due Tuesdays at 1pm. Late reflection papers will not be accepted.

**Topic Presentation**
For your topic presentation, you will identify an article (or possibly an issue) related to that week’s topic and provide a 10 minute presentation during one of the Friday classes. You will also provide a one page handout with the key figures and verbally summarize the rationale for the study, the method, and the key findings.

**Research Proposal Poster Presentation**
- The last three weeks will be used to present your research proposals (see Research Proposal Report) in a poster-style environment.
- Each student will provide a 5 minute poster presentation describing their research proposal (followed by a 5 to 10 minute question period), and a one-page poster handout.
- Both the students and the instructor will evaluate your poster presentation.

**Research Proposal Report**
On the last day of class, you will submit a research paper on a topic of current interest within the field of attention. This paper will include a review of past research relevant to your topic, and a proposal for future research. Late papers will be penalized 10% per day.

**Evaluation**
- Class Participation: 15%
- Reflection Papers: 25% (8 papers)
- Topic Presentation: 10%
- Research Proposal Poster Presentation: 15%
- Research Proposal Report: 35%

**Readings**
There is no textbook. Readings will consist of articles (typically, review articles).
Grading Scheme

All components of this course will receive numerical percentage marks. The final grade you receive for the course will be derived by converting your numerical course average to a letter grade according to Queen’s Official Grade Conversion Scale:

**Queen’s Official Grade Conversion Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Course Average (Range)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>90-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>85-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>80-84</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>73-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>63-66</td>
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<td>C-</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>49 and below</td>
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Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (see www.academicintegrity.org). These values are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University (see the Senate Report on Principles and Priorities [http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senateandtrustees/principlespriorities.html](http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senateandtrustees/principlespriorities.html)).

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments conform to the principles of academic integrity. Information on academic integrity is available in the Arts and Science Calendar (see Academic Regulation 1 [http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academic-calendars/regulations/academic-regulations/regulation-1](http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academic-calendars/regulations/academic-regulations/regulation-1)), on the Arts and Science website (see [http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academics/undergraduate/academic-integrity](http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academics/undergraduate/academic-integrity)), and from the instructor of this course. Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen's. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university.
Disability Accommodations

Queen's University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Disability Services Office (DSO) and register as early as possible. For more information, including important deadlines, please visit the DSO website at: http://www.queensu.ca/hcds/ds/

Course Schedule and Readings

Sept. 16 – Class 1

Topic
Organizational meeting
Discuss ideas regarding the phenomenon of attention.

Sept. 18 – Class 2

Topic
History of attention research

Readings

Sept. 23 – Class 3

Topic
Attentional capacity – Discussion

Readings
Sept. 25 – Class 4
Topic
Attentional capacity – Presentations

Sept. 30 – Class 5
Topic
Attention in Time – Discussion
Readings

Oct. 2 – Class 6
Topic
Attention in Time – Presentations

Oct. 7 – Class 7
Topic
Change / Inattentinal Blindness – Discussion
Readings

Oct. 9 – Class 8
Topic
Change / Inattentinal Blindness – Presentations

Oct. 14 – Class 9
Topic
Object-Based Attention – Discussion
Readings
Oct. 16 – Class 10
  Topic
  Object-Based Attention – Presentations

Oct. 21 – Class 11
  Topic
  Attention and Eye Movements – Discussion

Readings
  where we want them to go: Capture of the eyes by new objects. *Psychological Science, 9*,
  379-385.
  return is not a foraging facilitator in saccadic search and free viewing, *Vision Research, 45*,
  1901-1908.

Oct. 23 – Class 12
  Topic
  Attention and Eye Movements – Presentations

Oct. 28 – Class 13
  Topic
  Multifocal Attention – Discussion

Readings
  Fehd, H. M., & Seiffert, A. E. (2008). Eye movements during multiple object tracking:

Oct. 30 – Class 14
  Topic
  Multifocal Attention – Presentations

Nov. 4 – Class 15
  Topic
  Training of Attention – Discussion

Readings
  423*, 534-537.
  distribution of visuospatial attention. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human
  Perception and Performance, 23*, 1465-1478.
Nov. 6 – Class 16
Topic
  Training of Attention – Presentations

Nov. 11 – Class 17
Topic
  Attention and Memory – Discussion
Readings

Nov. 13 – Class 18
Topic
  Attention and Memory – Presentations

Nov. 18 to Dec. 4 – Classes 19-24
Research Proposal Presentations

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