



## American Sign Language 121 Syllabus

Item #1410 and 2013/  
Fall Quarter 2013

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Course Description: ASL 121 is a five credit, transferable, college level, language course. It is an introduction to American Sign Language (ASL) and the community of people who use it. As a second language, ASL 121 also covers fundamental issues of basic human language, grammar and communication. Above all, it is a class that requires your attendance, involvement, and practice if you plan to succeed. Success in this class will bring you valuable skills that will enrich your life significantly, by introducing you to a unique, diverse, rich culture that coexists throughout North America, namely Deaf community, empowering you to connect with members of that community by means of a natural language, and broaden your understanding of human communication, culture, and language.

### Course Outcomes

**Course Outcomes:** In the course of this class the student will develop and improve basic knowledge of grammatical constructs, rules, and functions of American Sign Language through usage, responses, translations and application in classroom conversation, receptive exams and expressive assignments.

At the end of this course the students will be able to...

- Demonstrate understanding of fundamental definitions of deaf culture and knowledge of the deaf community through interactions and written work.
- Demonstrate knowledge of basic issues common to American deaf culture, its history and values, through written work (reports, tests, group work and videos). Also identify elements of deaf culture that are different from or similar to their own and identify elements of deaf family life that are different from or similar to their own family lives.
- Explain and illustrate the substrates of a natural language as opposed to artificial languages or codes.
- Demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of fundamental ASL language functions, grammatical structures and general principles of human language functions that apply not only to

ASL but also to various natural languages. (Grammatical Elements -noun, verb, adjective, adverb, pronoun, preposition, subject, object, topic, comment)

- Demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of the rules governing the use of finger-spelling and ASL's numbers by correct responses and translations in conversations and exams and correct application in conversations and expressive assignments.
- Translate ideas from ASL to English and English to ASL and demonstrate their skill through quizzes, exams, class presentations, and interactions.
- Recognize and understand correct use of ASL through daily practice of core vocabulary by correct responses, translations and application in classroom conversation, receptive exams and expressive assignments.
- Gain a general knowledge of grammatical constructs, rules, and functions of American Sign Language and demonstrate this knowledge through usage, responses, translations and application in classroom conversation, receptive exams and expressive assignments.

### How Outcomes will be met

**Quizzes:** One Third of your grade will be earned through quizzes that will occur regularly throughout the quarter. Every quiz is an opportunity for you to accumulate more points toward your total grade. Your quizzes are:

Signing Naturally Units 1-4	4	@	50 points	200 points
Culture & Grammar	2	@	50 points	100 points
Fingerspelling	10	@	10 points	100 points

*Signing Naturally* is the main text of this class. A combination workbook and video, it gives you out-of-class exercise in reception, translation, and understanding not only of American Sign Language, but of the culture that uses it: American Deaf Culture. It is your responsibility to work and re-work the lessons until the information becomes **completely understandable to you**. You **MUST** stay abreast of scheduled workbook assignments and bring to class any questions that arise. Not all exercises in the chapter will be done in class, nevertheless, you will be responsible for all of the material in the assigned chapter. Reading and practicing is your responsibility. Your ability to follow through on this responsibility will be measured by means of regular **Signing Naturally Quizzes**. *These quizzes will include vocabulary and grammar from the assigned chapters of your workbook.* There will be a total of four **Signing Naturally** quizzes worth 50 points each. *We will cover Units 1-4.*

**Cultural/Grammar Quizzes:** Throughout the quarter, you will be quizzed on information from class lecture information and your assigned text readings directed at the exploration of issues in the culture of Deaf Americans and the Grammar of their language. There will be four multiple choice quizzes each worth 50 points for a total of **200** points. You are responsible for bringing a Scantron form and a #2 pencil to class on quiz days.

