

BCS 221: Auditory Perception

Syllabus: Spring 2026

Time and Location:

Monday and Wednesday, 10:25 – 11:40 AM
Hutchinson 473

Cross-listed:

PSY 221 and BCS 521

Credit Hour Policy:

This course follows the College credit hour policy for four-credit courses. This course meets two times weekly for three academic hours per week. The course also includes a recitation for one academic hour per week.

Instructor Information:

Course Instructor: Dr. Kevin Davis, Dept. of Brain and Cognitive Sciences

Email: kevin_davis@urmc.rochester.edu

Office: 303E Meliora Hall

Office hours: Monday 1–2PM, or by appointment

What is this Course About?

This course considers how we comprehend the auditory environment. Topics include the physical stimulus for hearing, the physiology of the auditory system (both at the periphery and in the central nervous system), the psychophysics of basic auditory perception (e.g., hearing thresholds), higher level auditory perception (including auditory scene analysis and the perception of complex auditory events such as speech and music), and hearing disorders.

The lecture schedule describes the general topics to be covered in each class, along with suggested readings to complement the lecture material.

Textbook:

Fundamentals of Hearing: An Introduction by William A Yost, 5th edition

How Will I Be Graded?

You will complete 4 unit exams in class. All exams will have a short-answer type format. Unit exams will cover the course content immediately preceding the exam and will not be (per se) cumulative. Each unit exam will be individually curved, and worth 25% of your total numerical grade. **All unit exams are mandatory!** Total grades are rounded to the nearest integer and letter grades assigned as follows: A, 93-100; A-, 90-92; B+, 87-89; B, 83-86; B-, 80-82; etc.

All exams will take place in the lecture hall during regularly scheduled class time. **Please note the dates and times for the unit exams!** If you believe that you have a conflict that would prevent you from attending an exam, such as a school-sanctioned event, or you have missed an exam due to an extraordinary personal situation or illness, then please email Dr. Davis as soon as possible.

Exam grades will be posted on Blackboard and an announcement sent out when they are available. Final letter grades will be posted via the Registrar after the last unit exam is graded.

Only sufficient proof of illness or other extenuating circumstances will be considered for allowing you to complete course exams at a different time or to arrange a make-up. You will not be permitted to arrange a make-up on the basis of personal obligations, or because you have multiple exams on the same day. Please note the exam schedule before making travel arrangements. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

Where Do I Look for Course Information?

Lecture slides and supplemental readings, as well as announcements and grade updates are available on Blackboard <http://learn.rochester.edu>.

How Do I Get Help with the Course?

Recitation:

Friday, 10:25 – 11:40 AM

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In addition to office hours, Dr. Davis will run a weekly recitation. Attendance is optional, but will help ensure success in the course. During recitations, Dr. Davis will review the major concepts (not all the slides) from the lecture material and answer questions from students, as well as lead discussions. It is up to you to come prepared with questions and utilize this resource.

Expectations

As a student, you should expect that your instructors provide a respectful learning environment and provide appropriate feedback and guidance. Similarly, we expect you to show this same respect to your instructors, and fellow students by attending, and participating in, lectures and recitation. It is also expected that you will adhere to the policies regarding academic honesty/integrity outlined at <https://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty/>. Violations of Academic Integrity, such as cheating and plagiarism, are taken seriously, and will be dealt with accordingly.

I look forward to working with you this term, and hope you enjoy this introduction to Auditory Perception!