



Basic Course Information

Semester:	Fall 2025	Instructor Name:	Liisa Mendoza
Course Title & #:	American Sign Language Linguistics AMSL 220	Email:	liisa.mendoza@imperial.edu
CRN #:	11373	Webpage (optional):	N/A
Classroom:	Via ZOOM	Office #:	312
Class Dates:	8/11/25 – 12/6/25	Office Hours:	Via Zoom: MW 9:00 – 10:00 am On ground : TR 9:00 – 10:00 am
Class Days:	MW	Office Phone #:	(760) 355-6120
Class Times:	4:20 – 5:45 pm	Emergency Contact:	Email
Units:	3	Class Format:	Real time, synchronous, online

Course Description

This course introduces the basic components of linguistics underpinning any language. It focuses on discovering how ASL satisfies these components, and linguistic comparisons between ASL and English. Topics covered include phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and lexis. This course will focus on comparative and applied linguistics, and also examine structural and theoretical linguistics. Students will learn ASL idioms, advanced mouth morphemes and classifiers, as well as advanced loan signs. This course ultimately aims to apply linguistic knowledge, resulting in increased fluency in ASL, both expressively and receptively. This course will be conducted in ASL. (CSU, UC)

Course Prerequisite(s) and/or Corequisite(s)

Recommended preparation: AMSL 200 (American Sign Language 3)

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon course completion, the successful student will have acquired new skills, knowledge, and or attitudes as demonstrated by being able to:

1. Students will be able to define the basic components of language: phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and lexis. (ILO 1, ILO2)
2. Students will be able to compare and contrast ASL and English in a given linguistic category. (ILO 1, ILO 2, ILO 5)
3. Students will demonstrate an ASL example of a given linguistic category. (ILO 1, ILO 2, ILO 5)



Course Objectives

Upon satisfactory completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Define and describe phonology.
2. Define and describe morphology.
3. Define and describe semantics.
4. Define and describe syntax.
5. Define and describe lexis.
6. Compare and contrast the phonology of ASL and English.
7. Compare and contrast the morphology of ASL and English.
8. Compare and contrast the semantics of ASL and English.
9. Compare and contrast the syntax of ASL and English.
10. Compare and contrast the lexis of ASL and English.
11. Provide signed examples of ASL phonology.
12. Provide signed examples of ASL morphology.
13. Provide signed examples of ASL semantics.
14. Provide signed examples of ASL syntax.
15. Provide signed examples of ASL lexis.
16. Demonstrate ability to sign advanced loan signs.
17. Define given ASL idioms.
18. Select and sign appropriate ASL idioms for given situations or meanings.
19. Discuss linguistic structures relating to classifiers.
20. Demonstrate the appropriate mouth morpheme for a given description.
21. Recognize an ASL acronym or abbreviation, and identify its English meaning.



Textbooks & Other Resources or Links

Required text: **ASL-English Grammar: A Comparative Linguistics Handbook.** Struxness, Kevin & G. Marble. ISBN 978-0-9891364-0-2-52995.

Course Requirements and Instructional Methods

Teaching Strategy:

The instructor will be teaching synchronously via Zoom. This class was listed in the catalog as real time, with time blocks given. **There are many advantages to attending the live class. It is the easiest way to earn lab points, you will have access to the embedded tutor during that time, and some exercises you CANNOT do individually.** Language is about communication and interaction, and you cannot do that signing to yourself into a camera.

The instructor will generally be teaching with a voice off approach. This will increase your receptive and expressive comprehension, as you will be asked to respond in ASL. You will be participating in a variety of class exercises designed to increase both your receptive and expressive skills. Please arrive to class on time, ready to start signing.

The instructor knows that you will not understand 100% of her signing. The necessary information is delivered to you via in class notes accompanying the lecture and information loaded onto Canvas.

We will be introducing new vocabulary related to linguistics weekly, and then applying it through a variety of exercises. **You MUST practice outside of class.** We will also be learning new grammatical structures weekly as we go through the chapters of the book. You will be asked to prepare some ASL assignments outside of class; you will be given clear instructions to follow to produce successful assignments.

