

**CG 11 Perception, Illusion, and the Visual Arts**  
**Semester II, 2006-07**  
**Prof. William Warren**

"The purpose of art is to force us to notice. Since perception is usually too automatic, art develops a variety of techniques to impede perception or to call attention to itself... Thus, it not only bears meaning, it forces an awareness of its meaning upon the viewer."

-- Lemon & Reis (1965), Russian Formalist Criticism, on Victor Shklovsky

**Class:** MWF 11:00-11:50 Foxboro Auditorium, Kassar House, 151 Thayer St.

**My Office Hours:** W 1:00-2:00 Metcalf Research 235, x3980

**TA Office Hours:** Rajesh\_Shah@brown.edu TuTh 1:00-2:00 Metcalf Research 131  
 Erin\_Conwell@brown.edu M 12:00-2:00 Metcalf Research 121

**Course Web Page:** <http://mycourses.brown.edu>  
 If you are not registered for the course, log in as "Guest" and click CG11 in the list

**Texts:**

- Dunning, W.V. *Changing images of pictorial space*. (Brown Bookstore)
- Willats, J. *Art and representation*. (Brown Bookstore)
- Readings – posted as PDF files on MyCourses

**Software:** Powerpoint; Dreamweaver (CIS website)

**Supply list:**

- Alberti's Window (RISD Metcalf Supply Store, 9 N. Main St.)
- 1 sketch pad (9"x12", at least 25 pp, tear-out sheets)
- 10 acetate transparencies (8 1/2" x 11", for overhead projectors)
- 6 permanent medium felt-tip markers: red, green, blue, yellow, purple, black
- 2 medium Bear clips

### Course requirements

1. **Do the reading.** We are all grown-ups, and I expect you to take responsibility for the reading.
2. **Sketchpad exercises.** A series of visual exercises will be posted on MyCourses that are designed to help you understand the perceptual principles discussed in class. These will be handed in on paper. In addition, you will annotate several paintings in Powerpoint to illustrate perceptual principles, and submit them via MyCourses. Exercises will be evaluated on their content, not their artistic merit.
3. **Web page.** For a final project, you will create a simple web page to explain an aspect of perception and art of your own choosing. Training sessions on Dreamweaver will be offered.
4. **Exams.** There will be a mid-term and a final. Exams will be based on concepts from class and the readings as well as perceptual interpretation of artwork; you do not have to memorize names and dates.
5. **Grading.** Midterm 25%, Final 35%, Exercises 25%, Web Page 15%

**PLAGIARISM WARNING:** Written and visual work in this course must be *your own work*. Academic dishonesty such as plagiarism, copying text or artwork from others, or cheating on exams is a serious offence, and can result in an NC for the course or dismissal from Brown. Read the Academic Code!

	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Exercises</b>
1/24	Perception and representation	Willats Ch. 1	
1/26	Four theories of picture perception	Rock Ch. 1; Winner Ch. 3	
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	<b>I. Space</b>		
1/29	The information in pictures	Rock Ch. 2, 3; Sedgwick (2002)	
1/31	The "natural attitude"	Bryson Ch. 1; Dunning, Ch. 1	Ex. 1
2/2	The rise of linear perspective	Dunning Ch. 2 & 3; NYT article	
2/5	The geometry of perspective	Dunning Ch. 4; Edgerton Ch. 3	
2/7	Trompe l'oeil	Kubovy Ch. 3	Ex. 2
2/9	The station point paradox	Rock Ch. 4	
2/12	Is linear perspective "natural"?	Goodman Ch. 1; Topper (1996)	Ex. 3
2/14	Why does art have a history?	Bryson Ch. 2	
2/16	The fall of linear perspective: Flatness	Dunning Ch. 10 & 11 Willats Ch. 10	Ex. 4
2/19	BREAK -- Presidents' Day		Visit RISD Museum this week
2/21	The fall of linear perspective: The moving observer	Dunning Ch. 12 & 13 Hockney article	
2/23	NO CLASS		
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	<b>II. Alternative representations</b>		
2/26	Gibson's information theory	Gibson (1971); Rogers (2002)	Ex. 5
2/28	Japanese projection systems	Hagen p. 97-115; 141-156; Willats Ch. 2	
3/2	Egyptian & NW Indian projection systems	Hagen p. 157-176; Willats Ch. 14	
3/5	Children's drawing	Willats Ch. 3, 8, 13	Ex. 6
3/7	Developmental studies of picture perception	Winner Ch. 4	
3/9	MIDTERM EXAM		
3/12	Cross-cultural studies of picture perception	Deregowski (1972); Kennedy Ch. 5	

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### III. Light & Shade

3/14	Simultaneous contrast	Hubel p. 33-46	
3/16	Contrast borders	Hubel p. 55-76; Ratliff (1972)	
3/19	Edges & image segmentation	Willats Ch. 4, 5	
3/21	Lightness constancy & shading	Gilchrist (1999); Willats Ch. 6	

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### IV. Color

3/23	Color vision	Sekuler & Blake Ch. 7	Ex. 7
3/24 – 4/1	SPRING BREAK		
4/2	Color interactions in Impressionism	Ratliff Ch. I	
4/4	Color mixing in Pointillism	Homer p. 48-87	
4/6	Scintillation & color perspective	Livingstone (1988), Dunning Ch. 14	

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### V. Shape and Form

4/9	Shape from X	Todd (2004); Willats Ch. 9	Ex. 8
4/11	Abstraction of shape	--	Web topic due
4/13	Abstraction and Gestalt laws	Rock Ch. 5; Taylor (2002)	
4/16	Illusions in art	Rock Ch. 6; Teuber (1974)	

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### VI. Motion

4/18	2D representation of motion	--	
4/20	Perceptual basis of film	Rock Ch. 7	
4/23	The moving camera	Gianetti p. 95-108	
4/25	Film editing I: Cuts	Anderson Ch. 6	Ex. 9
4/27	Film editing II: The grammar of film	--	
4/30	F/X	--	

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5/7 Web Page Due Monday 5:00 pm

5/14 **Final Exam** Monday 9:00-11:00 am

## Bibliography

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