

JOUR 30253
General Semantics for Mass Communications
Syllabus, Spring 2008, Revised February 24, 2008 (changes in purple)

The reasons for the February 24th changes include:

- **To allow more time for in-class lecture, demonstration, and discussion.**
- **To provide more opportunities for students to express themselves via electronic/written submissions, rather than in-class presentations.**
- **To provide details on the process, structure, and requirements for the 2nd Group Projects.**
- **To recognize those who have diligently attended class without absences, and to encourage perfect attendance through the end of the semester.**
- **To encourage both groups and individuals to exercise their creativity in using electronic media to convey the results of their work.**

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 topics 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. I will also be available at prescribed or pre-arranged times for eCollege Chats.

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817-886-3746

eCollege and Email

The resources and capabilities of eCollege will be used for important class communications, announcements, assignments, and posting grades. Critical functions and capabilities of the eCollege class shell will be covered in class, but you are expected to be proficient in using eCollege capabilities. For help with eCollege, please see:

www.elearning.tcu.edu/helpdesk/default.asp and <http://www.elearning.tcu.edu/resources/>.

Email will also be an important communication means for this course. Your official TCU student email address will be used for all course notifications.

Course Outline

1	Jan 15		<i>Introductions, Syllabus, Expectations, Spiral Overview</i>
2	Jan 17		<i>Alfred Korzybski, Orientation Survey, Perspectives</i>
3	Jan 22		<i>Time-Binding, Scientific Approach to Solving Problems</i>
4	Jan 24		<i>Abstracting and Evaluating, Structural Differential Model</i>
5	Jan 29		<i>Evaluating, Symbol/Signal Reactions</i>
6	Jan 31		<i>Verbal Awareness: Language Matters</i>
7	Feb 5		<i>Verbal Awareness: Fact/Inference, Extensional Devices</i>
8	Feb 7		<i>Implications for Language Revision (E-Prime, EMA)</i>
9	Feb 12	GR	Quiz #1, Attend/Participation (A/P) Pts, Journal Pts
10	Feb 14		<i>Sensory Awareness</i>
11	Feb 19	GR	1st Group Reports
12	Feb 21	GR	1st Group Reports (cont.)
13	Feb 26		<i>Project Review, Verbal Awareness, Facts/Inferences</i>
14	Feb 28		<i>Sensory Awareness, Demonstrations</i>
15	Mar 4		<i>Types of Knowledge, Questions, Categories</i>
16	Mar 6		<i>Types of Knowledge, Questions, Categories (cont.), Creativity</i>
17	Mar 18		<i>Extensional Orientation, Self-Actualization, 'Human Nature'</i>
18	Mar 20		<i>"Toxic Sludge" Documentary, Propaganda, Public Relations</i>
19	Mar 25	GR	Quiz #2; PR (cont.), Advertising, A/P Pts, Journal Pts
20	Mar 27		<i>Journalism</i>
21	Apr 1		<i>"The Persuaders" (Part 2 in class)</i>
22	Apr 3	GR	2nd Group Reports Due, Review Discussion
23	Apr 8		<i>Obscenity and Verbal Taboos</i>
24	Apr 10		<i>Current Events Discussion</i>
25	Apr 15	GR	Current Events Analysis Due, Presentations as Necessary, Applications
26	Apr 17	GR	Extra Credit Book Reports (Not Later Than), Applications
27	Apr 22	GR	Dialog Presentations
28	Apr 24	GR	Dialog Presentations (cont.)
29	Apr 29	GR	Pre-Final Paper, Summary, Final Prep, SPOT, A/P Pts, Journal Pts
	May 6	GR	FINAL EXAM, 3:00 – 5:30P

GR = Graded Assignment

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, projects, reports, and presentations 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 via eCollege Announcement.

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. Attendance, Participation	100
2. Quizzes (2)	150 (75 pts each)
3. Journals	145
4. 1st Group Project	150
5. 2nd Group Project	150
6. Current Events Analysis	50
7. Dialogs	55
8. Pre-Final Paper	100
9. Final Exam	100

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

There is no textbook for this course. Reading assignments and other class assignments will be posted on eCollege.

1. **Attendance, Participation (100 pts)** will be based on attendance, attentiveness, and engagement in class. Participation points will be awarded in conjunction with the two Quizzes and the Pre-Final Papers (33 points with Quiz 1, 33 points with Quiz 2, 34 Points with the Pre-Final Paper). You will lose 3 points for each class missed, other than official university absences which must be communicated to me in advance. You will also lose points if you do not complete ungraded assignments or participate in class activities, including eCollege assignments.
2. Two **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 complete **Journals (145 pts)** throughout the semester using the eCollege Journal tool. A minimum of one entry for every class is required, regardless of attendance. Additional entries are encouraged. Your class notes may be included in your journal, but the minimum journal entries are NOT simply your class notes. Each journal entry should be at least 300 words and provide a summary of what you felt were the most important points covered in that class, or how something from the class applies to something that happens outside of class. You are encouraged to reference, link to, or include additional materials in your journal, such as news articles, blogs, photos, videos, etc., that relate to class material. However, the core 300 words of your entry must be your

own original writing. This is an opportunity for you to reinforce what you are learning in class and relate class material to your own 'real world.' Each of the 29 entries will be worth 5 points each. You will lose points 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. **Points will be awarded at the same times as Attendance/Participation points. CHANGE: Only 28 entries will be required. The 5 points for what would have been the 29th entry will be automatically awarded. A component of Attendance/Participation points for the remainder of the semester will be participation in and contributions to the class online discussion.**