**Fingerspelling:** Fingerspelling quizzes require your attendance. A total of 11 quizzes are scheduled throughout the quarter. Each quiz is worth 10 points. **Your lowest score will be dropped.** This leaves a possible total of **100** points. Missed quizzes cannot be made up. On your Syllabus assignment write this sentence: "I understand that fingerspelling quizzes are pop quizzes and if I am absent I may miss one and it cannot be made up, but I do get to throw out my worst score!"

**Home Work:** Semi-Weekly homework projects will be assigned to you as a take-home learning/practice experience. These are assignments that pertain to issues discussed in class that are worth 10 points each. Homework assignments are designed as a learning tool for students rather than a testing tool of ability. Points are assigned by timeliness and effort put into the assignment rather than being graded for right or wrong. Check the class website for assignments. All homework is due on the Monday after it is assigned. **Late work will not be accepted for full points.**

### Expressive Skills Exercises & Self-evaluation:



Expressive skills are your ability to produce understandable sign language. To demonstrate your improving ability you will work in small groups. You will prepare your exercises outside of class and practice with a partner. Each assignment will be clearly defined as it is assigned (see Canvas). Points are earned for following instructions, preparation and participation. Exams will be explained as they are assigned. Expressive Exams will be worth a total of 100 participation points each. Following your expressive projects, you will integrate the feedback of your peers through a self-evaluation of your learning experience. (See: "Expressive Project Self-Evaluation" [Canvas](#)).

### Papers:

You will be writing several papers this quarter. As we know, ASL is not a written language; therefore you will be writing your papers in English. You are expected to be familiar with **college level writing** and will be held to that standard. These expectations are explained to you on the class website. (See "Writing College Papers" [Canvas](#)).

### Cultural Contact Paper: *A Cultural Endeavor!*

Practical application of your sign language skills is required this quarter. You are required to have a minimum of **3 contacts** totaling **6 hours of Deaf/ASL contact** this quarter to provide you first-hand experience with American Deaf culture, and hopefully to introduce you to new friends. These contacts are designed to build your confidence in your ability. You will keep a journal of these experiences, and write a brief reflection paper analyzing your contact experience. It is due at the end of the quarter and is worth **100** points. You will find the requirements and guidelines for this assignment on [Canvas](#).

**Expressive Project Self-Evaluation Paper** Following your expressive projects, you will integrate the feedback of your peers through a self-evaluation of your learning experience. (See: "Expressive Project Self-Evaluation" [Canvas](#)).

## Grading

Points for this class will be earned in the following areas:

Attendance/Participation	200
Unit Quizzes	200
Self Evaluations	200
Culture/Grammar	100
Fingerspelling	100
Culture Contact	100
Workbook Exercises/Homework	100

Total: 1000

The link to the College Grading Policy is located on page 10 of the Course Catalog and also on the web at: [http://bellevuecollege.edu/policies/3/3000\\_grading.asp](http://bellevuecollege.edu/policies/3/3000_grading.asp).

Grading: Your grade is a numerical reflection of the effort and dedication that you invest toward your learning of this subject and your ability to apply what you have learned. You are the only person responsible for your grade. The sum of all of your work points comprises this numerical value that is your grade. As per BCC policy, you will receive a letter grade after the completion of the quarter. This letter grade is assigned as an equivalent to your total earned numerical points. You must have no less than 60% of all possible points to receive a passing grade in this class.

There are a total of 1000 points possible for this quarter. Your grade will be a fraction of that number. You must achieve a minimum of a C grade to transfer to the next level of ASL.

## Books and Materials Required

Required Texts: You must bring these texts to class daily!

Required Texts: \*To be brought to class daily



- \* [Signing Naturally Units 1-6](#). Smith, Lentz, Mikos (2008) Dawn Sign Press
- \* [1001 Signs for ASL Students, Volume 1](#) (ASL 121 Course Packet & DVD)

**Web Resources:** Many of your class guidelines, assignments, homework, and handouts are accessible to you only through the internet. You will need to check frequently to find the resources you need. You can find these important materials in **Canvas**:

If you haven't used "Canvas" yet, log on to create an account as soon as possible. It may take a few days for your classes to show up on that site. Be patient. Once your Canvas account is up and running, **check it frequently** for class handouts, study guides, homework, and more.

