



**College of Education and Human Development
Division of Special Education and disAbility Research**

Spring 2023

EDSE 115 002: American Sign Language (ASL) I

CRN: 13820, 4 – Credits

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| Instructor: Shanmugam Pillai | Meeting Dates: 1/23/23 – 5/17/23 |
| Phone: (703) 350-8117 | Meeting Day(s): Wednesday |
| E-Mail: spillai@gmu.edu | Meeting Time(s): 7:20 pm – 9:10 pm |
| Office Hours: By Appointment | Meeting Location: Fairfax; Horizon 4014 |
| Office Location: Fairfax; Horizon 4014 | Other Phone: N/A |

Note: This syllabus may change according to class needs. Teacher Candidates/Students will be advised of any changes immediately through George Mason e-mail and/or through Blackboard.

Prerequisite(s):

None

Co-requisite(s):

None

Course Description

Focuses on introduction of American Sign Language (ASL) and Deaf culture. Teaches basic person-to-person conversational signing. Emphasizes development of expressive and receptive skills. Increases knowledge of ASL vocabulary and the syntax, semantics, and pragmatics of the language.

Advising Contact Information

Please make sure that you are being advised on a regular basis as to your status and progress in your program. Students in Special Education and Assistive Technology programs can contact the Special Education Advising Office at 703-993-3670 or sped@gmu.edu for assistance. All other students should refer to their assigned program advisor or the Mason Care Network (703-993-2470).

Advising Tip

Are you interested in an ASL minor? Submit your Minor Declaration (<http://registrar.gmu.edu/wp-content/uploads/UMD.pdf>), or contact the program for more information: speced@gmu.edu.

Course Delivery Method

Hybrid

Learning activities include the following:

1. Class lecture and discussion
2. Application activities
3. Small group activities and assignments
4. Video and other media supports
5. Research and presentation activities
6. Electronic supplements and activities via Blackboard

Learner Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Develop minimal ASL conversational skills and vocabulary to effectively communicate with members of the Deaf community in the United States (DH1S2, C1.1).
2. Introduce self and produce correct handshape form for letters and numbers, fingerspell names, ask yes/no questions (C1.1).
3. Narrate language and home background (C1.1).
4. Identify a person and give information about that person (C1.1).
5. Describe residence, use contrastive structures, tell about living arrangements (C1.1).
6. Talk about family and family relationships, tell similarities and differences between self and sibling, discuss information about relationship, marital status, age, etc (C1.1).
7. Develop a basic awareness of language and culture alive in the Deaf community today (DH1S2, C2.1).

Professional Standards

Goals, objectives, and assignments in this class address NCATE Standard 1b/ Pedagogical Content Knowledge and 1c / Skills Professional and Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills, the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Knowledge and Skill Standards, the Council on Education of the Deaf, and the Virginia Department of Education teacher licensure competencies. Goals, objectives, and assignments in this class address the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Knowledge and the American Sign Language Teachers Association (ASLTA) competencies. Code for CEC Standards: DH = Deaf and Hard of Hearing; Code for ASLTA Standards: C1 = Communication, C2 = Culture, C3 = Connections, C4 = Comparisons, C5 = Communities.

Required Texts

Smith, C., Lentz, E., & Mikos, K. (2008). *Signing naturally: Units 1-6 student set*. Dawn Sign Press.

Recommended Texts

American Psychological Association. (2020). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (7th ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000165-000>

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, VIA, hard copy).

VIA Performance-Based Assessment Submission Requirement

There is no required performance-based assessment for this course.

Assignments and/or Examinations

Course Format: Hybrid format

1. **Online portion:** students will study the new vocabulary, complete the weekly lessons and assignments, and complete the weekly vocabulary quizzes before attending class.
2. **Weekly class meetings,** students will review any assignments/materials for further clarification, review the new signs learned online, and practice signing with classmates on interactive activities learned in class.
 - a. **Feedback:** Will be given during class for students, this is an opportunity for students to fix their sign production errors. Students need to pay attention to feedback given to their classmates in class as a learning tool.

Vocabulary: Students will watch and learn the new vocabulary in Blackboard and refer to their textbook for the definition. Students are expected to practice signing the new vocabulary.

Vocabulary Quizzes: Students will have weekly quizzes which will be administered via Blackboard. There is a time limit for quizzes, it will be automatically submitted when the time expires. All answers will be typed.

Lessons and Assignments: Students will complete weekly assignments in Blackboard. Students will check the modules on **Blackboard** for more details about the assignments.

