

CMSD 4810 American Sign Language I Spring 2008

Professor: Kenneth R. Williams

krw@uga.edu

706-542-4561

Aderhold Hall Room 579

Office Hours: TBA

Course Objective: To open the door for students who wish to become ambassadors through their career choices.

Course Credit Hours: 3

Textbooks:

1. Ella Mae Lentz, Ken Mikos, Cheri Smith, (1993). *Signing Naturally*. Dawn Sign Press, book and dvd series.
2. *ASL Dictionary* can be purchased at local bookstore. See examples in class.
3. You will be responsible for *readings* as directed by instructor. The readings will be available for you to copy in Office of Instructional Technology (OIT), 2nd floor Aderhold Hall

II. Course Description: This multicultural course is a basic introduction to American Sign Language and the people who use it. We will explore historical perspectives and values of Deaf Culture. We will look at the linguistic claims that have been made about ASL and make comparisons with other languages. You will have opportunities to explore your attitudes about ASL and Deaf Culture and dispel misconceptions. With American Sign Language, you will develop a new way of communicating receptively and expressively.

III. At the end of this course you should be able to:

1. Define ASL as a true language
2. Understand the meaning of Deaf Culture
3. Be familiar with issue important to Deaf Culture/ASL
4. Think critically about the structure of ASL and the linguistic claims that have been made
5. Be familiar with historical landmarks in the development of ASL and Deaf Culture in the United States.
6. Receptively and expressively utilize finger-spelling
7. Receptively and expressively dialogue using basic ASL structures.
8. Receptively and expressively identify and explain *basic* grammatical rules of ASL
9. Meet and sign with Deaf individuals in environments outside of class.

IV. Attendance Policy: As ASL is a visual/spatial language class attendance is essential. Students will be allowed 3 excused/unexcused absences. **Upon missing the fourth day of class and subsequent ones, the student will be penalized by having 20 points deducted from his/her final grade for each day missed after the third one.** Five tardies will equate to 1 absence (tardy=after roll is called). If a student is absent it is his/her responsibility to get information from **classmates**. **If a student is tardy it is his/her responsibility to inform the professor after class.**

If a student is participating in an university sponsored activity he/she should provide a written document to the professor to prevent being penalized.

V. Communication Policy: A common concern among beginning signers is, "How will I understand what you are saying since I don't know ASL?" To enhance your acquisition of ASL your instructor will communicate to you in ASL. In the beginning you will be permitted to use your voice to talk with the instructor, answer questions, etc... As the class progresses you will be required to communicate via ASL. Language learning is an interactive process. For you to acquire this language you **must participate fully in all of the activities**. *Be prepared to transfer "hearing" from your ears to your eyes.*

Voiceless-ness! The instructor will let you know if using voice is allowed during necessary discussions; however, one cannot learn ASL by practicing spoken English. That is why a **silent environment will be maintained throughout the class, unless otherwise established by the instructor.**

Whispering is not allowed.

You are expected to assist your classmates and facilitate their effective learning by letting them wrestle with their own questions. Whispering answers to them does not help them learn anything.

"Listening" Skills: Stay alert and follow all conversations that take place in and around the classroom. Remember that exposure to the language is your best opportunity to learn it. Whether the conversation is involving you directly or not, it is another chance to practice your receptive skills. In other classes, we have learned to ignore exchanges between other students or between the instructor and another student when the issue does not concern us, in fact, it's considered impolite to "eaves drop". But in ASL, since it is a visual language, any conversation held in the presence of signing people is considered to be public in nature. Every exchange in class is an opportunity for you to follow a conversation and practice your new skills.

Active Listening Behaviors: Certain "active listening" behaviors are expected as part of American Sign Language. That is, certain manual (Oh-I-See; Huh?; Wow; Really?) and non-manual signals (Nodding; Facial Expression; Mouth Movements) are not only ways of showing the signer that you understand, but it is a **Social Norm! ~ Part of the culture. Blank looks** or lack of active listening behaviors will not only interrupt the conversation (such as causing your instructor to stop and ask if you understand, or needlessly repeat the information), but is taken for rudeness in most social situations.

Respect of Others: I will expect courtesy, attentiveness, and a willingness to learn. In so doing, you will earn my respect as a responsible adult, and be treated accordingly. What I will not tolerate is your interference in another student's learning experience. That includes, distracting noise or behavior, cell-phone use/texting, laptops, whispering, insults, cruelty, harassment (of any kind), or ridicule. I am sure that you as a responsible adults will not tolerate these things either. I wholeheartedly believe that learning requires the making of mistakes. My classroom is a place where your well-intentioned errors are welcomed. Sometimes, mistakes are funny and laughter follows naturally, good-natured laughter is welcomed, especially where we learn to laugh at ourselves -- with our classmates not **AT** them. Keep in mind that no one feels free to take risks in an environment where they fear being ridiculed or criticized and learning requires risk-taking. You are responsible for creating the kind of open environment where you, feel free to make mistakes, and find understanding, and support from those around you.

Mistakes: "Dare to be wrong!" I expect all students to make mistakes in the process of learning a new language. From my study of linguistics and theories of language acquisition, I have come to believe that the mistakes that you make while learning any language are not only inevitable, they are invaluable! Do not hold yourself back for fear of being wrong! Letting your best efforts speak for themselves, the errors you make in understanding, or producing sentences show me which properties of the language you have conquered successfully and which ones are still under development. Do not assume that other students in the class have an advantage over you. Most of them are probably right in the same boat rowing (or sometimes fishing) right along side of you. Your mistakes can be learning experiences for your classmates as well. Although you probably won't be making any mistakes that I haven't seen before, errors that you make in a good faith attempt may seem novel to your classmates, and understanding the mistakes of another can be a very useful way of getting to the root of an concept with which you, yourself, are struggling. Always do your best. Apply what you have learned, but set yourself free to learn more than you know by letting yourself try your best. In short: "Dare to be Wrong!"