You may have to sign individually to your instructor, or in small groups, or in front of the class. We will have presentations this semester, as well as signing labs, small group work, and larger group work. You will not. This will require a time commitment, so please read the statement below from the Department of Education.

You will quiz weekly in this class, and will take 3 exams over the course of the semester. A few quizzes will be given in the Zoom classroom. Most quizzes will be given through the Canvas system, but not using the Canvas quiz feature. Most quizzes will be written. **You may record your answers if you are more comfortable signing than writing.** You may be given the question file and a link to a recording. You will then click on the recording and start the quiz. The exams will be administered the same way. **There are no time limits on exams or quizzes,** as you may need to watch the recordings a few times if your wifi glitches or goes down.



Out of Class Assignments: The Department of Education policy states that one (1) credit hour is the amount of student work that reasonably approximates not less than one hour of class time and two (2) hours of out-of-class time per week over the span of a semester. WASC has adopted a similar requirement.

Course Grading Based on Course Objectives

Grading will be based on a standard distribution (see below). **You are allowed to submit one late homework for full credit.** If you are ill, you will make up any in class presentations the day you return to class. If written homework is due the day you are absent, you can submit it via Canvas to the instructor. No other late homework will be accepted.

Grading will be based on a standard distribution (i.e., 90-100% = A, 80-89.9% = B). There will be 1,000 points possible during the course.

Participation	150 (includes participation, following class rules, engagement in discussions)
Homework	300 (includes book questions, homework assignments, in class discussions and in class presentations, and preparation for discussions, etc.)
Quizzes	100
Exams	300 (Exam #1 – 100; Exam #2 – 100; Exam #3 (cumulative final) = 100)
Portfolio	100 (written and recordings)
Final	50

TOTAL 1,000

Very little extra credit will be given in class during the semester. Extra credit opportunities will consist of attending a Deaf event. You will be REQUIRED to attend a Deaf event to analyze some sociolinguistic elements, and include it in your portfolio. There will be at least 7 Deaf events during this semester, some offered on ground and some via Zoom. You are REQUIRED to attend 1 Deaf event, and type a report about it. You may attend a second event for extra credit.

Academic Honesty (Artificial Intelligence -AI)

IVC values critical thinking and communication skills and considers academic integrity essential to learning. Using AI tools as a replacement for your own thinking, writing, or quantitative reasoning goes against both our mission and academic honesty policy and will be considered academic dishonesty, or plagiarism unless you have been instructed to do so by your instructor. In case of any uncertainty regarding the ethical use of AI tools, students are encouraged to reach out to their instructors for clarification.



Accessibility Statement

Imperial Valley College is committed to providing an accessible learning experience for all students, regardless of course modality. Every effort has been made to ensure that this course complies with all state and federal accessibility regulations, including Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations. However, if you encounter any content that is not accessible, please contact your instructor or the area dean for assistance. If you have specific accommodations through DSPS, contact them for additional assistance.

We are here to support you and ensure that you have equal access to all course materials.

Course Policies

My classroom rules remain the same, regardless of online or on ground:

1 – Pay attention to the best of your ability – Turn on your cameras when in the Zoom room. I need to see you to know if you are even there. If you are having camera tech difficulties, let me know via the Chat or email. If you have to turn off your camera, let me know why. No cell phones, unless I say to use them or you are using them to screen shot the notes. (And then you still need to write the notes down, or you'll never remember the info.)

2 – If you have a question, ask the instructor, not your classmates. Of course you will have an opportunity to discuss things with your classmates in the Zoom classroom, and you may clarify things with each other. But if you have a significant question, you should probably ask the person who is going to give you the grade, not your classmate. The only stupid question is the one you don't ask – and it will probably show up on the test!

3 – NO CHEATING!!!!!!! There is not a strong enough English word to tell you how I feel about cheating. It is far better to leave an answer blank or to tell me a joke or draw me a picture when you don't know the answer. This is even more important during this time of online learning. I do not want to have to have you record yourself taking exams, or to administer them live to monitor all of you. Please do not make me. Your honor is something that no one can take from you. Don't give it away.