1. **Reading Assignments** – some assignments require you to read and find the answers in your textbook.
2. **Lesson/Assignment Question Formats**
 - a. **Multiple Choice**
 - b. **Multiple Answers (total points indicates how many answers).**
 - i. Question worth 3 points = 3 answers
 - c. **True/False**
 - i. Select the answer or
 - ii. If need to type– type the full word, not T/F
 - d. **Hotspot**
 - i. Click on the spot or picture given

- e. **Jumbled Sentences**
 - i. Pick the answer from the drop-down list
 - f. **Matching**
 - i. Select the correct answer that matches the information given.
 - g. **Ordering**
 - i. Put the answers in the correct order.
 - h. **Fill in the Blank/Fill in Multiple Blanks questions**
 - i. **Numbers** – type the number only (do not spell it out) or follow instructions given.
 - ii. **1-word answers** – most fill in the blank questions require 1-word answers. **Tip: type in the root word unless directed.**
Ex: walks, walking, walked (root – walk). **If there is no number of words, type only 1-word answers.**
 - iii. **2 or 3-word answers** If you see (2 words) or (3 words) next to the question/blank space, follow accordingly.
 - iv. **Parenthesis** – pick an answer given in the parenthesis
 - v. (bored/excited)
 - vi. (1st, 2nd, 3rd ...) which means enter one of these as an answer. If you see ... means it does not stop at 3rd, can 4th, 5th and etc.
 - vii. **Spelling** – will be deducted if not correct **(use Google to double check your spelling)**
 - viii. **Abbreviations** – are not allowed
 - ix. **Capitalization** – is not required
3. **Answer Key** – for assignments, correct answers will be available after the entire class has submitted the assignment.

Deaf Community Paper: Students will write **one** paper about the Deaf community. Students will need to find information in one of the categories listed below:

1. Deaf individuals (ASL users only, not oral Deaf individuals)
2. An educational program or Deaf school (K-12) that serves Deaf students.

Note: The following websites are not allowed:

1. Gallaudet University
2. Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT/NTID)

Note: Research on oral methods or oral approach is not accepted, the focus is on sign language organizations, schools and websites- international signs are accepted**

Students will write a paper for either category (Deaf individuals or educational), summarizing the website and information. The summary should be 1 to 2 pages long, size 12 font and double-spaced. The website link must be included in the paper.

If a student submits a plagiarized paper, the university policy will be followed: <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>. Will result in a **zero** on the assignment.

Post: Blackboard

Tests: The course objectives focus on the receptive and expressive use of ASL. Each test will have a receptive and an expressive portion at the end of each unit. ASL I will cover units 1-4. Students will check **Blackboard** for more details about the Unit Tests.

1. **Receptive Tests:** The receptive portion of the test will be administered via Blackboard. The formatting will be similar to assignments, however there is a time limit for tests. The test will be automatically submitted once the time has expired.
2. **Expressive Tests (videos):** Students will post the expressive portion (signing) on Blackboard. Rubrics are posted on blackboard to be used as a guide.

Note: Students will need to upload to Kaltura before posting (a video with instructions is included at the end of each expressive test).

Note: Remember the purpose of this video is to showcase a student's signing ability. Students will create a fake situation or scenario based on the required criteria. Utilize the vocabulary you have learned from the unit.

Note: Rehearse until you no longer need your notes. Record yourself signing the information and attach it on Blackboard. If a student's eye gaze is not on the camera, it will result in a zero.

Note: Students will submit **three** videos. Each video counts as **6.67%** of the course grade. (Expressive Tests – 20% of the course grade).

Final Exam: The final exam is a comprehensive exam, which focuses on both the production and receptive use of ASL. The final exam will be one-on-one with the instructor involving an interview-style type format.

Student Evaluations of Teaching:

The student evaluation of teaching, or SET, is an online course survey. You are strongly encouraged to complete this form for each course as this feedback helps instructors and administrators improve your class experiences. Towards the end of the course, you will receive email and Blackboard notifications when the evaluations open. Your anonymous and confidential feedback is only shared with instructors after final grades have been submitted. More information about the SET can be found on The Institute of Effectiveness and Planning website at <https://oiep.gmu.edu/set/>

Course Policies and Expectations

Attendance/Participation

It is expected that students will attend each class on time.

