

**JOUR 30253**  
**General Semantics for Mass Communications**  
**Syllabus, Fall 2007**

**Overview**

General Semantics (GS) deals with how we perceive, construct, evaluate and communicate our life experiences. This course provides an introduction to the discipline, focusing on practical applications for mass communications professionals.

**Course Objectives**

Students will:

- Demonstrate a working knowledge of the basic terms, formulations, and system of General Semantics.
- Relate the principles of GS to their chosen professional fields.
- Apply the methods of GS to their own individual evaluating, behavior, and self-awareness.
- Critically evaluate various aspects of the mass communications processes and outputs.
- Practice and demonstrate the skills and knowledge associated with their chosen professional fields (journalism, advertising, public relations, etc.).
- Research and report on a topic of interest using the analytical and communication techniques of General Semantics.

**Instructor Availability**

You can contact me at any time via email, or by phone during normal business hours, typically 8:30a – 5:00p. As an adjunct, I am usually not on campus other than for class. However, I can be available to meet on an appointment basis on campus. You can also meet with me on an appointment or short-notice basis at the Institute of General Semantics, 2260 College Avenue, which is just two miles from campus.

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**Email Notification**

Email will be an important communication means for this course. Additional information, to include additional class assignments, will be communicated between classes via email. Your official TCU student email address will be used for all course notifications.

## Course Outline

Session	Date	Topics
1	Aug 21	Introductions, Class Administration and Expectations
2	Aug 23	Alfred Korzybski, Orientation Survey, Perspectives
3	Aug 28	Time-Binding, Scientific Approach to Problem-Solving
4	Aug 30	Abstracting and Evaluating
5	Sep 4	Abstracting and Evaluating (cont)
6	Sep 6	Verbal Awareness, Extensional Devices
7	Sep 11	Verbal Awareness, Fact/Inference and Other Distinctions
8	Sep 13	Implications for Language Revision (E-Prime, EMA)
9	Sep 18	QUIZ #1, Review
10	Sep 20	Sensory Awareness
11	Sep 25	Applications of GS Principles
12	Sep 27	Applications of GS Principles (cont)
13	Oct 2	Evaluating Current Events
14	Oct 9	Extensional Orientation, Self-Actualization, and 'Human Nature'
15	Oct 11	POSTER PRESENTATIONS, JOURNAL CHECK #1
16	Oct 16	Obscenity, Profanity, Taboos
17	Oct 18	QUIZ #2, Introduction to Media Analysis, Criticism, Evaluation
18	Oct 23	* <i>"The Persuaders" Part 1 (B. Horvit)</i>
19	Oct 25	* <i>"The Persuaders" Part 2 (B. Horvit)</i>
20	Oct 30	* <i>Journalism and Reporting (A. Chimbel)</i>
21	Nov 1	* <i>Propaganda – Public Relations (D. Newsom)</i>
22	Nov 6	* <i>Public Relations (M. Thomas)</i>
23	Nov 8	<i>TBD</i>
24	Nov 13	* <i>NO CLASS – Research</i>
25	Nov 15	Review, Report from India and Pakistan
26	Nov 20	QUIZ #3
27	Nov 27	RESEARCH PROJECTS
28	Nov 29	RESEARCH PROJECTS (cont), JOURNAL CHECK #2
29	Dec 4	PRE-FINAL ESSAY
	Dec 13	FINAL EXAM, 3:00 – 5:30P
		* <i>Order may vary depending on availability of instructors</i>

The content for this course, particularly that related to Media Analysis, Criticism, and Evaluation, is fluid and will be determined based on current events, student interests, etc. Therefore I reserve the right to adjust the sequencing of the material based on the needs of the class. It is not anticipated that the dates for quizzes, journal checks, projects, and reports will change. However, should they become necessary or desirable, changes to the Course Outline, or any other part of this syllabus, will be communicated to the class as soon as possible. I will miss classes from October 23<sup>rd</sup> to November 13<sup>th</sup> due to a teaching trip to India and Pakistan. The schedule for this period may be especially fluid based on availability of substitute instructors.

## Grades and Assignments

A total of 1,000 points may be earned in this course. To earn an A, you must achieve 900 points (90% of total possible). To earn a B, you must achieve 800 points (80%), for a C 700 points (70%), for a D 600 points (60%). The graded assignments are worth the following points:

1. Class Participation	100
2. Quizzes (3)	150 (50 pts each)
3. Journal	150
4. Poster Project	150
5. Research Project	200 (100 pts Paper, 100 pts Presentation)
6. Pre-Final Paper	100
7. Final Exam	150
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	1,000 pts
*EXTRA CREDIT	50 pts (30 pts Book Report, 20 pts Presentation)

There is no required textbook for this course. You will be provided a CDROM that will contain required readings. Other readings may be assigned from the Internet or provided by handouts.

