American Sign Language Level 1

SNLN 651.800

Instructor Information

Instructor's name Donnie Brooks

ASL Program/Special Education Department
Ball State University, Muncie, IN

Instructor Contact Information:

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Office Hours- M/F: 1-2pm
MW: 3-4pm

Course Information

Course Description

Introduction to sign language systems, including fingerspelling and American Sign Language (ASL). Development of receptive and expressive skills in sign language is emphasized.

Expanded Course Description:

This course introduces students to the foundational skills necessary for developing both production and comprehension in American Sign Language (ASL). Students will learn key ASL vocabulary such as the manual alphabet and numbers, sentence structure, and grammar. Throughout the course, students will develop basic conversational abilities, practice culturally appropriate behaviors, and gain insight into the culture and history of Deaf communities. Additionally, students will explore various topics, such as hobbies, residences, and family.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course. Not open to students who have credit in SNLN 251.

Course Modality/Structure

This course is online asynchronous, depending on the section in which you are enrolled.

- **Online asynchronous sections** are delivered entirely online with no required live meetings. Students complete coursework independently according to posted deadlines

and are expected to engage with the material regularly. All assignments and course content are managed through Canvas.

Course Format and Timing

- The course is structured around weekly modules, which include instructional content, readings, assignments, and assessments.
- During fall and spring semesters, the course spans 15 weeks, with one module released per week.
- During summer sessions (9-week format), students will complete multiple modules per week, requiring a faster pace. It is essential to review the course calendar and Canvas announcements regularly.

Each module:

- Opens on Sunday at 12:00 AM
- Closes the following Sunday at 11:59 PM

Assignment Deadlines

- Most assignments are due on Wednesdays and Sundays by 11:59 PM
- Exams are typically scheduled on Tuesdays, though exact dates may vary. Please check Canvas regularly for announcements and due dates.

All content, instructions, and submission links will be posted in the Canvas modules. Consistently checking Canvas for announcements and updates will help you stay on track.

Course Time Commitment

Please be advised that this is a very complex subject matter that requires a significant dedication of time. This is a rigorous course with immersive application of receptive and expressive skills. It is expected that students will spend approximately 2-3 hours of study outside of class for every one hour in class. Since this is a 3-credit class; you should expect to study an average of 6-9 hours outside of class each week.

Course Expectations:

Course expectations are aligned with the rigor of an undergraduate-level class. Students are required to actively engage in all course activities and submit assignments by the designated deadlines. You are expected to effectively utilize all provided resources to achieve a thorough understanding and proficiency with the course content. This will enable you to develop the foundational skills necessary to build basic interpersonal communication skills in American Sign Language.

Course Information

- SNLN 651: American Sign Language Level 1 introduces students to a fully visual, manual language grounded in the cultural and linguistic traditions of the Deaf

community.

- Through the **True+Way ASL curriculum**, students engage in scaffolded learning that integrates language production, grammar, and cultural awareness. Assignments are designed to reflect major ideas in the discipline—such as spatial referencing, visual grammar, non-manual markers, and Deaf cultural norms—and give students repeated opportunities to communicate clearly and ethically in ASL.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

This course aims to enhance students' proficiency in American Sign Language for interpersonal communication. Emphasis will be placed on understanding and applying the foundational principles of ASL to develop effective communication skills. By the end of this course, students will be able to:

Course Level Outcomes: *At the end of this course, the students should be able to do the following:*

1. **Vocabulary Development**
    a. Recognize and produce vocabulary items in each unit.
    b. Demonstrate comprehensive mastery of targeted vocabulary words drawn from class items, lectures, and videos.

2. **Grammatical Features**
    a. Demonstrate comprehensive mastery of target, content-specific commands, questions, and statements in ASL.
    b. Identify grammatical features within short dialogues in ASL directed by the professor.

3. **Conversational and Communication Skills**
    a. Demonstrate comprehension and conversation-facilitating behaviors.
    b. Demonstrate comprehension and production of regulating behaviors (i.e. attention-getting techniques, turn-taking signals, and others)
    c. Comprehend short narratives and stories in ASL signed by the professor, Deaf ASL speakers, or ASL videos added by the professor.
    d. Demonstrate the ability to create, conduct and terminate a short

       content-specific conversation.

