

**Proposal:** AALAC Faculty Workshop, 2016

**Project Title:** Vision Science as an Idealized Model for the Liberal Arts

**Host Institution:** Rhodes College

**Timing:** 1.5 days in early August of 2017

**Organizer (Liasion):**

Jason Haberman, Assistant Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience, Rhodes College, habermanj@rhodes.edu

### **Description**

Vision is our most critical sense, utilizing, by some estimates, 50% of our neural processing. The widespread and intuitive appeal of visual perception has drawn interest from the liberal arts for millennia, from art history, to philosophy, to neuroscience. In the domain of art, our brains have no difficulty interpreting a 3D scene depicted on a 2D canvas. Artists bend the physics of our world to create compelling visual illusions, implicitly providing insight into the inner workings of our brains. In philosophy, phenomenologists reason about the role of vision in conscious experience, and just how much unconscious vision influences our behaviors. During this workshop, we will explore the connections between these disciplines through the common thread of visual experience. Some of the workshop themes will include: How has art revealed to scientists some of the neural architecture of vision, including depth, color, form, and shadow perception? What is the connection between phenomenology and physical reality? How does one best design an advanced or first-year seminar centered on the connections between visual perception and these other disciplines?

### **Rationale and Intended Audience:**

Vision science is deeply rooted within the liberal arts tradition. This is driven in part by the fact that most humans have some form of conscious visual experience; in truth we are all vision scientists. Exploring how vision works from various perspectives is tantamount to receiving an idealized liberal arts education.

This workshop has broad academic appeal, attracting scholars from psychology and neuroscience, art history, philosophy, education, and theater.

### **Schedule (redacted):**

**Format:** This will be a 1.5-day workshop that consists of multiple talks ranging from art to philosophy to neuroscience with visual perception as the common thread. We will have a panel discussion on how best to incorporate themes across these disciplines to create a seminar that highlights the interdisciplinary nature of visual perception. In addition, three speakers from outside the AALAC network will give the keynote lecture, lead workshops, and give closing remarks.

**Goals and Intended Impact:** The purpose of this workshop is to explore the rich connections vision science has to seemingly disparate disciplines by bringing in scholars from art history, philosophy, neuroscience, and psychology. Through lectures and panel

discussions, we seek common ground for understanding some fundamental elements of perception, with the hope of creating a framework for an undergraduate interdisciplinary seminar.

**Follow-up:**

To foster lasting impact of this workshop and encourage continued cross-institutional collaboration, there will be three follow-up activities.

- 1) Create an online repository for talk slides and videos from the workshop.
- 2) Create and disseminate a summary of pedagogical approaches discussed during the workshop.
- 3) Create an online forum where individuals may share the successes (and failures) of pedagogical implementation.

**Additional Participants:**

In the spring of 2017 we will put out a call for additional participants, so that at least two other AALAC member schools may be represented at the workshop.

**Workshop Leaders/Organizers (redacted):**

**Invited Speakers (redacted):**