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# AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE 1010

## FALL SEMESTER 2007

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Instructor: Mitch Jensen M. Ed  
Office Phone: 1-866-327-8877-- *an operator will ask you for the number you want to call-- give them this phone number 801-263-4875. They will connect you with me, and interpret the phone call. This is a free call.*  
E-mail: [mfjensen@utah.gov](mailto:mfjensen@utah.gov)  
Office Hours: By appointment only  
Required Text: Signing Naturally I, by Cheri Smith / Ella Mae Lentz/  
Ken Mikos

### Class Objectives

1. To be able to use and understand basic American Sign Language
2. To be able to use and understand American Sign Language structure and syntax
3. To improve eye readiness and mime activities
4. To have a basic understanding of the history of American Sign Language
5. To have a basic understanding of psychological, social, audiological, and political views of the Deaf Community

### Course Description

This course is designed to teach functional American Sign Language (ASL) which can be used in everyday interactions. Learning these interactions will enable students to establish and maintain social relationships with others who use ASL. The grammar and vocabulary of ASL will be learned within the context of communicative activities. Students will be taught awareness of Deaf culture through role-plays situations, assigned readings, interactions with Deaf individuals, and videotapes.

### Learning to Communicate in ASL

Because this course is designed to teach *functional skills* for communicating with persons who are Deaf, the use of your voice will be restricted during class time, and breaks. During class the only method of communication will be sign language,

gestures, and mime. This practice will give you the experience in how persons who are Deaf communicate, and will assist you in learning ASL.

### Method of Evaluation

1. *Attendance this is a must:* Failure to be in class will definitely lower your grade, due to the fact you won't be here to practice and learn skill building.
2. *Do practice assignments in student workbook:* Do all the assignments in the student workbook, and watch student video tape. Your instructor will inform you ahead of time when workbook units are due. Workbooks will be checked by instructor. **Workbooks will not be accepted late unless *prior* arraignments have been made with instructor.**
3. *One show-and-tell:* You will be required you to bring some item to class and show and tell the class about the item you have brought. This is the same idea as when you were in kindergarten and brought your dead goldfish to show the class. The big difference is you do it all in ASL. ***This will be explained in more detail later in the quarter***
4. *Major project (choose one):*
  - a. Take a tour of Robert G Sanderson Community Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; 5709 South 1500 West  
***(You will need to call 801.263.4861 to schedule a tour)***
  - b. Be Deaf for one day (8 hours minimum)

The major project must have a minimum one of (1) *typewritten* response to receive credit. **Any handwritten papers turned in will have a 30% reduction in their grade for this project.**

5. *Quizzes:* You will be notified in advance of date of quiz
6. *Weekly participation and in class activities*
7. *Midterm:* See schedule for date **(there will be no early or late midterms given)**
8. *Final:* See schedule for date **(there will be no early or late finals given)**

**Grading/Evaluation:**

Quizzes	200 points
Show-and-Tell	50 points
In Class Activities	200 points
Major Project	50 points
Midterm	100 points
Final	200 points
Workbook	240 points

**TOTAL POINTS****1040 POINTS****Grade Scale:**

A	= 100% - 95% of possible points
A-	= 94% - 90% of possible points
B+	= 89% - 86% of possible points
B	= 85% - 83% of possible points
B-	= 82% - 80% of possible points
C+	= 79% - 76% of possible points
C	= 75% - 73% of possible points
C-	= 72% - 70% of possible points
D+	= 69% - 66% of possible points
D	= 65% - 63% of possible points
D-	= 62% - 60% of possible points
E	= below 60% <i>of</i> possible points

**PLEASE NOTE:**

- There will be no make-ups on any quizzes or tests. All tests are signed, and there just is not enough time in the day to do all the make-ups that would be required.
- There will be NO extra credit points. Your grade will be based upon how well you use ASL, both expressive and receptive skills. It is vital that you are in class so that you can practice your skills and receive feedback. If you are not in class your grade will reflect your skills.

- Class will be always conducted in ASL when you enter the class turn your voice off. If you use your voice in class **I may elect to reduce your final total grade by 50 points.**
- This syllabus is subject to change if during the semester if I feel that some adjustment is needed to meet the classes learning needs. I will inform you of any changes that are made.

