

**HUM 295 American Sign Language**  
**Ohio Valley University**  
(1 semester hr. credit)

Spring 209  
F 11:45 – 12:35  
Room 64

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Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or wish to speak about the course or anything. I freely confess my limitations and will endeavor to include those who are more conversant in ASL throughout the course. If you are experiencing difficulties you should contact me as soon as possible so we can work on these together. You are free to come to my office (373 Timberline Parkway, off Rosemar Road) or arrangements can be made to meet on-campus or elsewhere. Do not allow problems to persist until they become crisis.

**Course Description**

By virtue of the course's design, and the limits imposed by only one hour of credit being offered, this course is to be viewed as an introduction to American Sign Language (ASL). The course will seek to provide a basis for beginning the process of understanding ASL and the Deaf culture which developed it.

ASL is not "signed English" but a unique language (with roots in French rather than English). Due to the time constraints associated with an introductory format, grammatical considerations will not be emphasized as they would be in more advanced courses.

As with any language, the student's "vocabulary" will need to increase even as what has already been covered will be reinforced through constant repetition and review. Students will find it necessary to work outside of the weekly classroom meetings. Assignments should be completed, and where appropriate reviewed, before coming to class.

Understanding the Deaf culture and context is essential in learning ASL. Attitudes developed by those in the hearing culture, and the resultant actions, can hamper one's ability to comprehend and understand those whose native language is ALS. No language can be clearly conveyed or understood devoid of its cultural context.

**Course Overview**

Students enrolled in this course typically enter it with dueling senses of excitement and anxiety. It is exciting to consider the world that may be opened by developing the ability to begin communicating with the Deaf. There is a certain degree of anxiety as you not only explore a new language but one that requires physical manipulations (hands, facial expressions, miming) that are unfamiliar and may initially seem very awkward.

It is hoped that in addition to whatever learning takes place in the class context the student will come to appreciate the Deaf culture and the possibilities for personal enrichment that may result from their interaction with the Deaf.

This course is not designed with the expectation that those who complete it will be proficient in ASL. While some may eventually become fluent, serving as interpreters, this course is not designed to produce interpreters. Instead, this course is designed with the conviction that every person can benefit from an introduction to ASL. The lives of the hearing students may be enriched as a result of the doors opened to relationships with, and understanding of, the Deaf. Opportunities for using ASL could include educational, work, church and relational settings.



To develop both signing and comprehension skills a great deal of class time will be devoted to conversations in ASL and their interpretation.

### Course Objectives

1. Students will gain a basic knowledge of the manual alphabet and numerals
  - a. This will be demonstrated through the ability to finger spell and count using the manual alphabet
  - b. This will be demonstrated through the ability to read as others fingerspell and count
2. Students will be able to explain the development of ASL and how it has been influenced by, and influenced, the Deaf culture in North America
3. Students will develop a basic sign vocabulary so they may exchange personal information, ask and answer simple questions about time and space, and explain relationships within families, work, and church systems
4. Students will be able to view a simple ASL conversation and interpret the main concepts being conveyed

### Course Requirements

#### Textbook

*The Joy of Signing: The Illustrated Guide for Mastering Sign Language and the Manual Alphabet* by Lottie L. Riehoff, Gospel Publishing House (1987)

#### Website

www.lifeprint.com is the website of ASL University, an online curriculum resource developed and maintained by Dr. Bill Vicars who teaches ASL at California State University—Sacramento (Dr. Vicars is d/Deaf, you'll soon learn what that means).

#### Assignments

1. You will receive worksheets throughout the semester which will focus on vocabulary acquisition and comprehension. Conversations and exercises in class will be used to facilitate this development and ascertain development.
2. You are to complete two reaction papers<sup>1</sup> of at least 500 words; reactions will be to assigned readings<sup>2</sup>
  - First paper, due February 27; assigned readings online
  - Second paper, due April 10; assigned readings online
3. Students are to participate in at least two projects throughout the semester (such as a "Silent Supper"<sup>3</sup>)—list of project options to be found in syllabi
4. Students are to go to the ASL University website and complete quizzes 1 – 25 (go to the "lessons pages", <http://www.lifeprint.com/asl101/lessons/lessons.htm>, review the lesson, and then click on "quiz" at the bottom of the page; Email your answers and score—you

#### Tests

1. There will be at least two tests during the semester.
2. There will be a final test during finals week.

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<sup>1</sup> Written assignments must be submitted in **printed** form. Handwritten work will not be accepted; All work must conform to the college's policy concerning plagiarism

<sup>2</sup> First paper: <http://www.lifeprint.com/asl101/pages-layout/culture1.htm> (Pages 1-9);

Second paper: <http://www.lifeprint.com/asl101/pages-layout/culture1.htm> (pages 1-7)

