"And here are trees and I know their gnarled surface, water, and I feel its taste. These scents of grass and stars at night, certain evenings when the heart relaxes -- how shall I negate this world whose power and strength I feel? Yet all the knowledge on earth will give me nothing to assure me that this world is mine. You describe it to me and you teach me to classify it. You enumerate its laws and in my thirst for knowledge I admit that they are true. You take apart its mechanism and my hope increases ... What need had I of so many efforts? The soft lines of these hills and the hand of evening on this troubled heart teach me much more."

ALBERT CAMUS, The Myth of Sisyphus (1942)

"The keenness of our vision depends not on how much we can see, but on how much we feel. Nor yet does mere knowledge create beauty. Nature sings her most exquisite songs to those who love her. She does not unfold her secrets to those who come only to gratify facts, but to those who see in her manifold phenomena suggestions of lofty, delicate sentiments."

HELEN KELLER, The World I Live In (1904)

EXPLORING PERCEPTION OUTSIDE OF CLASS

The two quotes above remind us that the study of perception is vacuous without insight provided by our own perceptual experiences: the richest source of information for understanding perception is provided by your own everyday experiences. During this semester, take time to discover things that, in a sense, you already know.

• Learn to pay attention to the sights, sounds, tastes and smells that populate your perceptual world. Relate those experiences to what you lean in the class.
• Note how art and perception are related.
• Pay attention to the news that is related to our perception. NY Times, CNN, BBC, Scientific American…
• Search online (e.g. Google News) for perception related topics like illusions, ESP, animal perception, …
• Conduct your own simple experiments. Participate in perceptual experiments at the UR. Think about those experiments in the context of this course.
• Read a research article on a perceptual topic that interests you.
• …. Feel free to be creative! Use images if that helps clarify and illustrate your entry.

As you do these things, keep a journal of your observations. For your assignment, you will need to turn in a “paper” with four such observations. The TOTAL length should be at least 800 words (each observation can be of different length). Observations do not have to be related.

Due at class time on Thursday, November 12.

Rules: (1) Use PDF format, (2) Use single spaced text. (3) Include the word count in the paper.

Grading (10 points total):
• 1 point for each relevant observation (4 max).
• Up to 3 points for insightfulness, creativity, and/or originality.
• Up to 3 points for observations that link with class lectures and/or readings. Assume that the reader has the class knowledge – that is, do not explain class materials.

Best strategy: start early!