Your instructor's perspective on attending class via Zoom:

Learning via Zoom can be challenging. Many of you will be attending from your home or your workplace. That means there may be many different, important things competing for your attention. I personally don't care if you bring your dog, cat, or baby/younger sibling into the Zoom room. They are a part of your life too.

I don't care if you're in your jammies in the Zoom room – as long as you don't sleep nude! I don't care if you have your makeup on or not. I don't care if you have your hair done or the worst bad hair day ever. I DO care that you make it in to class. (In clothes. Please wear clothes. Something that covers all of you, even if we don't see it!)



Students will be expected to follow IVC's online netiquette policy:

- What is netiquette? Netiquette is internet manners, online etiquette, and digital etiquette all rolled into one word. Basically, netiquette is a set of rules for behaving properly online.
- Students are to comply with the following rules of netiquette: (1) identify yourself, (2) include a subject line, (3) avoid sarcasm, (4) respect others' opinions and privacy, (5) acknowledge and return messages promptly, (6) copy with caution, (7) do not spam or junk mail, (8) be concise, (9) use appropriate language, (10) use appropriate emoticons (emotional icons) to help convey meaning, and (11) use appropriate intensifiers to help convey meaning [do not use ALL CAPS or multiple exclamation marks (!!!!)].

Other Course Information

Your instructor believes that we can still create a learning community – and a signing community - on Zoom. We will be interacting, and you will get to know your classmates and possibly make some new friends. ASL belongs to the Deaf community, and the Deaf community is a friendly group of people, who enjoy interacting.

You don't have to be a "people person" to take ASL. You do have to be willing to communicate with your classmates. There will be times that your grade will depend on your classmates and your interaction with them. Make sure that you are polite and supportive: EVERYONE is learning, and ANYONE can be having a bad day, and may not be signing as well as they can.

IVC Student Resources

IVC wants you to be successful in all aspects of your education. For help, resources, services, and an explanation of policies, visit <http://www.imperial.edu/studentresources> or click the heart icon in Canvas.

Financial Aid

Your Grades Matter! In order to continue to receive financial aid, you must meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) requirement. Making SAP means that you are maintaining a 2.0 GPA, you have successfully completed 67% of your coursework, and you will graduate on time. If you do not maintain SAP, you may lose your financial aid. If you have questions, please contact financial aid at finaid@imperial.edu.

Anticipated Class Schedule/Calendar

Note: AEG = ASL-English Grammar BQ = Book Questions

Please note: This is the ANTICIPATED course calendar, subject to change

DATE	IN CLASS	HOMEWORK
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8/11 (M) 1	Syllabus, welcome Basic orientation to course Definitions and basic ideas	Read syllabus, note questions Purchase text Review notes
8/13 (W) 1	What is language? What is culture? What is ASL? Symbols for ASL and English when glossing Semantic exercises orientation: AEG pp 87-110	Watch video as assigned Read AEG xi - xx Semantic exercises as assigned Read AEG pp 1-9 BQ AEG as assigned
8/18 (M) 2	Quiz #1 (Week 1) English in the Deaf Community Parts of speech, forms, sentence parts and sentences Introduction to phonology	Read as assigned Semantic exercises as assigned
8/20 (W) 2	Phonology in spoken languages Phonology in signed languages Phonology in ASL History of ASL phonological discovery	Video HW as assigned Review for quiz Read AEG pp 9 – 17 BQ AEG as assigned
8/25 (M) 3	Quiz #2 (Week 2, HW) AEG BQ due & discussed Sign formation and variation Nouns	Semantic exercises as assigned
8/27 (W) 3	Pluralization of nouns Pronouns and pronominalization in ASL	Read AEG pp 22-30, 39- 43 Review for quiz
9/1 (M)	NO CLASS – LABOR DAY	
9/3 (W) 4	Quiz #3 (Week 3, HW) Verb types in English Noun-verb pairs Study guide for Exam #1	AEG as assigned Begin review for Exam #1 Study for Exam #1
9/8 (M) 5	Rotations and review for Exam #1 Sample questions for Exam #1	Study for Exam #1 Turn in question re: Exam #1
9/10 (W) 5	Questions re: Exam #1 EXAM #1 (GB I – V, VIII, XII; AEG nouns, pronouns, verbs; noun-verb pairs; phonology; basic definitions and glossing symbols; semantic exercises as assigned)	Take Exam #1 Read AEG pp 17-22, 30-39, 43-52 Semantic exercises as assigned
9/15 (M) 6	Verbs: time and tense Adjectives Adverbs	Read AEG pp 118-145 Semantic exercises as assigned
9/17 (W)	Adverbs Introduction to morphology Mouth morphemes in ASL	Begin practicing mouth morphemes Begin learning meanings for mouth morphemes Video HW as assigned Written HW as assigned



