ASL LITERATURE (EXP 0005S)

Instructor
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Class time
Tues./Thurs. 4:30-5:45

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is designed for students interested in continuing beyond basic language courses. Deaf American performance art and literature is examined and explored in the context of culture and linguistics. Trends in drama, narrative, poetry and film in the twentieth and twenty-first century are discussed throughout the semester. Through readings, viewing of performance pieces, and discussion of both well-known and local artists, we will explore how the literature of ASL deals with issues of politics, minority, language, and bi-cultural life.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To develop and apply aesthetic criteria
  a. to develop research and analytical skills
  b. to write with clarity and critical thinking

- To acquire skills in interpersonal communication and effective collaboration
  a. to think precisely in the moment
  b. to speak confidently in public
  c. to develop flexibility and adaptability
  d. to develop empathy and listening skills

- To understand the unique history, theory, and practice of ASL performance through intellectual and experiential investigation
  a. to develop the ability to understand how ASL literature relates to society
  b. to approach ASL literature as a mirror of society and personal growth
  c. to acquire historical and cultural perspective
  d. to understand the function of literature as social and political commentary

- To create opportunities for crossing cultures
  a. to develop cultural awareness and sensitivity
  b. to combat stereotypes and challenge exclusive social norms

- To acquire language skills and linguistic knowledge
  a. To develop towards fluency receptively and expressively.
  b. To gain a further understanding of classifiers, hand-shape, and other linguistic markers in poetry and storytelling.
  c. To gain familiarity with common ways American Deaf artists play with language.
COURSE MATERIALS

PERFORMANCE PIECES (video formats, scripts)

- Children of a Lesser God. Paramount Pictures.
- Cook, Peter and Kenny Lerner. The Flying Words Project. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rm0WOZqItHg
- Eyeth Films. Destination Eyeth. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0NCFHkGE3_s&feature=BFa&list=PL5B9864AF9C40CF22
- Hait-Campbell, Ryan, Dack Virnig and Jeff Shaul. Three Little Pigs. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RkcD0e2Xbl&feature=fvwrel
- Kapil, Aditi. Love Person.
- Lentz, Ella Mae and Marie Philip. “Moments of ASL Preserved.” Ella’s Flashlight: a DeafMute’s Search for Deafhood Enlightenment. ” http://www.ellasflashlight.com/
- Northeastern University ASL festival 10th anniversary.
- Wann, Keith. My Experience Different.
- You Have to Be Deaf to Understand. Madsen, Willard J. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ajT_h93FNKs&feature=related

THEORY PIECES (articles, chapters, documentaries)

- Signing the Body Poetic. Edited by Bauman et al. DC: Dawn Sign Press, 2006
- Bove, Linda. Why We Need Deaf Actors in Deaf Roles. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eZRWbZfb3cM&list=PLAC6AD21867192EB2&index=8&feature=plpp_video


• D-PAN Productions. www.d-pan.org


• *Deaf Jam.*


• *Robert Panara: A Profile.* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=faJfH8yUECU


• *See What I’m Saying.*


• Veditz, George. *The Preservation of Sign Language.* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XITb3NTLUQ

SUPPLEMENTARY PIECES (dictionaries)


• *American Sign Language Dictionary.* Edited by Martin Sternberg.

• *Technical Signs 8: Theater.* Rochester, NY: NTID.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Tufts’ booklet entitled “Academic Integrity” outlines the university’s expectations for the integrity of students’ academic work and explains the importance of academic honesty. Please note:

• ALL WORK DONE IN THIS CLASS MUST BE YOUR OWN ORIGINAL WORK.

• Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be reported to the university.

• Written work submitted in this class will be screened by plagiarism detection software.

ACOMODATIONS

The goal of Disability Services is to enable students with documented disabilities to demonstrate their full potential at Tufts University. The university will work with students with documented disabilities and their families to coordinate the most
reasonable accommodations to ensure full inclusion with the community. Students who have documented physical or learning disabilities and need accommodations for their classes should email Disability Services. Disability Services will work with you to provide counseling and support and arrange accommodations such as extended time exams, e-books, and time management tutoring.