Students will be allowed two (2) absences without penalty. Each absence afterwards will result in a 5% deduction from the total grade as shown below:

First Absence – no penalty

Second Absence – no penalty

Third Absence – 5% deduction of the final grade

Fourth Absence – 5% deduction of the final grade

Fifth Absence – 5% deduction of the final grade

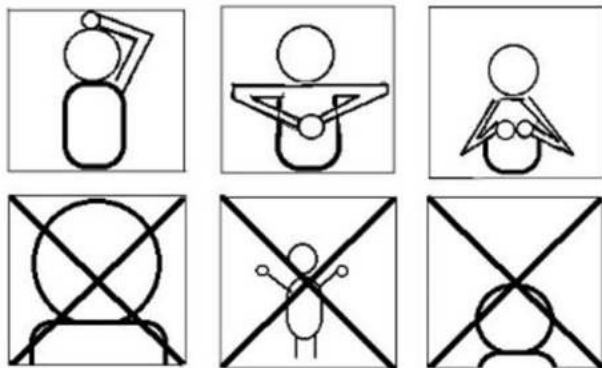
Sixth Absence – Withdraw or fail the course depending on the date

1. Two (2) late arrivals will be equivalent to one (1) absence which will be applied to the policy stated above.
2. If a student arrives more than 30 minutes late, it will count as one (1) absence.

Note: For excused absences beyond the (2) given, students would need to get a letter from Disability Services for any mental or physical health related issues.

Editing ASL videos: Students are required to edit their ASL videos.

1. Ensure the computer or tablet is on a firm surface (a desk or table). Do NOT have the computer on the student's lap, a bed, or any other surface where the student will be moving.
2. Make sure the video is centered and visible where the instructor can see the top of the student's head and the bottom of the student's chest area as shown below.



3. If students use their phone, follow the format below:



4. Make sure eyes are facing the camera, not looking to the side, above or below. Brief glances are acceptable.
5. Make sure that the background is clean (one-colored wall) and free of “visual noise” (people, books, television, animals appearing, etc.).
6. The color of the student’s shirt should contrast their skin tone. Avoid red, yellow, and orange shades. If students have tattoos on their arms, they should wear long-sleeved shirts. Tank tops and string shirts are not allowed.
7. Remove hats and excessive jewelry. Wedding rings and small earrings are ok.
8. If students are sitting, do not swivel.
9. All videos must be submitted on Blackboard as one.
10. Review the quality of the videos before submitting.

Video Feedback: Students can check for video feedback for Unit Expressive Tests via Blackboard.

Late Work

Any papers, videos, or assignments will not be accepted past due dates.

Note: Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.

Other Requirements

No Voicing Policy: To enhance students’ language acquisition of ASL, a “no voicing” setting will be enforced. Respect the instructor and classmates by refraining from voicing or interpreting for others. If students do not understand the instructor or classmates (or missed a portion of information), please ask the instructor for clarification. Students can ask a classmate by using signs or writing back and forth.

Students are expected to cease voicing the moment they walk into the classroom until the moment they exit the classroom. Students are also expected to continue signing until the instructor has left the room after the class session. It is expected that students will practice ASL with classmates during times they are in the classroom and the instructor is not present.

If voicing becomes a persistent problem, the instructor will ask the student to leave the class for the day; this will count as an absence for the day.

Grading

Grading Scale

| Letter Grade | Percent Grade |
|--------------|---------------|
| A+ | 97-100 |
| A | 94-96 |
| A- | 90-93 |
| B+ | 87-89 |
| B | 84-86 |
| B- | 81-83 |
| C+ | 79-80 |
| C | 76-78 |
| C- | 74-75 |
| D | 70-73 |
| F | Below 70 |

Grade Distribution:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| 1. Assignments/Deaf Papers | 20% |
| 2. Vocabulary Quizzes | 20% |
| 3. Unit Tests - Expressive | 20% |
| 4. Unit Tests – Receptive | 20% |
| 5. Final Exam | 20% |

Note: Students' grades will be based on **percentage** for each area as shown above, not **total points**.

Note: A student needs 76% to pass the course or to move on to the next course.

Final Exam Waiver - If a student gets at 94% or above in class, the Final Exam will be waived.

***Note:** The George Mason University Honor Code will be strictly enforced. See [Academic Integrity Site](https://oai.gmu.edu/) (<https://oai.gmu.edu/>) and [Honor Code and System](https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/) (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>). Students are responsible for reading and understanding the Code. “To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.” Work submitted must be your own new, original work for this course or with proper citations.

Professional Dispositions

Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times. See [Policies and Procedures](https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/) (<https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>).

