

ENG 343-001 Linguistics of ASL  
 Department of English & Creative Writing, SFASU  
 Spring 2018 Syllabus  
 TR 3:30-4:45 p.m.  
 F183

Professor	Dr. Jessie Sams
Office	LAN 229
Office hours	MW 2:30-3:00 p.m. TR 12:30-1:30 p.m. F 1:00-3:00 p.m. Finals week: MTR 1:00-2:30 p.m.
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Required text     *Grammar, Gesture, and Meaning in American Sign Language* by Scott K. Liddell

### 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. Students need to have taken (or be currently enrolled in) second-semester ASL; material in the course assumes previous knowledge of ASL.

### Course objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to

1. Identify the major subfields of linguistic study (phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics).
2. Analyze a variety of naturally-occurring language texts.
3. Justify the approaches taken to analyze those texts.
4. Synthesize researched information from scholars with their own original data analyses.
5. Create a final product that demonstrates an understanding of the concepts learned throughout the semester and incorporates aspects of both synthesis and analysis.

### 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.

### Department objectives

1. Develop students' practical skills in reading, writing, and reasoning and students' research skills in traditional print as well as electronic sources.

2. Enable students to think critically and analytically and communicate effectively in a variety of contexts.
3. Promote students' understanding of linguistic 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 policies and requirements**

The two overarching principles for the course are the following:

- (a) Adults make arrangements.
- (b) Poor preparation on your part does not constitute an emergency on my part.

These two principles are reflected in all the following policies.

#### *Student policies*

1. If you have a quick question, you can email me with your specific question. Take the time to construct an email with a specific concern or question clearly stated to maximize the efficiency and productivity of our email exchange. The only email I regularly check is my SFA email, so that is the only email you should use to contact me for this course.
2. If you have a complex question, need a concept explained further, want to practice analytic skills, or have a question about your grade, you need to see me during my office hours, which are included in this syllabus and posted outside my office door.
3. When you come to my office hours, show up prepared so we can get right to work. If there is a line at my door, I will limit each student to 10 minutes.
  - a. When you come into my office hours, you will sign in and sign out on an office hour attendance sheet so I can keep accurate records of office hour visits.
  - b. If you show up while another student is in my office, please knock on the door to get my attention so that I know you are in the hallway waiting.
  - c. If you only need to turn something in or grab a graded assignment, you can simply hand me the assignment or request the graded assignment. You do not need to wait in the line.
  - d. Unless you and other students have the same question and have pre-arranged to come into my office as a group, I will see students one at a time in the order in which they arrived.
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 or information 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 actively participate during the course; participation includes joining in on class discussions, working in groups during in-class activities, and showing up to class prepared for the day's lesson.
6. I begin taking attendance on the first day of class and take attendance once at the beginning of every class period; only the students who are there at the beginning of class are counted present for the day, so any student who is tardy is counted as absent. Once I have put away the roll sheet, I will not take it out again to count students as present even if a student shows up one minute after I finish taking roll.
  - a. If you leave class early, it will count as an absence.
  - b. Any disruptions, unacceptable behavior toward other students, and/or lack of active participation will result in a recorded absence
7. The due dates provided on the course schedule in this syllabus are the final due dates.
  - a. 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.

- b. Any work handed in late (or early) must be handed in directly to me during office hours. Any work not submitted directly to me in person will have a 20-point deduction on that assignment.
  - c. All submitted work that consists of multiple sheets of paper must be stapled. For any multiple-paged assignment that is not stapled, 5 points will be taken off the assignment's grade.
  - d. Unless otherwise directed, all work must be typed in 11- or 12-point Times New Roman font. If any other font is used, there will be a 5-point reduction on the grade of that assignment.
  - e. When a word count minimum is provided in the directions, you must supply your total word count in parentheses after the response/essay. If the minimum word count is not met, it will result in a 50% grade reduction on that assignment; a 50% reduction means that only half the grade will be awarded. That is, if the assignment was graded at 80% but did not meet the minimum word count, only 40% will be recorded in the gradebook. It is imperative to meet minimum expectations on all assignments.
8. You need to keep track of your own grades and absences to know if and when you need to reach out for help and to know whether you've had too many absences (see the Attendance section below).
  9. Like the movies, classes can be disturbed by noisy phones and constant texting. Be considerate to your neighbors and professor by turning 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 social media page 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. The only way I have of getting in touch with the class is your school email address; make sure you check your SFA email regularly.

#### *Post-semester policies on graded work*

For fall semesters, I will keep any graded work that has not been claimed in my office until March 1 of the following spring semester; for spring semesters, I will keep graded work until October 1 of the following fall semester. If you would like to pick up your graded work from the previous semester, let me know 48 hours in advance so that I can locate the work and have it ready for you when you come by my office hours to pick it up. Any work that has not been claimed by the specified dates will be recycled.

#### *Acceptable student behavior*

Classroom behavior should not interfere with the professor'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 professor 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 and active participation are expected for this course. I allow three absences before it affects final grades; after that, each day's absence results in a deduction from the final grade. As outlined in the Student Policies section, tardies count as absences.

Any absence above three weeks' worth of classes, whether excused or not, results in a failing grade.

Maximum number of absences allowed	3
Percent deducted per absence above allowable amount	1% per absence (up to 7 absences)
Absence that results in a failing grade	7

The university policy on class attendance can be found here: <http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/class-attendance-and-excused-absence-6.7.pdf>.

### *Assignments*

This semester, you will be graded on three major areas. On the schedule “HW” stands for ‘homework’ and includes both a written assignment and video demonstration.

