

# Language and Culture in the Deaf Community

Sherman Wilcox  
Department of Linguistics

## Course Description

This course is an introduction to American Deaf culture. We will examine the language, education, social and political aspects, and art forms of Deaf people from an anthropological and linguistic point of view.

## Course Outline

1. Culture: introduction to the concept of culture and how it can be applied to the study of Deaf people's lives and histories
2. Language: languages and modalities used in the deaf community, emphasizing ASL; the linguistics and sociolinguistics of ASL; the suppression of natural sign languages; systems for representing English and their historical and cultural context
3. Education: history of deaf education from a cultural-political point of view; current trends in deaf education; what Deaf culture has to offer deaf education
4. Sociology: the social network of the deaf community; minorities; families
5. Arts: literature and poetry; visual and performing arts; folklore; the arts as a vehicle for Deaf culture

## Required Texts

Lucas, C. *Sociolinguistics of the Deaf Community* (Chapter 5). Gallaudet University Press.

Padden, C. & T. Humphries. *Deaf in America*, Harvard University Press.

Wilcox, S. *American Deaf Culture*, Linstok Press.

Wilcox, S. & P. Wilcox. *Learning to See*. Gallaudet University Press.

Bragg, L. *Deaf world: A historical reader and primary sourcebook*. New York University Press.

## Optional Text

Gannon, F. *Deaf Heritage*, NAD.

## Grades

Short assignments (3)..... 10 % each

Midterm..... 30 %

Final exam..... 40 %

Students are expected to attend all class sessions and participate actively in class discussions. The short assignments will consist of a "Culture Interview" due on January 25, and two essays on readings from the course materials (two readings per essay) due on March 8 and April 19. The essays must be 3-4 pages in length, typed (double-space, Times 12-point font or equivalent, 1 inch margins) and use APA reference format; title and reference pages are not included in the page count. Content requirements for the papers will be discussed in class.

The midterm (March 22) will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. The final exam will be an essay test (you will need to bring a blue book) covering content over the entire course.