1. Class participation (100 pts) will be based on attendance, attentiveness, and engagement in class. Participation points will be awarded in conjunction with the two journal checks, a maximum of 50 points with Journal Check #1 and 50 points with Journal Check #2. You will lose 3 participation points for each class missed, other than official university absences. You may also lose points if, in my judgment, you repeatedly do not pay attention or participate in class activities. This class will have relatively less lecture and more discussion than what you may be accustomed. Your attendance and participation will be vital to the overall learning experience for you and your classmates.
2. Three quizzes (150 pts) will be given during the semester and may consist of multiple choice, true/false, short answer, and/or essay questions.
3. You will be required to maintain a journal (150 pts) throughout the semester using any format or materials you choose. Each entry should be dated and there should be at least one entry for every class. Additional entries are encouraged. Your class notes may be included in your journal, but the minimum journal entries are NOT simply your class notes. The journal entries should be at least 300 words and provide a summary of what you felt was/were the most important point(s) covered in that class, or something that happened outside of class that's important to you. You are encouraged to include additional materials in your journal, such as newspaper clippings, blogs or other online articles, magazine ads, etc., that support the material covered in class. This is an opportunity for you to reinforce what you are learning in class and relate class material to your own 'real world.' Each designated Journal Check is worth a maximum of 75 points. You will lose points proportionately if you do not complete a required entry, or if your entries are consistently shorter than the 300-word minimum. Your entries will not be scored qualitatively other than to verify you completed the assignment.

4. The Poster Project is an opportunity for you and one or two other students to produce a creative and informative poster that will reflect your understanding of course material. You will select a target group or organization as your hypothetical audience and design a poster that will summarize the most pertinent points applicable to that audience using images, graphics, and text. The poster must be at least 22 x 28 inches in size. (150 pts)
5. You will complete a research project on an instructor-approved topic of interest that lends itself to the objectives of the course. You may select your own topic, or choose from a list that will be suggested. The purpose of the research project is for you to apply the course material in researching, analyzing, and communicating using GS principles. One-half of the project grade (100 points) will be earned in a written report of at least 2,500 words, not including notes and references. The other half of the project grade (100 points) will be earned in a 7-10 minute presentation to the class.
6. On the last day of class, you will turn in a Pre-Final Paper (100 pts). This paper should be between 2,000-2,500 words and will address: 1) what is general semantics about? 2) what did you get out of this course? 3) how do you expect this course will help you in your chosen career?
7. The Final Exam (150 pts) will cover material from the entire semester.

\* There is one extra credit opportunity worth a maximum of 50 points. Write a 2,000-word book report and prepare a 10-minute presentation to the class on an instructor-approved book that relates to the objectives of the course. The written report is worth up to 30 points. The presentation to the class is worth up to 20 points.

### **Attendance**

- In-class lectures, presentations, and discussion will constitute the major source of learning opportunities. The learning opportunities afforded by in-class demonstrations, films, presentations, and discussions simply cannot be made up. Therefore class attendance is extremely important. Attendance will be taken.
- If you miss three or more classes due to unofficial absences, 30 points (3%) will be subtracted from your final point total in addition to the impact on your Class Participation grade.
- If you miss a quiz or journal check due to unofficial absence, you will not be given an opportunity to make up the points unless you have made previous arrangements.
- Late work due to unofficial absences will be accepted within one week of the assigned date and automatically penalized by a 20% reduction in possible points earned.
- Graded work missed due to an official university absence may be made up with no penalty provided the make-up work is completed within one week of your return. It is your responsibility to notify me immediately of an official absence and to initiate any make-up work. Make-up tests will be different from the original test.

## **Policy on Classroom Disruptions**

Turn off your cellular phones and all electronic devices before class begins. You may not sleep, wear headphones or use non-essential electronic devices or functions during class. If you are caught using non-essential electronic devices during class, you will lose all or part of your Class Participation points, at the discretion of the instructor.

You must not conduct side conversations or create other disruptions. It is disruptive to arrive late and/or pack up early. Be on time for class and plan on meeting for the entire class period. Class will begin on time. I prefer that you not bring food into the classroom.