## Classroom Learning Atmosphere

### Instructor's Expectation

**Classroom Protocol** (*what I expect of your behavior*):  
Please Read the Arts & Humanities Student Expectations and Policies:  
<http://www.bcc.ctc.edu/artshum/policy.html>

**Participation Points:** A total of 200 points (20% of your grade) is will be earned by being in class, following directions, participating in class activities, doing your homework (and turning it in on time), and satisfactorily completing Expressive Exams and self-assessment assignments such as self-graded practice quizzes. *These points can also be taken away by speaking in class without permission* (see "Voicelessness") or for disrespectful or disruptive behavior (such as texting or falling asleep).

**Voiceless-ness!** During the class, the use of voices is prohibited. Your voice is not invited to the class. The Instructor will voice only necessary discussions and students may be invited to do likewise; 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. Upon the teacher's discretion, a penalty of 5 points per infraction may be implemented for students who speak in class without the teacher's permission. Whispering is not allowed. I will have specific times set up for questions. If you have questions that come up, I encourage you to write them down so that you have them when I allow speaking.



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. And it irritates your instructor!

**When you have questions... ASK DIMITRI! Not the person sitting next to you!**

**Respect of Others:** I expect courtesy, attentiveness, maturity, and a willingness to learn. In demonstrating these traits you will earn my respect as a responsible adult, and be treated accordingly. I will not tolerate your interference in another student's learning experience. That includes, **distracting noise or behavior, Cell-phone use, texting, whispering, insults, cruelty, harassment (of any kind), or ridicule**. I am sure that you as a responsible adult will not tolerate these things either. I whole-heartedly believe that learning requires trust and courage. 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 but 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, yourself, 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

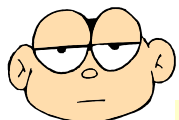
you make in understanding, or producing sentences show me which properties of the language you have conquered successfully and which ones are still under development. Do not assume that other students in the class have an advantage over you. Most of them are probably right in the same boat rowing (or 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!"

***"It is very wrong to say that you understand a thing when you do not."***  
*~Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, 1836*

**"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 can be interpreted as rudeness in many social situations.



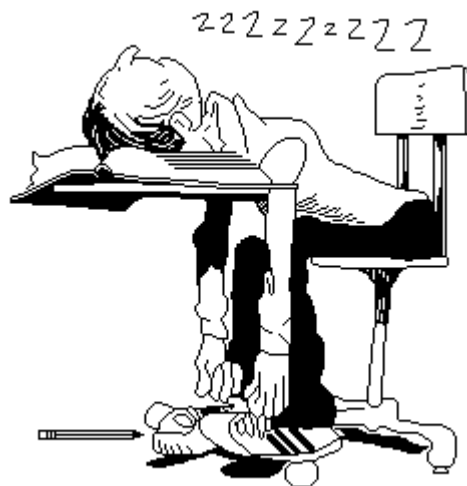
**Try to understand every thing that you are reading or learning, or that any body says to you, and then you will improve fast; and then you will become wise, and I hope also, good and happy. I am your friend,**

Thomas H. Gallaudet, 1836

**How to fail this class:**

Failing this class is no simple task, but it is possible. To fail this class, all you need to do is miss class often. Material comes quickly and is comprehensive. You miss one day and there's no telling how far behind you will fall, and there is a "snowball" effect. Information missed in one week can come back to haunt you weeks later. Here are some things other students have done to help fail this class:

- ✚ Miss class and you'll miss important information and practice time.
- ✚ **Cheat**
- ✚ Do not practice outside of class.
- ✚ Don't participate in class.
- ✚ Do not read your texts on time.
- ✚ Turn in work late.



✚ Be disrespectful of ASL, Deaf Culture or your fellow students.