**For more information:** Call Linda Sullivan (linda.sullivan@tufts.edu, 617-627-5571) or email Disability Services

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**RESOURCES**

Free writing assistance is available for all undergraduate and graduate students in Arts, Sciences, and Engineering at Tufts through the Academic Resource Center. Graduate Writing Consultants work with undergraduate and graduate students to plan, draft and revise papers. Consultations are also available for longer writing projects such as senior theses and dissertations. Students may make an appointment with a Graduate Writing Consultant through the Online Tutor Finder, or visit drop-in hours in Tisch Library or elsewhere on campus. For further information, see: http://uss.tufts.edu/arc/writingtutoring/

The Tisch Library’s Humanities Reasearch Librarian is available for questions. You can reach Chris Strauber at Chris.Strauber@tufts.edu

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**ASSIGNMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

**Participation in class discussion.** This means being active, not just present, and mentally prepared by doing the assignments. Participation means commenting thoughtfully or asking questions, and it also means being respectful of your fellow students. I recommend that you bring notes or homework material to class so that you can read a relevant quote if it comes up.

**Weekly responses in Trunk.** Please respond before 3pm on your assigned day, and read each others’ comments. This is not a formal writing assignment, but rather a way of generating discussion and getting our gears oiled for class. This a first attempt at making sense of your reading. Don’t worry about being right – take risks and put your thoughts out there. Please do refer to the assignments specifically, with quotes and page numbers.

**Research Paper on an Artist**

DUE FEBRUARY 24

For this paper, you will research a Deaf American artist of your choice. You will be expected to view at least two of this artist’s creative works in order to get a sense of his or her style and the themes and issues she or he addresses. You will also be familiar with where and how this artist has been produced, what critical reviewers have said about his or her work, and how historical and cultural contexts have influenced him or her. This paper will be no less than 2,000 words (about 8 pages) and have no fewer than 5 sources (academically rigorous – not quickie websites). Make sure you follow either MLA or Chicago guidelines.

**Research Paper on Linguistics**

DUE MARCH 31

For this paper, you will research a linguistic feature of American Sign Language. You will be expected to synthesize current research in the field of linguistics. You will analyze at least two pieces of literature that incorporate this feature, and discuss how it is used. This paper will be no less than 2,000 words (about 8 pages) and have no fewer than 5 sources (academically rigorous – not quickie websites). Make sure you follow either MLA or Chicago guidelines.

**Creative Application**

APRIL 23 AND 25

For this presentation, you will compose your own story, poem, skit or other piece of literature in American Sign Language. You may choose to work alone or with a small group of up to 3 students. You will perform your piece and discuss the
creative process. Refer back to readings, viewings, lecture and discussions from the semester to support your choices. The presentation will be 15 minutes for individuals, 20 minutes for groups of two, and 25 for groups of three.
### SCHEDULE

**R 1/17**  
Introduction to the Course

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**WEEK 2 – DEFINING LITERATURE AND ASL LITERATURE**

**T 1/22**  
100 Years After A.G. Bell  
Brueggeman, *Lend Me Your Ear*; Interlude 2 (TRUNK)  
Peters, *Deaf American Literature*: Is There Really Such a Thing..? (TRUNK)

**R 1/24**  
Finding an Audience  
*See What I’m Saying* (RESERVE)  
Frishberg, *Signers of Tales* (TRUNK)  
*Signing the Body Poetic*: chapter 7  
Explore D-Pan

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**WEEK 3 – LINGUISTIC FEATURES FOR LITERARY STUDY**

**T 1/29**  
Classifiers and Parameters  
Valli and Lucas: *Basic Concepts*  
unit 1 *Signs Have Parts*, do homework 1  
unit 7 *Classifier Predicates and Locative Verbs*  
⇒ GUEST VISIT: Naomi Berlove  
Tufts grad student in linguistics  
ASL UTK, *Practice Sentences: Classifiers* (TRUNK)

**R 1/31**  
Hand Shape, Eye Gaze and Role Shifting  
Valli and Lucas: unit 6  
more to be assigned  
Monique Holt, *A Reflection in the Painting* (TRUNK)  
⇒ DUE TODAY – choice of artist for research paper  
*Three Little Pigs* (TRUNK)
WEEK 4 – KEY ARTISTS IN THE CANON

T 2/5 Veditz and Valli

Burch, “Introduction,” Sign Language Studies (TRUNK)

