ENG 343-001: Linguistics of ASL Syllabus
Department of English, SFASU
Spring 2016
T 6:00-8:30 p.m.
F179

Professor: Dr. Jessie Sams
Office: LAN 229
Office hours: MW 1:00-2:45 p.m.
R 3:15-4:45 p.m.
Finals week office hours: MT 1:00-2:30 p.m.
Email: samsj@sfasu.edu
Tumblr: http://jessiesams.tumblr.com
Textbook: Any required readings will be posted on D2L.

Course description
Linguistic study of ASL, including the following: phonological features of individual signs (hand shape, orientation, location, movement) and how those features shift when placed in a stream of signs; morphological features of signs, including compounding and lexicalization of fingerspelled words; grammar, focusing on typical word orders found in ASL sentences; meaning of signs and how those meanings have shifted over time (as well as how those meanings shift for particular dialects); and typical pragmatic features of conversation in ASL. Knowledge of ASL is helpful but not necessary (nor will it be assumed). No prerequisite.

Department objectives
1. Develop students’ practical skills in reading, writing, and reasoning, and research skills in traditional print as well as electronic sources.
2. Enable students to think critically and analytically, and to communicate effectively in a variety of contexts.
3. Promote students’ understanding of literary and cultural history.
4. Empower students to understand and write about texts, as well as produce original texts.
5. Train students to apply the skills they have learned in the discipline to a variety of situations.

Course objectives
1. Encourage students to think about the nature of English studies as a discipline, leading to a variety of professional opportunities, and about the field’s various critical and pedagogical strategies.
2. Instill an awareness of English studies as a diverse and dynamic field which includes writing, linguistics, literature in translation, and culturally diverse texts in World, British, and American literature.

Program Learning Outcomes
1. The student will demonstrate the ability to think critically and perform close readings of linguistic-related texts.
2. The student will demonstrate the ability to comprehend and apply both traditional and contemporary methods in linguistics to language.
3. The student will demonstrate the ability to integrate theories and methodologies of the linguistics course with that of other disciplines taught at the university.
4. The student will demonstrate the ability to perform original research and/or data analysis relevant to linguistic study.
5. The student will demonstrate the ability to effectively communicate results of research and/or data analysis in a medium appropriate for the academic level.
Course Policies and Requirements
The two overarching principles for the course are that adults make arrangements and that poor preparation on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part. These two principles are reflected in all the following policies:

1. If you have a quick question, email me; if you have a complex question or need a concept explained further, utilize my office hours.
2. I only answer specific questions via email; vague questions will be answered with something along the lines of “What exactly are you asking?”
3. My scheduled office hours are posted on the syllabus and outside my office door; when you come to my office hours, show up prepared so we can get right to work.
4. I expect you to attend every class and to keep up with the course schedule. If you are absent, you need to find out from fellow classmates what you missed during class, and you will need to get any handouts you missed from a fellow classmate. If you miss class on a day I hand back graded work, you will need to come to my office hours to pick up your work.
5. I also expect you to participate during the course; participation includes joining in class discussions, working in groups during in-class activities, and showing up to class prepared for the day’s lesson.
6. The due dates provided on the course schedule are the final due dates. I will accept late work as long as I am still grading your classmates’ work for that same assignment; once I am finished grading an assignment, I will not accept any more submissions for that assignment. Any work handed in late must be handed in directly to me during office hours.
7. Exams and quizzes are given in class ONLY on the dates provided in the course schedule.
8. You need to keep track of your own grades; if you have a question about your grades, you have to speak with me in person in my office hours.
9. Like the movies, classes can be disturbed by noisy phones and constant texting. So be considerate to your neighbors and turn off your cell phone’s ringer when you come to class and have the courtesy to wait until after class to text and/or update your Facebook about the amazing lecture you just witnessed.
10. As in any relationship, the student/professor relationship is strengthened by communication. If I send something out, pay attention to it. If you have a question/concern/emergency, communicate that to me immediately.

Acceptable Student Behavior
Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic, or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom. Students who do not attend class regularly or who perform poorly on class projects/exams may be referred to the Early Alert Program. This program provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance available to help SFA students succeed.

Attendance
Attendance is—by and large—linked to grades; very few students who miss a high number of classes make an above-passing grade in this course. I allow one week’s worth of absences before it affects final grades; after that, each day’s absence results in a deduction from the final grade. Any absence above three weeks’ worth of classes results in a failing grade.
Course meeting days | Number of absences allowed | Number of points deducted per absence above allowable amount | Absence that results in automatic failure of course
--- | --- | --- | ---
MWF | 0-3 | 1 pt. per absence (up to 9 absences) | 10
TR | 0-2 | 1.5 pts. per absence (up to 6 absences) | 7
Once/week | 0-1 | 3 pts. per absence (up to 3 absences) | 4

The following policies apply to attendance:
- I take attendance at the beginning of class and only count the students who are there as being present; a tardy counts as an absence.
- I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences.
- I begin taking attendance on the first day of classes.
- If you have to miss class, make sure that you ask a classmate what you missed and that you understand the material covered. You must get any missed information (lecture notes, handouts, etc.) from a classmate.
- Any disruptions, unacceptable behavior toward other students, and/or lack of active participation will result in a recorded absence.

