

JOUR 40970
Special Topics: General Semantics for Mass Communications
Syllabus, Spring 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.).
- Collaborate with peers in a group project to learn about a local organization, assess the organization through personal interviews and observations, and complete a project to benefit the organization that applies lessons learned in the class.

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.

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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	1/16/07	Introductions, Overview of General Semantics (GS-1)
2	1/18/07	GS-2
3	1/23/07	GS-3
4	1/25/07	GS-4
5	1/30/07	GS-5
6	2/1/07	GS-6
7	2/6/07	GS-7, Quiz #1
8	2/8/07	GS-8
9	2/13/07	GS-9
10	2/15/07	GS-10, Journal Check #1
11	2/20/07	Applications (App-1)
12	2/22/07	App-2
13	2/27/07	App-3
14	3/1/07	App-4
15	3/6/07	App-5
16	3/8/07	App-6, Quiz #2
17	3/20/07	App-7
18	3/22/07	App-8
19	3/27/07	App-9
20	3/29/07	App-10, Journal Check #2
21	4/3/07	Poster Project Presentations
22	4/5/07*	Extra Credit Book Reports, Presentations
23	4/10/07	Integration, Discussion (ID-1)
24	4/12/07	ID-2
25	4/17/07	ID-3
26	4/19/07	ID-4
27	4/24/07	Community Project Presentations
28	4/26/07	ID-5, Journal Check #3
29	5/1/07	Pre-Final Paper Due, Course Summary/Evaluation
	5/8/07	FINAL EXAM, 3:00 – 5:30P

Much of the content for this course, particularly that related to Applications, 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.

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. Community Project	200 (60 pts Working Papers, 140 pts Presentation)
6. Pre-Final Paper	100
7. Final Exam	150

	1,000 pts
EXTRA CREDIT	50 pts (30 pts Book Report, 20 pts Presentation)

There is only one required text, Kenneth G. Johnson's *General Semantics: An Outline Survey*. This 50-page outline of GS provides a useful reference to reinforce the material discussed in class. You may purchase it on the first day of class for \$8.76 plus tax, for a total of \$9.48, checks payable to Institute of General Semantics. You will be provided a CDROM with a selection of articles and presentations from which weekly assignments will be selected. Other readings may be assigned from the Internet, particularly www.time-binding.org.

1. Class participation (100 pts) will be based on attendance, attentiveness and engagement in class, and general enthusiasm for the class. Points will be assigned throughout the semester for designated periods. This class will have relatively less lecture and more discussion than what you may be accustomed. Your 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. The first two quizzes are scheduled, the third will be unannounced.
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.'
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 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 participate in a group with other students on a Community Project (200 pts). Your group will select a nonprofit, community service, or school organization for your project, subject to instructor approval. The purpose of the project is for your group to research the organization, interview its leadership, assess its effectiveness in communicating internally and externally, and conduct a consulting engagement with the organization's leadership. The engagement will include recommendations based on applying GS principles learned in class. Thirty percent of the group grade (60 points) will be determined by the working materials generated by the group (notes, interview tapes, collateral from the client's organization, etc.). Seventy percent of the grade (140 points) will be determined by a group presentation to the class, including the client if possible.
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. Choosing from a selection of books, write a 2,000-word book report and prepare a 10-minute presentation to the class. 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 unexcused 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 unexcused absence, you will not be given an opportunity to make up the points unless you have made previous arrangements.
- Late work due to unexcused 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 excused absence may be made up provided the make-up work is completed within one week of your return. It is your responsibility to notify me immediately of an excused 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 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities. Eligible students seeking accommodations should contact the Coordinator for Students with Disabilities in the Center for Academic Services located in Sadler Hall, 11. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations. Further information can be obtained from the Center for Academic Services, TCU Box 297710, Fort Worth, TX 76129, or at (817) 257-7486.

Academic Misconduct (Sec. 3.4 from the Student Handbook)

Any act that violates the academic integrity of the institution is considered academic misconduct. The procedures used to resolve suspected acts of academic misconduct are available in the offices of Academic Deans and the Office of Campus Life. Specific examples include, but are not limited to:

- **Cheating:** Copying from another student's test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files and listings; Using, during any academic exercise, material and/or devices not authorized by the person in charge of the test; Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or laboratory without permission; 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; Substituting for another student or permitting another student to substitute for oneself;
- **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.
- **Collusion:** The unauthorized collaboration with another in preparing work offered for credit.