



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

Fall 2022

EDSE 115 005: American Sign Language (ASL) I

CRN: 73803, 4 – Credits

<b>Instructor:</b> Shanmugam Pillai	<b>Meeting Dates:</b> 8/22/22 – 12/14/22
<b>Phone:</b> (571) 350-8117	<b>Meeting Day(s):</b> Wednesdays
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<b>Office Hours:</b> By Appointment	<b>Meeting Location:</b> Hybrid – Fairfax; Petrsn 2413 & Online
<b>Office Location:</b> IN 330	<b>Other Phone:</b> 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 [speced@gmu.edu](mailto:speced@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: [spced@gmu.edu](mailto:spced@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 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. (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> ...) which means enter one of these as an answer. If you see ... means it is does not stop at 3<sup>rd</sup>, can 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> 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 about one paper about the Deaf community. Students will need to find information 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 student's signing ability. Students will create a fake situation or scenario on 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 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.

## 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

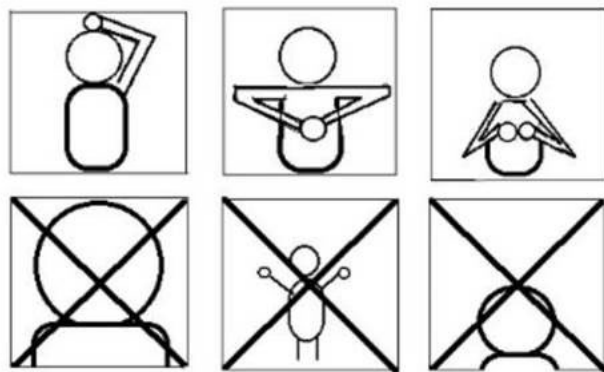
1. Two (2) late arrivals will be equivalent to one (1) absence which will be applied

- to the policy stated above.
- 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.

- Ensure the computer or tablet is on a firm surface (a desk or table). Do NOT have the computer on student's lap, a bed, or any other surface where the student will be moving.
- 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.



- If students use their phone, follow the format below:



- Make sure eyes are facing the camera, not looking to the side, above or below. Brief glances are acceptable.
- Make sure that the background is clean (one-colored wall) and free of “visual noise” (people, books, television, animals appearing, etc.).
- 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.
- Remove hats and excessive jewelry. Wedding rings and small earrings are ok.
- If students are sitting, do not swivel.
- All videos must be submitted on Blackboard as one.
- 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.

### Course/Graduation Requirements

Students are responsible for completing course work that demonstrates the level of competence satisfying the foreign language requirements.

**\*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	24-Aug	Syllabus	Module 1
Week 2	31-Aug	<b>Unit 1</b> Lessons 1.1-1.6	Module 2
Week 3	7-Sept	Lessons 1.7-1.12	Module 3
Week 4	14-Sept	<b>Unit 2</b> Lessons 2.1-2.4	Module 4
Week 5	21-Sept	Lessons 2.5-2.8	Module 5
Week 6	28-Sept	Lessons 2.9-2.12	Module 6
Week 7	5-Oct	<b>Unit 3</b> Lessons 3.1-3.4	Module 7
Week 8	12-Oct	Lesson 3.5-3.9	Module 8
Week 9	19-Oct	Lessons 3.10-3.15	Module 9
Week 10	26-Oct	<b>Unit 4</b> Lessons 4.1-4.4	Module 10



Week 11	2-Nov	Lessons 4.5-4.8	Module 11
Week 12	9-Nov	Lessons 4.9-4.11	Module 12
Week 13	16-Nov	Lessons 4.12-4.14/Review	Module 13
Week 14	23-Nov	No Class	
Week 15	30-Nov	Final Exam	One-on-One
Week 16	7-Dec	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](mailto: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/>).

### **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](mailto: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
<b>Vocabulary:</b> Usage of vocabulary	Accurate, relevant use of wide variety of vocabulary used from all units studied (2)	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
<b>Formation:</b> 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
<b>Space Referents:</b> 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
<b>Grammar:</b> 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
<b>Fluency/Accuracy</b> 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
<b>Total Points Possible</b> = 10	Points earned in parenthesis	Points earned in parenthesis	No points earned