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Syllabus - Tutorial (Fall 2025)

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Course Information

Instructor:

- Collin Nolte, Noyce 2216, noltecollin@grinnell.edu

Class Meetings:

- Noyce 2245 TR 8:30-9:50
- Meditation (Optional) MTWRF 8:00-8:15
    - You *absolutely* must be on time for this. Please *do not enter* the room if you are late

Office Hours:

By appointment

Course Description:

This course is intended to serve as an introduction to the idea of general semantics. In particular, we will concern ourselves with how our relations to the physical world are mediated through a hierarchy of abstractions, often framed in the context of a map-territory relationship: the word is not the thing, and the map is not the territory. Recognizing this distinction helps us construct better "maps," giving us greater control over our own cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses. First articulated in 1933 with Alfred Korzybski's Science and Sanity, the principles of general semantics have since shaped the work of influential writers, artists, and academics across a variety of domains. Texts for the course will be pulled from the fields of comparative mythology, anthropology, cybernetics, embodied cognition, and philosophy of science.

Texts:

- Language in Thought and Action
- Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace
- Metaphors We Live By

There may be readings from other sources which will be provided as necessary.

Aims and Objectives

Learn to read and write

Learning Objectives

After completing this course, students should be able to:

1) Introduce students to college-level writing
2) Help students develop critical reading skills
3) Introduce college-level oral communication skills

4) Acquaint students with a librarian and library resources
5) Introduce students to academic honesty policies and practices
6) Collaborate on academic advising

Policies

Class Sessions

Discussion, free-writing, relentlessly pursuing excellence according to the six pillars of a liberal arts education

Attendance

The very nature of Tutorial makes attendance absolutely necessary. You may miss exactly one class without penalty. Following this, only excused absences will count. Each unexcused absence after three will result in a one step decrease in letter grade (e.g., A- to B+)

Being on class is also important. Repeated instances of tardiness will have a negative impact on your participation score.

Grading

I will be employing the following scale for this course:

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C	D
Range	94-100	90-93	87-89	83-86	80-82	70-79	60-69

A breakdown of how grades will be distributed during the course is as follows:

Engagement, Participation, and Attendance -20%

Be good, respectful citizens of the class; communicate in good faith and assume the best in others.

Individual Homework - 20%

This will primarily consist of exercises from Style and short essays.

Papers (3) - 15%, 15%, 20%

We'll have three papers throughout the semester. TBD

Presentations - 10%

We'll aim to have 2 presentations throughout the semester

Boilerplate

Academic Honesty

Don't use AI, don't lie, don't cheat.

At Grinnell College you are part of a conversation among scholars, professors, and students, one that helps sustain both the intellectual community here and the larger world of thinkers, researchers, and writers. The tests you take, the research you do, the writing you submit-all these are ways you participate in this conversation.

The College presumes that your work for any course is your own contribution to that scholarly conversation, and it expects you to take responsibility for that contribution. That is, you should strive to present ideas and data fairly and accurately, indicate what is your own work, and acknowledge what you have derived from

others. This care permits other members of the community to trace the evolution of ideas and check claims for accuracy.

Failure to live up to this expectation constitutes academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is misrepresenting someone else's intellectual effort as your own. Within the context of a course, it also can include misrepresenting your own work as produced for that class when in fact it was produced for some other purpose. A complete list of dishonest behaviors, as defined by Grinnell College, can be found here.

Inclusive Classroom

Grinnell College makes reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. To receive accommodations, students must provide documentation to the Coordinator for Disability Resources, information can be found here. If you plan on using accommodations in this course, you should speak with me as early as possible in the semester so that we can discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course.

Religious Holidays

Grinnell College encourages students who plan to observe holy days that coincide with class meetings or assignment due dates to consult with your instructor in the first three weeks of classes so that you may reach a mutual understanding of how you can meet the terms of your religious observance, and the requirements of the course.

Title IX and Pregnancy

Grinnell College is committed to compliance with Title IX and to supporting the academic success of pregnant and parenting students and students with pregnancy related conditions. If you are a pregnant student, have pregnancy related conditions, or are a parenting student (child under one-year needs documented medical care) who wishes to request reasonable related supportive measures from the College under Title IX, please email the Title IX Coordinator at titleix@grinnell.edu. The Title IX Coordinator will work with Disability Resources and your professors to provide reasonable supportive measures in support of your education while pregnant or as a parent under Title IX.