*Written assignments:* Throughout the semester, you will have five written homework assignments that relate to concepts covered in the class and textbook. The guidelines for each assignment will be handed out one week prior to its due date.

*Video demonstrations:* Along with each written assignment, you will complete video demonstrations; in the video, you will apply concepts from the course and textbook to your signing. The guidelines for each video demonstration will be handed out one week prior to its due date.

*Final project:* You will complete a cumulative final project that requires you to apply concepts from the course to signed language data.

### *Grading*

Each assignment will be graded out of a score of 100; each major assignment area is weighted differently:

Written assignments	60%
Video demonstrations	15 %
Final project	25%

I round all grades to the nearest tenth of a decimal point and then assign letter grades according to the following scale of percentages:

A	90-100	Earning an A indicates that you mastered all the necessary concepts and skills for the course and exceeded expectations on assignments throughout the semester.
B	80-89.9	Earning a B indicates that you did well with all necessary concepts and skills for the course and mastered some of them; it also indicates you exceeded expectations on some assignments but not others.
C	70-79.9	Earning a C indicates that you did well with some of the concepts and skills but not as well with others; it also indicates you met all required guidelines throughout the course. In other words, a C is the average grade.
D	60-69.9	Earning a D indicates you did not do well with a majority of the concepts and/or skills required for the course; it also indicates that not all required guidelines were met throughout the semester.
F	0-59.9	Earning an F indicates that you regularly did not meet required guidelines.

Final grades are final. I do not offer extra credit, and I do not bump or round up grades at the end of a semester. Grades do not reflect my personal feelings about students; instead, they solely reflect a student’s demonstrated mastery of the concepts and skills introduced in class through completed work on assignments. Mastery and hard work do not necessarily mean the same thing.

*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 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 this course will result in a grade of negative 10% on the assignment/exam/quiz in question.** This policy applies to verbatim plagiarism, mosaic plagiarism, improper citations, missing quotation marks, auto-plagiarism (using your own past work and turning it in for this course), and copying another student's work to present as your own. All work must be original, completed on your own, 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% 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*

The following is taken from SFASU's Policy Manual (2012), "Semester Grades Policy" (A-54).

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.

For this course, a grade of WH must be requested by the student, negotiated between the student and professor, and approved by the professor *before* the final week of classes begins (i.e., before "dead week"). Not all requests will be granted; each request will be taken on a case-by-case basis. For the request to be granted, the student must have completed all work prior to the WH request and must be passing the course with a grade of a B or higher. If the WH is approved, all work for that WH must be completed by the end of the first week of the following academic semester.

**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) as early as possible in the semester. ODS is located in the Human Services building, room 325; their number is 468-3004 (or 468-1004 for TDD). 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/>.

For this course, if you are registered with ODS and have an accommodation and/or auxiliary aids, you need to speak with me during office hours about the accommodation/aids. Please do this as soon as possible during the semester.

**Course schedule: January 15-May 12**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Due</b>
<b>Week 1</b>	T 1/16 R 1/18	Intro to class ASL as a language	Ch1	
<b>Week 2</b>	T 1/23 R 1/25	<i>Ch2 Sketch of ASL grammar</i> ASL phonology ASL morphology	pp. 6-14 pp. 14-37	
<b>Week 3</b>	T 1/30 R 2/1	Aspect/Inflection & derivation ASL syntax	pp. 37-52 pp. 52-65	<b>HW1</b>
<b>Week 4</b>	T 2/6 R 2/8	<i>Ch3 Pronouns &amp; real space</i> Historical approaches Mental space/real space	pp. 66-78 pp. 78-96	
<b>Week 5</b>	T 2/13 R 2/15	<i>Ch4 Indicating verbs &amp; real space</i> →y verb forms x→y verb forms	pp. 97-109 pp. 109-116	
<b>Week 6</b>	T 2/20 R 2/22	Backward, reciprocal, intransitive Entities, locations, directions	pp. 116-122 pp. 122-140	<b>HW2</b>
<b>Week 7</b>	T 2/27 R 3/1	<i>Ch5 Surrogates</i> Blended spaces Constructed dialogue/discourse	pp. 141-158 pp. 158-175	
<b>Week 8</b>	T 3/6 R 3/8 3/12-3/16	<i>Ch6 Directing signs</i> Locations, vectors, entities Spatial metaphors SPRING BREAK	pp. 176-184 pp. 184-189	<b>HW3</b>
<b>Week 9</b>	T 3/20 R 3/22	<i>Ch7 Tokens</i> Multiple & changes to tokens Unusual placement, distinct settings	pp. 190-204 pp. 204-222	
<b>Week 10</b>	T 3/27 R 3/29	<i>Ch8 Buoys</i> List, theme, & fragment buoys NO CLASSES	Ch8	
<b>Week 11</b>	T 4/3 R 4/5	<i>Ch9 Depicting verbs</i> Types & DVs as lexical items Presence and space	pp. 261-274 pp. 275-291	<b>HW4</b>
<b>Week 12</b>	T 4/10 R 4/12	Shapes, action, and motion Metaphor, blends, & transitions	pp. 291-301 pp. 301-316	
<b>Week 13</b>	T 4/17 R 4/19	<i>Ch10 Five Brothers</i> Introducing the five brothers Multiple generations	pp. 317-333 pp. 333-354	<b>HW5</b>
<b>Week 14</b>	T 4/24 R 4/26	<i>Ch11 Grammar, gesture, &amp; meaning</i> Final project guidelines In-class work on final project	Ch11	
<b>Week 15</b>	T 5/1 R 5/3	In-class work on final project In-class work on final project		
<b>Finals</b>	R 5/10	1:00-2:30 p.m. in my office		<b>Final project</b>