### SIGNIFICANT DATES:

<b>MIDTERM:</b>	<b>October 4</b>
<b>SHOW &amp; TELL</b>	<b>November 27 &amp; 29</b>
<b>MAJOR PROJECT:</b>	<b>December 4</b>
<b>FINAL:</b>	<b>December 6</b>
<b>FALL BREAK:</b>	<b>October 8-13</b>
<b>THANKSGIVING BREAK:</b>	<b>November 22-23</b>

### INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES:

If you are disabled and need accommodations such as: special tests arrangements, note taking, taped textbooks, tutoring, equipment, etc., please contact me and/or the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 585-1813.

### TEXT BOOK AND VIDEO TAPE:

The book and tape used for this class is set up very different than the traditional way to teach ASL. The book is not designed to give you a sign and an English equivalent, but to teach you ASL in a natural learning environment, the way you learned your native Language. Your book does include some of the vocabulary items for your review, and I would recommend that you bring your book to class for introduction of these vocabulary items. I would not encourage you to write an English word since the meaning may change depending how it is used in ASL. ASL is a visual language that has its own structure and utilizes signs, body movements, eye gaze, markers, and sign space that are very different than English structure.

*Just a note of warning do not convince yourself that there is one sign for each English word, but more what does this means in English.* I also understand that many of you want increase vocabulary, and may want to know the signs for specific items. I want to assist you in increasing your vocabulary as much as possible within the philosophy of teaching ASL naturally. However, I will not give you sign for an English word that you write or fingerspell. If you want to know a sign you

will have to act it out, or show how it looks. During the first couple weeks we will spend much of the class time on working on eye and body readiness activities. This is a vital part of learning ASL. More vocabulary will come as the quarter progresses.

### **Strategies for Learning AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE**

*To increase your language learning in the classroom, develop the following habits:*

1. Follow all conversations whether they are between the teacher and class, teacher and students, or student and student.
2. Focus on the signer's face, not on the hands. Don't break eye contact while in a signed conversation.
3. Develop active listening behaviors, i.e., nodding, responding with "huh?", "wow", "really?" Your teacher may stop to repeat information because you do not nod to indicate you are following along. This is not teacher/student behavior--it is cultural. Listeners have very active roles in signed conversations.
4. Participate as much as possible by adding comments, agreeing or disagreeing, etc. The more you participate, the more you will learn. Don't worry about mistakes. They are part of the learning process.
5. Try not to worry about a sign you missed. Work on getting the "gist" of the conversation. If a particular sign pops up over and over, and you haven't a clue to its meaning, then ask the teacher. Try to avoid asking your classmate for a quick English translation. You would lose out on valuable communication experiences between the instructor and you that can strengthen your comprehension skills.
6. Leave English, your voice, and your whispering outside the door. Try not to translate in your head as you watch someone sign. Don't worry about memorizing, as repetition and context will help you acquire the language.
7. Try to maintain a signing environment during class breaks, before class begins, and whenever Deaf people are present.
8. Try not to miss class, especially at the beginning. Your class strives to form a language community: the cohesiveness of the group influences how rich the

language exchange is in the classroom. Missing class makes it difficult to achieve this interactive environment.

9. **YOUR PRESENCE IS CRUCIAL!** This is not like studying or reading at home, at work during breaks, or in the library. The learning happens **HERE** in class.
10. "Activities" on the syllabus: your presence will be very valuable, as this will have a lot of facial expressions, body language, and many hidden attention-getting behaviors as well as basic vocabulary signs that are used. Your participation in Activities is where the "substance" is, and #3 is to be put into practice as well.

## **AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE**

### **Class Rules**

1. You may gesture, sign, or act out in class, but **NO SPEAKING OR WHISPERING!**
2. Often, you will be expected to learn more than one (1) sign/variation for a concept in ASL. These variants may be due to: a) generational usage; b) register (formal vs. casual); c) ease of production; d) regional usage.
3. If you have seen a sign different from that presented in class, feel free to ask about it. It may be another acceptable variant, or learned incorrectly, and class is the ideal place to learn.
4. **DO NOT** assume that each ASL sign has an exact English equivalent. There may be times when you will have a "feel" for what a sign means in the context but cannot put a "word" to it. That does not mean that you do not understand. It may only mean that there might not be an efficient way to express it in English.