Class Schedule

*Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

Modules: Due on **Tuesdays at 11:59 pm**, the day before next class.

| | Day | Class Topic | Weekly Reading/Assignments |
|---------|------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Week 1 | 25-Jan | Syllabus | Module 1 |
| Week 2 | 1-Feb | Unit 1 Lessons 1.1-1.6 | Module 2 |
| Week 3 | 8-Feb | Lessons 1.7-1.12 | Module 3 |
| Week 4 | 15-Feb | Unit 2 Lessons 2.1-2.4 | Module 4 |
| Week 5 | 22-Feb | Lessons 2.5-2.8 | Module 5 |
| Week 6 | 1-March | Lessons 2.9-2.12 | Module 6 |
| Week 7 | 8-March | Unit 3 Lessons 3.1-3.4 | |
| Week 8 | 15-March | Spring Recess | Module 7 |
| Week 9 | 22-March | Lesson 3.5-3.9 | Module 8 |
| Week 10 | 29-March | Lessons 3.10-3.15 | Module 9 |
| Week 11 | 5-April | Unit 4 Lessons 4.1-4.4 | Module 10 |
| Week 12 | 12-April | Lessons 4.5-4.8 | Module 11 |
| Week 13 | 19-April | Lessons 4.9-4.11 | Module 12 |
| Week 14 | 26-April | Lessons 4.12-4.14/Review | Module 13 |
| Week 15 | 3-May | Final Exam | One-on-One |
| Week 16 | 10-May | Final Exam | One-on-One |

Core Values Commitment

The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles: See [Core Values](http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/) (<http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>).

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code. See [Honor Code and System](https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/) (<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing. See [Responsible Use of Computing](http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/) (<http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.

- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor. See [Disability Services \(https://ds.gmu.edu/\)](https://ds.gmu.edu/).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to VIA should be directed to viahelp@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments>.
- Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to [Blackboard Instructional Technology Support for Students \(https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/\)](https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/).
- [Learning Services \(learningservices@gmu.edu\)](mailto:learningservices@gmu.edu) - Provides a variety of experience-based learning opportunities through which students explore a wide range of academic concerns. Services include support to students with learning differences, individual study strategy coaching, individualized programs of study, and referrals to tutoring resources. Presentations on a variety of academic topics such as time management, reading, and note taking are available to the university community. The programs are open to all George Mason University students free of charge.

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per [University Policy 1202](#). If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as the [Student Support and Advocacy Center \(SSAC\)](#) at 703-380-1434 or [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance or support measures from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website [College of Education and Human Development \(http://cehd.gmu.edu/\)](http://cehd.gmu.edu/).

Appendix

Assessment Rubric(s)

| | EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS | MEETS EXPECTATIONS | DOES NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS |
|---|--|--|--|
| Vocabulary: Usage of vocabulary | Accurate, relevant use of wide variety of vocabulary | Generally accurate, relevant use of vocabulary from more than half the units studied (1) | Vocabulary inaccurate and used covers less than half the units studied |

| | EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS | MEETS EXPECTATIONS | DOES NOT MEET EXPECTATIONS |
|--|--|---|---|
| | used from all units studied (2) | | |
| Formation: Handshape, Palm Orientation, Movement, Location | Skilled, accurate, appropriate use of hand shape, orientation, location and movement; transitions smooth (2) | Generally accurate, appropriate use; errors made do not compromise meaning (1) | Less than 50% accurate, appropriate use; errors compromise meaning; effort and practice not evident |
| Space Referents: Motion/Location of Verbs (includes eye gaze, body shifting and choice of signs) | Use is consistently accurate and appropriate; use precisely expresses intended meaning (2) | Use is generally accurate and appropriate; errors do not compromise the intended meaning; good effort (1) | Use is either not present or awkward; interferes with intended meaning; effort and practice not evident |
| Grammar: Yes/No Questions “Wh-word” Questions Location Negation Contrastive Structures (referents, time, intensity, etc.) | A variety of sentence types are used; solid knowledge of grammar is evident (2) | A variety of sentence types are used; errors do not compromise meaning; use demonstrates effort and thought (1) | Use is awkward and confusing; errors compromise meaning; effort and practice not evident |
| Fluency/Accuracy Smoothness and Fluency of Signs Conceptually Accurate Ideas/Messages | Use is consistently accurate and appropriate; use precisely expresses intended meaning (2) | Use is generally accurate and appropriate; errors do not compromise the intended meaning; good effort (1) | Use is either not present or awkward; sometimes interferes with intended meaning; effort and practice not evident |
| Total Points Possible = 10 | Points earned in parenthesis | Points earned in parenthesis | No points earned |