Course: ASL and Deaf Culture Summer Academy

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Course Description:

The American Sign Language (ASL) and Deaf Culture Academy gives an introduction to ASL and an overview of topics integral to experiences of American Deaf community members. The academy will feature ASL instruction in an immersion environment where students will learn basic conversation and narrative skills. The course will also feature a weekly seminar in which we discuss experiences and perspectives of Deaf community members as demonstrated through online publications (vlogs), lectures, and a panel of Deaf community professionals in related fields.

Upon completion of the Academy, students will come away with the following ASL skills:

- Share personal information including hometown, language background(s), how one gets from location to location via transportation, and interests/hobbies.
- Discuss and describe locations within a building and give directions within a building using perspective shift and directional vocabulary.
- Express wants/needs and ask/tell where to obtain those wants/needs.
- Ask and tell about marital status, whether they have children/siblings, and the chronological ranking of children/siblings.
- Use number skills including how to express collective group numbers, age, and time numbers.

Students will also gain awareness of cultural values and topics important to Deaf community members in order to better understand and connect with Deaf community members in future interactions.

Class Schedule:

Mondays-Thursdays 11AM-12PM; 1-2PM EST: Synchronous ASL Instruction via Zoom
Fridays: 1-2:30 EST Deaf culture topics discussions (synchronous, in English, with Dr. Fisher)

Last day of class: Panel lecture with community members on the last day of class (Friday, July 29, 1-2:30 PM)

Required texts/materials to be distributed (no purchase required):

- *Signing Naturally, Units 1-6* (online materials). PLEASE READ the following guidelines for using the online curriculum: Signing Naturally Units 1-6 Interactive Online Student Materials_How-To for Students.pdf This will be helpful for you to navigate how the materials and interface work.
- A GoReact account

Other materials:

- You may need a Facebook account to access some of the videos. If this is a problem, please let me know.
- You should have scrap paper and a pen/pencil available to you for various group activities.

Your schedule for ASL Instruction can be found HERE and in Modules.

Expectations for instruction and learning:

The ASL Summer Academy is comprised of both American Sign Language and ASL/Deaf culture and community instruction and learning. Both synchronous and asynchronous learning will be used in this course. **A reminder that no spoken English is used during the ASL instructional times.**

Daily asynchronous work:

Canvas: Everything you do for this course will run through Canvas in one way or another. Please familiarize yourself with the layout of the course website. Also, *please make sure you turn all Canvas notifications ON* (including threaded discussions, announcements, and email) as all communication will happen through this site.

Workbook video materials: You will complete the Signing Naturally workbook exercises for practice as assigned to you during your synchronous sessions as reinforcement of what you've learned. You can also look at Modules to see when assignments are due (they are organized by week and then listed according to which day they are due). However, the pace of class instruction should be used as a final say of what is due when, particularly if we move slower or faster than expected. I will let you know if timelines change (and will update Canvas accordingly). That said, you are only expected to complete exercises based on what you've *already* have learned. If there is something due in the course Assignments/Modules that you haven't learned yet, let me know and I'll push back the due date.

Pair Practices: Starting in Week 2, you will be asked to practice and record a conversation with a classmate in GoReact two times per week. This is an opportunity for you to practice signing. Please don't worry about making mistakes, but do try your best to sign in the ways you learned and practiced in class. **The No-English rule still applies here.** I will give you some feedback via GoReact, though most of this practice will be for you to have more opportunities to sign without feeling like I'm watching over you. I will assign you partners some days and you will choose a partner on other days.

Interactive threaded discussions: I will keep a two running threads open to you to post thoughts, ideas, and questions as the course progresses. The first is based on ASL grammar or other language topics; the second is based on general interest/ASL/Deaf Culture topics and questions. The second will likely be centered on things you want to point out or ask about any videos, readings, or other ASL/Deaf Culture-related ideas you've come across.

Preparation for weekly class discussion and panel: You and a partner of your choice will work together to think about and discuss (in English) what resonated with you about the themes for the week. You should choose at least 3 topics you want to touch on and come up with questions and comments to bring to class on Discussion Day.

What you bring is really quite open: you might find something confusing or unclear and you want to ask and follow up during class; you might point out something that you thought was important or reminded you of something else familiar to you (in your culture, community, language group, etc.); you might even search for and find other related materials you want to show and discuss. The idea is that you and your partner think about the theme for the week and talk about what you watched and read.

I will also give you guiding questions for each week. See Canvas Modules for those questions.

Research Threaded Discussions:

On Fridays (July 14 and 21), you will post findings from research on a selected topic related to Deaf communities and culture(s). Only one person per topic please.

Final Reflection:

On the final Friday (July 29), you will submit a self-reflection post on your ASL progress and thoughts on what you learned with respect to Deaf culture and communities. Details can be found in the assignment [HERE](#).