### How to get an A:

Getting an A in this class is no simple task, but it is possible. In years of watching students with all kinds of learning styles, personality types, and study habits, I have seen many students succeed in ASL classes. I have noticed that “A” students have certain behaviors in common. Here’s what they’d tell you to do if you want to get an A:



- ✚ Maintain excellent attendance; miss no tests, quizzes or homework.
- ✚ Read your syllabus—know what’s expected of you.
- ✚ Read your class schedule, know what’s expected and when.
- ✚ Read your texts and bring questions to class.
- ✚ Practice ASL outside of class: study groups; interact with ASL students, Deaf Friends.
- ✚ *Fall in love with ASL.*

**Resources/Class Website:** It is the Student’s responsibility to frequently check **Canvas** for resources and class materials. Study guides and other documents that will help you succeed in this class are also posted on **Canvas**. Start with “Definitions of Classroom Terms”

**Attendance:** Your attendance is required if you are to succeed in any language class. **ASL 121** is no exception. Because the language is visual

and manual, your eyes, Your participation in class American Sign Language interaction between can never provide this miss a class, it is your what was missed. If you copy of that handout from copy. **Make-ups are not** attendance will be factored into your final grade and will earn you part of your **Participation points**. Showing up late and leaving early are disruptive to the class. **You will be counted present only if you are present for the entire class period.**



body and mind must be present or you cannot learn. activities is a required part of your attendance. is all about communication and communication is the individuals sharing information. A book or videotape communication environment. If for any reason you responsibility to contact a classmate and find out missed a handout it is your responsibility to make a a fellow student or to contact the instructor for a **possible** for missed tests or quizzes. Your recorded and your percentage of attendance will be

## ASL CLASS REALITY CHECKLIST

### **READING:** *Be ready to commit to your class reading!*

Because our classroom will be striving for a voiceless environment, your access to information about Deaf culture, ASL Grammar, and tools for learning ASL as a second language will depend upon your reading proficiency and commitment to your study schedule. Reading is a vital part of your success; **this is not a light reading class.**



### **SCHEDULE** *Stay on top of the class schedule!*

Don’t let major assignments, quizzes, and homework assignments sneak up on you. The schedule may change through the quarter, if you miss class, you may miss a schedule change.

## Signing, Culture & Respect

**ASL:** If you want to *learn it*, you have to *earn it*. Use it every day, and get to know the people who call it their own.

**DEAF-WORLD!** You are earning college credit for learning the language of the DEAF-WORLD... you cannot expect to do that without contact with Deaf Folks. Your culture contact requirements are designed to encourage you to venture out into the DEAF-WORLD, but only YOU can make it happen for yourself. You will explore and step out into the world of ASL users...you cannot master ASL by limiting your exposure to the language to the time you spend sitting in the classroom. Your success in this class depends not only upon your experience with ASL, but also upon your experience with people who use it fluently.



**Respect:** I expect you to respect this language and the people who use it. Learning in the DEAF-WAY means maintaining visual awareness, keeping a silent environment (*it's incredibly rude to speak in the presence of Deaf people without signing*) and learning how to learn in that environment. If you plan to be successful in this class, you will work actively on your ability to communicate manually/visually and to increase your knowledge of DEAF social etiquette to the point where you feel safe enough to approach and converse with Deaf people.

**Cheating:** I expect you to respect the integrity of your education. As per college guidelines, any student suspected of cheating will receive no points for that test or assignment. Multiple occurrences will result in expulsion. The most common form of cheating is glancing at your neighbor's paper during a quiz. It is not only your responsibility to avoid cheating the appearance of cheating as well. Remember, this is an ASL class. ASL teacher's look into your eyes as part of the language; we will

notice if those eyes are focused on another's work. You can best protect yourself by keeping space between yourself and your neighbors during quizzes.

### Affirmation of Inclusion

Bellevue College is committed to maintaining an environment in which every member of the campus community feels welcome to participate in the life of the college, free from harassment and discrimination.