4. You will contribute to two **Group Projects (150 pts each)**. Each Group Project is an opportunity for you to work in a group of 5 (notionally) students to study, analyze, and present a report to the class on a selected topic of interest. The purpose of the report is to relate your understanding of general semantics as it applies to a specific topic. During the first class, you will be provided a list of potential topics and asked to select 3 preferences. Based on these preferences, you will be assigned to a group for the 1st Project. After completion of the 1st Project, the same process will be used to make assignments for the 2nd Project. Anyone who doesn't get a 1st or 2nd choice assignment during the 1st Group Project will have priority for 1st choice for the 2nd Group Project. **CHANGES REGARDING THE 2ND PROJECT: You will be assigned to a group for the second project. Group assignments will be based on the following criteria: a) No one will be in a group that includes anyone from their first group; b) Each of the nine boys will be assigned to a different group; and c) No one who was in the group of 6 for the first project (Iraq/Afghanistan) will be in the group of 6 for the second project. Each group will choose its own topic for the second project, subject to my approval. The two acceptable approaches for this project are: 1) Plan, conduct, and report on a project that you create with the objective of generating or promoting *change* on the TCU campus [*ex*: attitudes toward/about Greeks, voter registration, recycling, conservation, physical fitness, blood donation, community service, etc.]; or 2) Study and report on the evolution (*change*) of some 'thing,' some situation, some process, etc., over time [*ex*: one of the arts, or one genre/segment of music, film, television, architecture, dance, sculpture, photography, poetry, fiction, documentaries, politics, radio, sport; or something like political campaigns, advertising, public relations practices, attitudes/perceptions, different religions/denominations, etc.] The more limited and specific your choice, the better. Rather than an in-class presentation, you will deliver your final report in the electronic format of your choosing, with no time or size constraints. Twenty percent (30 of 150 points) of your grade will be based on your creativity and degree of risk you take in how you choose to present your report. Each group must select their topic no later than March 6th. Prior to your return from Spring Break (March 18th), I will provide you with a suggested template for your project. You are free to use, modify, or ignore this template.**
5. During **Current Events Analysis (50 pts)**, you will give a 5-minute presentation to the class on a current event of your choice. The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate your understanding of how to use GS principles to critically analyze media reports. **CHANGE: You will have the option of submitting a written or electronic analysis rather than make an oral presentation. The written or electronic analysis can take**

any form, and is preferred over the originally-planned oral presentation. Length should be approximately 1500 words if written or 5 minutes if presented in other electronic formats. This assignment is due April 15th regardless of which format you select.

6. For the **Dialog assignment (55 pts)**, you and a partner will compose and deliver to the class an 8-10 minute dialog in which one of you assumes the role of a person knowledgeable about GS, while the other assumes the role of someone who doesn't know anything about GS. The dialog will reflect your understanding of what is most important about GS to convey to someone in a specific situation of your choosing. **CHANGE: The dialog assignment should be only 5 minutes long if you present it before the class. You have the option of preparing a video that can be submitted in lieu of the class presentation. If you submit the video, you can exceed 5 minutes. You may choose your own partner, or request that I assign you one. You may use your own video equipment or use the resources of CIS if you plan ahead and make schedule arrangements with them.**
7. 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 three questions:
 - a) what is general semantics about?
 - b) what did you get out of this course?
 - c) how do you expect this course will help you in your chosen career?
8. The **Final Exam (100 pts)** will cover material from the entire semester. **CHANGE: If you have no absences from February 26th through the end of the semester (April 29th), you may elect to not take the Final Exam and receive the grade you've earned to that point, based on a 900-point scale. For those who have had no absences to date (through February 21st), you may miss one class from February 26th through April 29th and still elect to not take the Final Exam.**

* 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. **NOTE: The extra credit book reports MUST BE COMPLETED no later than April 17th. You must coordinate with me to schedule your book report date no later than March 6th. No more than 3 reports will be scheduled for presentation during any one class.**

Attendance

- In-class lectures, presentations, and discussion will constitute the major source of learning opportunities. These learning opportunities simply cannot be made up. Therefore class attendance is extremely important. Attendance will be taken.
- 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 and put away all mobile phones, iPods, PDAs, and all electronic devices before class begins. You may not sleep, wear headphones or use non-essential electronic devices or functions during class. **POINT OF EMPHASIS: If you are caught using non-essential electronic devices during class, you will lose all of your Class Participation points for that class. Repeat offenses may result in additional points being reduced. Using a notebook computer for anything other than taking class notes or performing class assignments is not permitted. This includes text messaging.**

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 and be dismissed no later than the scheduled conclusion.** For the purposes of this class, eating constitutes a disruption and will therefore not be permitted. Plan accordingly.

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. At the instructor's discretion, work presented in this course is subject to verification of originality using the following service: www.turnitin.com .

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.