Furthermore, the university policy on class attendance can be found here: [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/class-attendance-and-excused-absence-6.7.pdf](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/class-attendance-and-excused-absence-6.7.pdf).

**Assignments**

This semester, you will be graded on two areas:

*Analyses:* Throughout the semester, you will have eight take-home assignments to practice concepts being covered in the readings and the class discussions/activities. Specific guidelines for each analysis will be provided during the semester. You will have a week to complete each analysis.

*Final paper:* A final project, consisting of research and data analysis, synthesizes information from the entire course and is due during the final exam time provided on the course schedule.

**Grading**

I grade semesters on a 100-point scale, which makes it easier to keep track of your grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>Earning an A indicates that you mastered all of the necessary concepts for the course and exceeded all (or nearly all) expectations provided for assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-89.9</td>
<td>Earning a B indicates that you did well with all of the necessary concepts and mastered some of them and exceeded several expectations provided for assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79.9</td>
<td>Earning a C indicates that you did well with some of the concepts and not as well with other concepts and that you met the expectations for assignments. In other words, a C is the average grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69.9</td>
<td>Earning a D indicates that you did not do well with a majority of the concepts and/or did not meet all the expectations provided for assignments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59.9</td>
<td>Earning an F indicates that you did not do the required work and/or did not meet the majority of the expectations provided for assignments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Final grades are final. I do not offer extra credit, and I do not bump up grades at the end of a semester. Grades do not reflect my personal feelings about students, so I do not change grades just because I like a student or feel badly about a student’s situation. Instead, grades solely reflect students’ mastery of the concepts introduced in class. Mastery and hard work do not necessarily mean the same thing; I appreciate (and expect) hard work, but do not attempt to get a higher grade by outlining all the struggles you’ve had during the semester and how you’ve overcome them.

**Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism.

- Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism.
- Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.
- Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

Any problems with plagiarism or cheating in our course will result in a grade of negative 10 points on the assignment/exam/quiz in question. This policy applies to verbatim plagiarism, mosaic plagiarism, improper citations, missing quotation marks, and auto-plagiarism (using your own past work and turning it in for this course). All work must be original and written specifically for this course. A grade of negative 10 means that not only do you lose all points for the work in question but also lose an additional 10 points from your overall grade.

Furthermore, use of excessive direct quotations (higher than 40% of your work) will result in a grade of zero on that assignment.

**Withheld Grades: Semester Grades Policy**


At the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.
### Course Schedule: January 18-May 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Due</th>
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| Week 1 (1/18-1/22) | Introduction to linguistics  
Hockett’s design features of language |                                          |
| Week 2 (1/25-1/29) | Sign language typology  
Analysis I: ASL as a language |                                          |
| Week 3 (2/1-2/5)  | ASL history and language change            |                                          |
| Week 4 (2/8-2/12) | ASL phonology  
Analysis II: ASL typology |                                          |
| Week 5 (2/15-2/19) | ASL phonology                              |                                          |
| Week 6 (2/22-2/26) | Fingerspelling and lexicalized words  
Analysis III: Transcription systems |                                          |
| Week 7 (2/29-3/4) | ASL morphology  
Analysis IV: Fingerspelling |                                          |
| Week 8 (3/7-3/11) | ASL morpho-syntax                           |                                          |
| Week 9 (3/21-3/25) | ASL syntax  
Analysis V: Morphology |                                          |
| Week 10 (3/28-4/1) | ASL syntax                                  |                                          |
| Week 11 (4/4-4/8) | ASL syntactico-semantics  
Analysis VI: Word order |                                          |
| Week 12 (4/11-4/15) | ASL semantics                              |                                          |
| Week 13 (4/18-4/22) | ASL semantics                              |                                          |
| Week 14 (4/25-4/29) | ASL pragmatics and Deaf culture  
Analysis VII: Semantics |                                          |
| Week 15 (5/2-5/6) | ASL pragmatics and Deaf culture  
Analysis VIII: Storytelling and poetry |                                          |
| Finals week (5/9-5/13) | Tuesday, May 10, 6:30-7:30 p.m. (turn the paper in at my office) | Final paper |

**Students with disabilities**

To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).