

JOUR 30253
General Semantics for Mass Communications
Syllabus, Fall 2008

Overview

General Semantics (GS) deals with how we perceive, construct, evaluate and then express our life experiences through our language-behaviors. 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 for eCollege Chats as necessary.

Steve Stockdale
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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.

Grading

Course Outline

1	Aug 26		Introduction, Syllabus, Grading, Expectations
2	Aug 28		Environmental Perspectives, Personal Orientation
3	Sep 2	*a	Environmental Perspectives, Time-binding, Scientific Orientation
4	Sep 4	*b	Nervous System, Sensory Limitations, Brain Functions
5	Sep 9		Symbolic Transformation Process
6	Sep 11	*c	Symbolic Transformation Process
7	Sep 16		Symbolic Transformation Process
8	Sep 18		Review, Integration, Discussion
9	Sep 23	*d	Verbal Awareness
10	Sep 25	*e	Verbal Awareness, Quiz #1
11	Sep 30		Verbal Awareness, Linguistic Revision
12	Oct 2		Linguistic Revision
13	Oct 7	*f	Genres, Categories, and Classifications
14	Oct 14		Types of Knowledge, Types of Questions
15	Oct 16	*g	Language-Behaviors, Motivations, "Human Nature"
16	Oct 21		Nature of "Offensive Language"
17	Oct 23		The F-Word
18	Oct 28	*h	The N-Word
19	Oct 30		Review, Integration, Discussion
20	Nov 4	*i	Standards for Evaluation, Dialogues
21	Nov 6	*i	Propaganda, PR, Advertising, etc., Dialogues (cont)
22	Nov 11		Journalism
23	Nov 13	*j	Response Side Semantics
24	Nov 18	*k	Discussion, Integration, Group Presentations
25	Nov 20	*k	Group Presentations (cont)
26	Nov 25	*l	Application, Extended Metaphor
27	Dec 2		Application, Integration
28	Dec 4		Application, Integration
29	Dec 9	*m	SPOTs, Review, Summation

* Graded Assignment due

The content for this course is somewhat fluid and may 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

The grading philosophy for this course is that you earn points for completing assignments. Except as noted, the assignments are not “graded” other than to make sure the stated requirements are satisfied. The intent is to reward accomplishment of assigned tasks; in other words, you will determine your grade based on how much you choose to accomplish.

You will participate in two different Groups throughout the semester. You will be expected to participate in and contribute to each Group activity. You may lose points if, in my judgment, you fail to appropriately participate and contribute.

This course is worth a total of 1,000 points:

- 930 points are required for an A
- 840 points are required for a B
- 750 points are required for a C
- 660 points are required for a D

Assignments are divided into four types:

- 1) Individual Assignments (625 points)
- 2) Group 1 Assignments (125 points)
- 3) Group 2 Assignments (150 points)
- 4) Quizzes (100 points)

1) Individual Assignments (625 points)

Attendance — 232 points. There is no primary textbook for this course. Some supplementary articles will be assigned throughout the course to reinforce material covered in class, but the primary source for course content will be class presentations, lectures, and discussion. Therefore attendance in this course is very important. Each class is worth 8 points. If you attend the class, you earn the points; if you don't attend the class, you don't earn the points. If you miss class due to an official university absence or if you have an extenuating circumstance as determined by the instructor, you may complete make-up assignments for no more than two absences.

Journals — 168 points. You are expected to complete one journal entry after each class (except the final class, 28 total) throughout the semester using the eCollege Journal tool. An entry for each class is required, regardless of attendance. Your class notes may be included in your journal, but the intent of the assignment is to write about more than just 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. 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 28 entries is worth 6 points. Entries for each Tuesday/Thursday class must be completed by the following Monday to earn maximum points. Journal entries will not be scored qualitatively, but entries shorter than 300 words or entries submitted after the Monday they are due will receive only 3 points each.

Online Discussion — 40 points. You have the opportunity to participate in a general online threaded discussion forum in eCollege. A maximum of eight (8) points may be earned for each three-week period in which you materially contribute to the general discussion. In this context, “materially contribute” means that you, during each three-week period, offer at least four comments that begin or propel a threaded discussion by expressing a well-stated opinion, observation, insight, or respectful argument.

Definition Task — 40 points (*a, *m). Two 20-point tasks related to definitions will be assigned. Details will be provided in class.

Current Event Task — 25 points (*f). You will be required to complete one assignment regarding a current event. Details will be provided in class.

Book Report — 75 points (*h). Select a book from the list of approved books, read it, and submit a 2,000-word book report that relates the contents of the book to material covered in the course.

Individual Report/Evaluation for Group 2 Project — 45 points (*l). Details will be provided in class.

2) Group 1 Assignments (125 points)

Time-binding Timeline Task — 25 points (*b). Details will be provided in class.

Process Diagram Task — 25 points (*c). Details will be provided in class.

“100 Greatest Discoveries” Project — 75 points (*d). Each group will be assigned one of the eight subject areas for the Discovery Channel’s series featuring Bill Nye. Each group will be tasked to study the content of its respective video (approximately 45 minutes) and prepare a report to the class, according to the requirements to be provided in class. Depending on performance, your Group may receive 75, 68, or 60 points.

3) Group 2 Assignments (150 points)

Project Plan — 25 points (*g). Details will be provided in class.

Dialogue Presentations (pairs) — 25 points (*i). Details will be provided in class.

Video Series Project — 100 points (*k). Each group will be assigned a major topic that includes a series of videos. Each group will be tasked to study the content of its respective video topic and prepare a report to the class, according to the requirements to be provided in class. Depending on performance, your Group may receive 100, 90, or 80 points.

4) Quizzes (100 points)

Two **Quizzes (50 points each, *e, *j)** will be given and may consist of multiple choice, true/false, short answer/essay questions, or other activities to be graded individually.

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.

Policy on Classroom Disruptions

Turn off and put away all mobile phones, iPods, PDAs, and all electronic devices (other than notebook computers) before class begins. You may not wear headphones or use non-essential electronic devices or functions during class. This includes text messaging. **POINT OF EMPHASIS: If you are caught using non-essential electronic devices during class, you will lose all of your Attendance 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.**

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 time.** 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.

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3) Group 2 Assignments (150 points)

Questions for Guest Speakers — 25 points (*g). Based on assigned readings and videos, prepare a list of 10 questions to ask the guest speakers on November 11 regarding the boundaries/overlaps of Journalism and Public Relations. Bring to class and turn in before you leave. One set of questions per group.

Dialogue Presentations (pairs) — 25 points (*i). See instructions posted on eCollege.

Video Series Project — 100 points (*k). Each group will be assigned a major topic that includes a series of videos. Each group will be tasked to study the content of its respective video topic and prepare a report to the class, according to the requirements to be provided in class. Depending on performance, your Group may receive 100, 90, or 80 points.

4) Quizzes (100 points)