We value our different backgrounds at Bellevue College, and students, faculty, staff members, and administrators are to treat one another with dignity and respect.

<http://bellevuecollege.edu/about/goals/inclusion.asp>

### Division Statements

**Please go to the Arts & Humanities policy link:**

<http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/artshum/policy.html>

Students are responsible for being aware of the policies on that page.



Information about Bellevue College's copyright guidelines can be found at:  
<http://bellevuecollege.edu/lmc/links/copyright.html>

A good resource for Plagiarism is the Writing Lab: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/writinglab/Plagiarism.html>

### **Student Code**

“Cheating, stealing and plagiarizing (using the ideas or words of another as one’s own without crediting the source) and inappropriate/disruptive classroom behavior are violations of the Student Code of Conduct at Bellevue College. Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to: talking out of turn, arriving late or leaving early without a valid reason, allowing cell phones/pagers to ring, and inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates. The instructor can refer any violation of the Student Code of Conduct to the Vice President of Student Services for possible probation or suspension from Bellevue College. Specific student rights, responsibilities and appeal procedures are listed in the Student Code of Conduct, available in the office of the Vice President of Student Services.” The Student Code, Policy 2050, in its entirety is located at:

[http://bellevuecollege.edu/policies/2/2050\\_Student\\_Code.asp](http://bellevuecollege.edu/policies/2/2050_Student_Code.asp)

[If you plan to use a plagiarism checking service, you should indicate so in your syllabus. Please make sure your penalty for plagiarism does not contradict official college policy.]

### **Important Links**

### **Bellevue College E-mail and access to Canvas**

All students registered for classes at Bellevue College are entitled to a network and e-mail account. Your student network account can be used to access your student e-mail, log in to computers in labs and classrooms, connect to the BC wireless network and log in to *Canvas*. To create your account, go to: <https://www.bellevuecollege.edu/netid/>

BC offers a wide variety of computer and learning labs to enhance learning and student success. Find current campus locations for all student labs by visiting the [Computing Services website](#).

### **Disability Resource Center (DRC)**

The Disability Resource Center serves students with a wide array of learning challenges and disabilities. If you are a student who has a disability or learning challenge for which you have documentation or have seen someone for treatment and if you feel you may need accommodations in order to be successful in college, please contact us as soon as possible. If you are a student with a documented autism spectrum disorder, there is a program of support available to you.

If you are a person who requires assistance in case of an emergency situation, such as a fire, earthquake, etc, please meet with your individual instructors to develop a safety plan within the first week of the quarter.

The DRC office is temporarily located in the Library Media Center, D126, or you can call our reception

desk at 425.564.2498. Deaf students can reach us by video phone at 425-440-2025 or by TTY at 425-564-4110. . . Please visit our website for application information into our program and other helpful links at [www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc](http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/drc)

## Public Safety

The Bellevue College (BC) Public Safety Department's well trained and courteous non-commissioned staff provides personal safety, security, crime prevention, preliminary investigations, and other services to the campus community, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Their phone number is 425.564.2400. The Public Safety website is your one-stop resource for campus emergency preparedness information, campus closure announcements and critical information in the event of an emergency. Public Safety is located in K100 and on the web at: <http://bellevuecollege.edu/publicsafety/>

## Final Exam Schedule

**This class does not have a final exam.**

## Academic Calendar

The Bellevue College Academic Calendar is separated into two calendars. They provide information about holidays, closures and important enrollment dates such as the finals schedule.

- Enrollment Calendar - <http://bellevuecollege.edu/enrollment/calendar/deadlines/>. On this calendar you will find admissions and registration dates and important dates for withdrawing and receiving tuition refunds.
- College Calendar - <http://bellevuecollege.edu/enrollment/calendar/holidays/0910.asp>. This calendar gives you the year at a glance and includes college holidays, scheduled closures, quarter end and start dates, and final exam dates.
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