

Common Course Outline
ASLS 211
Linguistics of American Sign Language
3 Credits

Community College of Baltimore County

Description

ASLS 211 – Linguistics of American Sign Language is designed for signers of American Sign Language (ASL) with no previous background in linguistics. This course is an introductory study of the phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic features of ASL, along with an introduction to semantics and sociolinguistics. Students compare basic linguistic components of ASL with similar structures in other languages.

3 Credits

Prerequisites: ASLS 121 and ASLS 204 with a grade of “B” or higher

Overall Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

1. describe the basic concepts of linguistics;
2. explain the basic parameters and phonological processes that impact ASL;
3. describe the difference between languages and communication systems;
4. identify phonemes in ASL and English;
5. identify types of morphemes in ASL and English;
6. transcribe basic signs in ASL using a variety of linguistics systems;
7. compare the types of verbs in ASL;
8. categorize sentence types in ASL;
9. contrast different types of meaning and pragmatic intent in ASL discourse;
10. recognize sociolinguistic variation in ASL;
11. categorize the reasons for variation;
12. evaluate how sociolinguistic variation impacts the work of interpreters;
13. contrast historical versions of ASL with modern ASL; and
14. contrast similar linguistic structures in ASL with structures in other languages.

Major Topics

- I. Basic properties of language
 - A. Nine characteristics of languages
 - B. Communication systems
 - C. Descriptive and prescriptive grammar
- II. ASL phonology
 - A. ASL parameters
 - B. Transcribing signs

- C. Glossing ASL
 - D. Phonological processes in ASL and other languages
- III. ASL morphology
 - A. Types of morphemes in ASL and other languages
 - B. Morphological processes in ASL
 - C. Morphological changes which create new lexical items in ASL and other languages
 - D. Inflectional and derivational morphology in ASL and other languages
- IV. ASL semantics
 - A. Types of meaning
 - B. Figurative language and metaphor
 - C. Pragmatics of ASL and other languages
- V. ASL syntax
 - A. Basic sentence types in ASL
 - B. Verb types in ASL
 - C. Aspect and inflection in ASL
- VI. Sociolinguistics
 - A. Types of variation in ASL and other languages
 - B. Impact of variation on communication
- VII. Historical change in ASL
 - A. Language families
 - B. How ASL spread across America
 - C. Variation in historical form of ASL

Course Requirements

Grading procedures will be determined by the individual faculty member but will include the following:

Grading/exams

- Minimum of 10 homework assignments
- One midterm and one comprehensive final examination
- Minimum of one research paper

Written Assignments: Students are required to use appropriate academic resources.

Other Course Information

This course is taught completely in American Sign Language. Students are expected to have a minimum language proficiency in order to be successful in this course.

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