## **Grading Policy of the Schieffer School of Journalism**

The Schieffer School is a professionally oriented academic unit that seeks to equip students to step immediately into positions in mass communications and advertising/public relations. The industries served by the school are fast-paced, high pressure and demanding. These industries seek students who have the skills to perform from day one. A Schieffer School degree or a TCU transcript will not earn you a job or job success. These industries are looking for definite and demonstrable skills. For that reason, the school will enforce these same expectations. An A in a journalism course means you have demonstrated significant achievement. The unit does not give A's for effort or attitude or attendance or diligence or demonstrated responsibility in doing assignments promptly. Those are commendable and indeed do weigh in various degrees in your overall grade. But your grade will reflect your achievement of the objectives of the course. Remember, your work in this school is not to cross another line off your degree plan – it is to build the skills and competencies that assure success in the field for which you are preparing

## **Senior Portfolio**

All students in each of the majors in the Schieffer School must present a portfolio of their work before they can be cleared for graduation. That portfolio, required in our Senior Seminar course, will include evidence of your learning and samples of your work. The portfolio will be explained and demonstrated in Senior Seminar, but you cannot complete it unless you have saved samples of your work. You may consider work produced in this class for your portfolio. However, you should obtain permission from anyone who provides substantial material or content for the work you produce, to include your classmates on the group project, interview subjects, etc.

## **Diversity Statement**

The Schieffer School recognizes the diversity of American society and acknowledges that mass communications professionals must work comfortably and effectively in that society, as well as in an interdependent global community. This course will examine the implications of this need for a diverse orientation on both professional and personal levels.

We will discuss a wide range of topics and issues that will undoubtedly generate a variety of opinions, beliefs, attitudes, etc. Some discussions may generate emotional heat as well as educational light. All discussion participants, including students, instructors, and guests, must maintain appropriate classroom courtesy, decorum, and respect even while challenging, debating, and critically assessing alternative viewpoints.

## **Disability Policy**

Texas Christian University complies with the Americans With Disabilities Act and with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities. No otherwise qualified individual shall be denied access to or participation in the services, programs, and activities of TCU solely on the basis of a disability. The University shall provide reasonable accommodations for each eligible student who (a) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, (b) has a record or history of such an impairment, or (c) is regarded as having such an impairment.

Each eligible student is responsible for presenting relevant, verifiable, professional documentation and/or assessment reports to the Coordinator for Students with Disabilities. Information concerning a student's disability is treated in a confidential manner in accordance with University policies as well as applicable federal and state laws. Documentation presented to the Coordinator shall be reviewed by appropriate University professional(s) to verify the existence of a disability. Further documentation may be required from the student to substantiate the claim of a disability or to assist the University in determining appropriate accommodations. **The Coordinator for Students with Disabilities may be contacted in the Center for Academic Services located in Sadler Hall, room 11 or at (817) 257-7486.**

Eligible students seeking accommodations should contact the coordinator as soon as possible in the academic term for which they are seeking accommodations. The Coordinator will prepare letters to appropriate faculty members concerning specific, reasonable academic adjustments for the student. The student is responsible for delivering accommodations letters, conferring with faculty members, and returning validation of the receipt of information to the Coordinator. The Coordinator consults with the student and with University faculty and staff to ensure delivery of appropriate support services and serves as liaison between the student and the faculty member as needed.

Students who wish to appeal a decision regarding appropriate accommodations shall do so in writing to the Affirmative Action Officer, who shall decide the appeal.

### **Academic Misconduct**

Any act that violates the spirit of the academic conduct policy is considered academic misconduct. Specific examples include, but are not limited to:

A. Cheating. Includes, but is not limited to:

1. Copying from another student's test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files and listings.
2. Using in any academic exercise or academic setting, material and/or devices not authorized by the person in charge of the test.
3. Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during an academic exercise without the permission of the person in charge of the exercise.

4. Knowingly using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in its entirety or in part, the contents of a test or other assignment unauthorized for release.

5. Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in a manner that leads to misrepresentation of either or both students work.

B. Plagiarism. The appropriation, theft, purchase, or obtaining by any means another's work, and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of that work as one's own offered for credit. Appropriation includes the quoting or paraphrasing of another's work without giving credit therefore.

C. Collusion. The unauthorized collaboration with another in preparing work offered for credit.

D. Abuse of resource materials. Mutilating, destroying, concealing, or stealing such materials.

E. Computer misuse. Unauthorized or illegal use of computer software or hardware through the TCU Computer Center or through any programs, terminals, or freestanding computers owned, leased, or operated by TCU or any of its academic units for the purpose of affecting the academic standing of a student.

F. Fabrication and falsification. Unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise. Falsification involves altering information for use in any academic exercise. Fabrication involves inventing or counterfeiting information for use in any academic exercise.

G. Multiple submission. The submission by the same individual of substantial portions of the same academic work (including oral reports) for credit more than once in the same or another class without authorization.

H. Complicity in academic misconduct. Helping another to commit an act of academic misconduct.

I. Bearing false witness. Knowingly and falsely accusing another student of academic misconduct.