Peters, Deaf American Literature: Words Another Way (TRUNK)

Veditz, The Preservation of Sign Language (TRUNK)

Valli, Poetry in Motion (RESERVED IN TISCH)

R 2/7 Panera, Philips and Bragg

Bragg on Bragg: chapters ___

Robert Panera: A Profile (TRUNK)

Philips, Moments of ASL Preserved (TRUNK)

WEEK 5 – THE DEAF EXPERIENCE AS A TOPIC

T 2/12 20th Century

Bahan, Bird of a Different Feather (RESERVE)

Peters, Deaf American Literature: chapter ___ (TRUNK)

Signing the Body Poetic: chapter 2

R 2/14 Early 21st Century

Blue, A Nice Place to Live

ASL in Performance: A Conversation with Adrian Blue (TRUNK)

Signing the Body Poetic: chapter 6

WEEK 6 – RESEARCH

⇒ T 2/19 GUEST VISIT – Chris Strauber

Humanities Research Librarian

⇒R 2/21 Tufts Monday Schedule – NO CLASS

⇒ DUE SUNDAY 2/24 – RESEARCH PAPER ON ARTIST
WEEK 7 – THE CODA EXPERIENCE AS A TOPIC

T 2/26  Deaf and CODA Identity

Hoffmeister, in Open Your Eyes (RESERVE)

Keith Wann, My Experience Different (RESERVE)

R 2/28  GUEST VISIT: Bonnie Kraft

Kraft, Tomorrow, Dad Will Still Be Deaf (RESERVE)

Alan Abarbanell, Abababa, A Life (RESERVE)

⇒ DUE TODAY – choice of linguistic feature for research paper

WEEK 8 -- THEATER IN ASL LIT.

T 3/5  Who Tells the Story?

Sandahl, Considering Disability (TRUNK)

Kapil, Love Person (TRUNK)

Signing the Body Poetic: chapter 4

R 3/7  Deaf Actors/ Deaf Stage

Baldwin, Pictures in the Air: chapter ___

⇒ GUEST VISIT: Ian Sanborn

Bove, Why We Need Deaf Actors (TRUNK)

Deaf West, Big River

WEEK 9 – POETRY IN ASL LIT.

T 3/12  Reclaiming Rhyme and Rhythm

Burch, Deaf Poets’ Society (TRUNK)

The Heart of the Hydrogen Jukebox (RESERVE)

R 3/14  Inherent Language in Poetry

⇒ HAVE A GOOD SPRING BREAK!

ASL FESTIVAL Friday 3/22
WEEK 10 – BOSTON-BASED ARTISTS AND VENUES

T  3/26  Discuss our Experiences

R  3/28  ⇒ Guest Visit – Ayisha Knight-Shaw
          Knight-Shaw Until Last Night (TRUNK)
          Poet, teacher

⇒ DUE SUNDAY 3/31 – RESEARCH PAPER ON LINGUISTIC FEATURE

WEEK 11 – STORYTELLING AND COMEDY IN ASL LIT.

T  4/2  A Storytelling Culture
          Peters, Deaf American Literature: chapter 3 (TRUNK)
          Rosa-Lee Gallimore, The Rosa-Lee Show

R  4/4  A Storytelling Language
          Rayman, Storytelling in the Visual Mode
          Peter Cook, The Flying Hands Project (TRUNK)

WEEK 12 – MOVIES AND TELEVISION IN ASL LIT.

T  4/9  Clowns or Victims
          Signing the Body Poetic: chapter 3
          Children of a Lesser God

R  4/11  Defining Literature
          Bauman, Redesigning Literature (TRUNK)
          Switched at Birth
          Journey to Eyeth (TRUNK)
          Explore ASL film festivals

WEEK 13 – REVOLUTIONARY DISABILITY THEATER

T  4/16  Ownership
          Davidson, Concerto for the Left Hand (TRUNK)
          Brueggemann, Lend Me Your Ear (TRUNK)
          What Are You... Deaf?
          Annie Dearest (TRUNK)

R  4/18  Work on original pieces
          Signing the Body Poetic: chapter 9 and 11

WEEK 14 – OUR CONTRIBUTIONS

⇒ T  4/23  PRESENTATIONS ⇒

⇒ R  4/25  PRESENTATIONS ⇒