Study & Practice: Do not fool yourself into believing that your learning experience for this subject will be confined to the time you spend in this classroom! What you are undertaking is an adventure in language! That takes time, patience, discipline, practice, practice and more practice. This semester, we have a total of roughly **45 hours** together! Do you think that's enough time to learn a language? You can see why it is essential that you take what you learn in class out into your regular life and practice it there (I know that most students don't have a "regular" life, but you know what I mean!) Successful students know how to apply themselves outside of class to get the results they want. Your student workbook is a great starting place. It gives you receptive practice watching various models from the videotape. You will quickly realize that no two people sign exactly the same; no more than any two hearing people have exactly the same voice, accent, volume, and style.

VI. Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated on receptive and expressive language skills. There will also be evaluation on general knowledge through written exams.

- 1.) No make up pop quizzes.
- 2.) If you arrive late for a quiz or exam you will be permitted to join the testing situation **from the point at which you arrive. No signing will be repeated if you are late.**
- 3.) Assignments turned in late will receive a deduction of 10 points for each late day. **All Assignments MUST be stapled or will not be accepted.**
- 4.) If there is a problem or concern with grades or assignments please talk to your instructor or graduate assistant right away. Do not wait until the end of the semester.
- 5.) The professor has the discretion to modify the evaluation and class protocol in an effort to ensure the best learning outcome and will in all fairness inform students of a change.

Quizzes @ 100 points
 Deaf Culture Events (2) @ 100 Points
 Expressive Videos (3) = 300 Points
 Observation/Volunteer Hours and Reflection Paper = 100 points
 Group Presentation = 100 Points
 Article Critiques @ 100 Points
 Receptive Video Summaries @ 100 Points
 Written Final = 100 Points

Total = 1000

- A 1000 - 950
- A- 949 - 900
- B 899 - 870
- B+ 869 - 840
- B - 839 - 800
- C 799 - 770
- C+ 769 - 740
- C- 739 - 700
- D 699 - 670
- F Below

Due dates and format for projects will be announced in class.

VIII. University Honor Code and Academic Honesty Policy

A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures can be found at www.uga.edu/ovpi
 In an effort to maintain a healthy environment for learning The University of Georgia's Policy on Academic Honesty will be followed stringently in this course. Refer to the website above to familiarize yourself with this policy. Also, students needing special accommodations should contact the Office of Disability Resource on campus.

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE CLUB at UGA (HMH HEAR MY HANDS) is a student initiated Sign Language Club created to provide opportunities to use and practice ASL in a non-threatening environment. Monthly activities are planned and carried out by a committee of interested students. Plan to attend some of these fun events! For more information OR if you would like to serve as an officer or class representative contact information will be provided. **(Attendance at 1 Meeting is required as a Deaf Culture Event)**

COURSE OUTLINE	This outline is a guide and tentative.	
<u>DATE</u>	<u>OBJECTIVE</u>	<u>ASSIGNMENT</u>
	Introduction and Course Overview Manual Alphabet Same/Different	Memorize Manual Alphabet plus signs in Unit 1 SN (Signing Naturally) Complete pretest in workbook Complete workbook Unit 1
	What is Language? To learn proper greetings and exchanging personal introductions Distinctive features of ASL Interrogatives and question forms: yes/no, wh? To comprehend video dialogues Unit 1	Read Workbook Unit 2 SN Read C. Padden article, <i>The Deaf Community and the Culture of Deaf People</i> . answer questions (type your answers)
	Express and recognize Noun/Verb pairs Express and recognize signs using the agent marker	Complete Unit 2

	Define Deaf Culture Define signer's perspective and use of space and vision in ASL Define arbitrary vs. iconic signs	Read <i>Introduction to ASL and Deaf Community</i>
	Explain ASL "topic/comment" structure Historical markers in the development of ASL Review Units 3	Prepare Unit 3
	QUIZ #1 Express and understand vocabulary in order to ask, tell and confirm answers to simple questions	Complete Unit 3 Reading: DPN (pg 4 SN) <i>Deaf President Now!</i>
	Discuss the historical impact of <i>Deaf President Now!</i> DPN Video	Readings: <i>The Language of the Deaf World</i> <i>Two Views of Deafness</i> Prepare Unit 4
	Spatial referencing in ASL Sentences in ASL: Topic/comment\ Declarative/Imperative Simple Numbers in ASL Deafness: Difference or Disability? PROJECT #1 VIDEO INTRODUCTION DUE	Review Unit 4 Reading: <i>Welcome to the Deaf World</i>
	Identify educational options for Deaf/deaf children Practice expressing and understanding ASL in context Practice using facial expression and non manual markers	Complete Unit 4 Prepare Unit 5
	Talking about family and friends To sign singular and plural pronouns accurately Sign gender appropriately Use contrastive structure	
	To define classifiers and use CL:1, CL:B, CL:3,CL: Practice using contrastive structures Give clear negative responses to questions	Review Unit 5 workbook and videotape
	Quiz#2 Family Life	Complete Unit 5
	Identify vocabulary used to discuss activities	Read handout: Prepare Unit 6
	Expressive & Receptive practice To communicate time and dates Identify proper etiquette in ASL situations	Review Unit 6
	To sign about daily activities To sign about recreational activities	Continue Unit 6
	Review Unit 6	Complete Unit 6
	Review	Read Cumulative Review Units 1-6