9/22 (M) 7	Morphology in spoken languages Morphology in signed languages Morphology in ASL	Keep practicing mouth morphemes Learn meanings for mouth morphemes
9/24 (W)	Quiz #4 (Week #6, mouth morphemes) Facial grammar	Keep practicing mouth morphemes Video HW as assigned Written HW as assigned
9/29 (M) 8	ASL Morphology: Temporal aspect ASL Morphology: Distributional aspect	Review for quiz Practice mouth morphemes Work on portfolio Section I
10/1 (W)	Quiz #5 (Week 7, HW) ASL Morphology: Locatives Study guide for Exam #2	Begin review for Exam #2 Start studying for Exam #2
10/6 (M) 9	Rotations Sample questions for Exam #2	Study for Exam #2 Question re: Exam #2 Work on portfolio Section I
10/8 (W)	Questions re: Exam #2 EXAM #2 (GB VII, XI, XIII, XIV; time and tense, adjectives, adverbs, morphology, semantic exercises as assigned, mouth morphemes)	Read AEG pp 60-78 Complete Portfolio Section I
10/13 (M) 10	Phrases and clauses Sentence types Introduction to syntax	Work on portfolio Section II Read AEG as assigned
10/15 (W)	Syntax in English Syntax in ASL	Video HW as assigned Written HW as assigned Work on portfolio Section II
10/20 (M) 11	Subjects and objects ASL syntax: Directional verbs	Read AEG pp 110-117 Review for quiz Finish portfolio Section II
10/22 (W)	Quiz #6 (Week 10, HW) Introduction to semantics ASL semantics: Classifiers	Begin portfolio Section III
10/27 (M) 12	PORTFOLIO CHECK IN DUE (SECTIONS I & II complete, Section III begun) Semantics: Idioms from English Semantics: Idioms from ASL	Read AEG pp 87-110 Read AEG pp 83-85 Work on portfolio Section III
10/29 (W)	Quiz #7 (Week 11, HW) Semantics: Culturally relevant abbreviations Definition of lexicon ASL lexicon: FLS	Find ASL idiom examples Practice FLS Work on portfolio Sections III & IV
11/3 (M) 13	TBA (Possible Portfolio work day)	Read AEG pp 85-87 Practice and review idioms and notes
11/5 (W)	Quiz #8 (Week 12, HW) ASL idiom examples due & discussed Semantics: Prefixes	Finish portfolio



	Semantics: Compound signs Questions regarding portfolios, etc.	
11/10 (M) 14	PORTFOLIO PROJECT DUE Sunday 11/16 at 11:59 pm (NO LATE PORTFOLIOS ACCEPTED) Quiz #8 (Week 12, HW) Additional lecture	Begin cumulative review Review for quiz
11/12 (W)	Quiz #9 (Week 13, HW) Study guide for Exam #3	Continue cumulative review
11/17 (M) 15	Course wrap up	Study for Exam #3 Review for Exam #3
11/19 (W)	Sample questions Exam #3 Review for Exam #3 Review for One on one finals EXAM #3	Study for Exam #3 Review Take Exam #3
11/24, 11/26	NO CLASSES: THANKSGIVING BREAK	
12/1 (M), 12/3 (W) 16	One-on-one finals (English idioms, ASL idioms, mouth morphemes)	Do the Snoopy Happy Dance because you survived 220

Subject to change without prior notice