*our procrastination does not translate into my personal crisis* (translation: accept responsibility for your own actions)

<sup>3</sup> A meal at a local restaurant or in a home where all communication, including ordering your meal, is to be done silently using sign language (with another student responsible for interpreting for you)



*For Learning. For Faith. For Life.*

Course Grading

1. Class attendance and participation	150
2. Performance on quizzes	100
3. Reaction Papers (2 @ 25/each)	50
4. Projects (2 @ 25/each)	50
5. Exams (2 @ 75/each)	150

A list of possible projects, a class calendar (including reading assignments for Riekoff and Vicar), an explanation of the policy concerning work that is late, attendance, and work for extra credit can be found in the syllabus supplement.

**January 16 (Friday, 11:45 – 12:35)**

1. Introduction to ASL
2. Introduction to signed alphabet
3. Introduction to signed numbering
4. Introduction to Question words

**January 23 ((Friday, 11:45 – 12:35)**

1. Review signed alphabet and numbering
2. Learn sign language greetings
3. Introduction to grammatical structure of sign sentences
4. Pronouns, Question Words & Endings, Opposites (Joy, pp. 25 – 35, 105 – 117)<sup>4</sup>
5. Review Game: Hangman in Sign

**January 30**

1. Review signed alphabet, numbering, greetings and introduction
2. Review Pronouns, Question Words and Endings (Joy, pp. 25 – 35)
3. Family Relationships and Time (Joy, pp. 17 – 24; 36 – 46)
4. Review Exercise: Birthdays

**February 6**

1. Review skills and vocabulary covered previously in course
2. Students to introduce themselves (fingerspell name and assign “sign” name)
3. Review grammatical structure of sign sentences
4. Physical Movements and Travel & Location and Direction (Joy, pp. 94 – 104; 118 – 125)
5. Review Exercise: How to get to my house

**Assignments for next week:**

1. Prepare a joke to tell next week in class
2. Prepare for next week’s test

**February 13**

1. **TEST #1**
2. Review skills and vocabulary covered previously in course
3. Review grammatical structure of sign sentences
4. Mental Action, Emotions & Feelings (Joy, pp. 47 – 78)
5. Review Exercise: Tell a joke in ASL

**February 20**

1. Turn in first reaction paper (500 words)
2. Review skills and vocabulary covered previously in course
3. Review grammatical structure of sign sentences
4. Review previously introduced words lists from Joy
5. People, Occupation & Money (Joy, pp. 79 – 93)

**Assignments for next week:**

1. Choose and prepare a song to “sign” to the class next week

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<sup>4</sup> Word introduced in class will be taken from the corresponding chapters in Joy of Signing; students should review these before and after class

### **February 27**

1. **REVIEW PAPER #1 DUE**
2. Review skills, vocabulary and grammatical structure covered earlier in course
3. Review Exercise: Sing, Sing a Song

#### Assignments for next week:

1. Choose a Bible verse to sign to the class

### **March 6**

1. Review skills, vocabulary and grammatical structure covered earlier in course
2. Quantity, Size and Degree (Joy, pp. 170-179)
3. Review Exercise: My Favorite Bible Verse

### **March 13**

Spring Break

### **March 20**

1. Review skills, vocabulary and grammatical structure covered earlier in course
2. Verbs II and Religion (Joy, pp. 139 – 152; 301 – 317)
3. Review Exercise: Introduction to my family

#### Assignments for next week:

1. Begin thinking about where you would like to go for the Silent Supper

### **March 27**

1. Review skills, vocabulary and grammatical structure covered earlier in course
2. Food & Related Words and Animals (Joy, pp. 257 – 273; 291 – 300)

#### Assignments for next week:

1. Have you started your reading for your second reaction paper, due April 10?
2. Prepare for test next week (vocabulary and grammatical structure)

### **April 3**

1. **TEST #2**
2. Review skills, vocabulary and grammatical structure covered earlier in course
3. Verbs I (Joy, pp. 126 – 138)
4. Review Game: Going to a Restaurant

#### Assignments for next week:

1. You need to complete your reaction paper by next Friday

### **April 10**

1. **REVIEW PAPER #2 DUE**
2. Education and Nature (Joy, pp. 194 – 205; 217 – 226)
3. Review Exercise: Ladies & Gentlemen of the Jury

### **April 17**

1. Quality, Kind & Condition and Sports & Recreation (Joy, pp. 153 – 169; 274 – 280)
2. Review Game: Speed spelling and speed math

**April 24**

1. Body, Medicine, & Health / Communication & Government (Joy, pp. 227 – 242; 180 – 193)
2. Review Exercise: Signing of randomly selected sentences

**May 1**

1. Review for Final
2. Review Exercise: Signing a prayer