4. **Cultural Awareness**
    a. Analyze and critique competing perspectives of diverse Deaf communities in the United States and Canada, ideas, aesthetic traditions, and cultural practices, and its history.
    b. Compare, contrast, and interpret differences and commonalities among Deaf and hearing cultures.

Course Materials

Title: TRUE+WAY ASL STUDENT E-WRKBK UNITS 1-4
ISBN: 2818440128264
Edition: 3rd 24
Note: (the fourth edition is the same)

Important: This is not a physical book. You will receive an access code to access the TRUE+WAY ASL curriculum in Canvas.
Do not purchase through TWA — the access sold there will not work for our Canvas course.
You must purchase the access code only through the BSU Official Bookstore.

Course Assignments and Assessments

Course Assignments

Your final grade will be based on the following components. Detailed instructions, due dates, and rubrics will be posted in Canvas.

Participation

1. **Starter Discussion**
   - Watch the conversation starters. Pick a question to answer and type your response in the discussion board by the due date. Once you type your response, you will be able to see your classmates' responses. Feel free to post additional questions and comments to better understand the conversation starters.

2. **Unit + Section Worksheets**
   - Worksheets are designed to retain and reinforce what is learned in the classroom. Complete the assigned workbook assignments by the assigned due dates.

3. **Snapshot Quizzes & Unit + Section Quizzes**
   - Quizzes are designed to cover content previously learned to ensure you are on the right pace in learning the material. Complete the assigned quizzes by the due dates.

4. **Story Comprehension**
   - At the end of each unit, you will watch a story and answer questions about the story by the due date.

5. **Self-Observation Analysis (SOAR)**
   - At the end of each unit, you are to sign sentences in ASL. You are to record your work and submit your video of your work by the due date. Complete the rubric by comparing your video with the proficient Deaf ASL signer, identifying that you can improve and areas that you are doing well, such as sign accuracy, ASL sentence structure, Non-manual Markers (NMM), etc.

6. **Peer Observation Assessment (POA)**
    - At the end of each unit, you will be watching videos of proficient, Deaf ASL signers signing something incorrectly. Identify the error by answering the questions by the due date.

7. **Comprehension Exams**
    - The test will cover material presented up to this point in the course. They will include information from the lectures, vocabulary, conversation starter discussions, worksheets, and quizzes.

8. **Productive Exams**
    - The test will cover material presented up to this point in the course. They will include information from the lectures, vocabulary, conversation starter discussions, worksheets, and quizzes.
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Distribution of Points and Grading Scale

Activity	# of Assignments	Points per Assignment	Total Points
Conversation Starter Discussions	20	1 point	20
Unit + Section Worksheets	39	4–20 points	353
Snapshot Quizzes	18	3–18 points	155
Comprehension Quizzes	18	5–12 points	56
Story Comprehension	4	5–6 points	24
SOAR Reflections	8 (2 per unit)	10 points	80
POA Assessments	4	4 points	16
Comprehension Exams	4	50 points	200
Productive Exams	4	100 points	400
TOTAL			**1,304**

Grading System: Note: Canvas does not round up when assigning letter grades. Thus, a score of 93.98 is an A-

Letter Grade	Percentage Lower Bound
A	98%
A-	92%
B+	88%
B	83%
B-	80%
C+	78%
C	73%
C-	70%
D+	68%
D	63%
D-	60%

F	<60%

University Policies

University Statement

We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse.

Disability Statement

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's Disability Services Office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

Freedom of Expression

In this course, we are committed to fostering a learning environment that values intellectual diversity, encourages free expression, and promotes open inquiry. As members of the Ball State Community, we treat each person in the Ball State community with civility, courtesy, compassion, dignity, and respect, and learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions. Please review Ball State University's Statement on Freedom of Expression, the resources on Ball State's Freedom of Expression webpage, and Ball State's Beneficence Pledge.

Attendance/Participation

Attendance in Ball State University online classes is measured by your active participation in course activities at least once each week. Be sure to complete your coursework as assigned to ensure you are recorded as attending the course. For this class, timely submission of assignments, participation in the student discussion forum, and logging into the course materials in Canvas are ways in which we determine if a student is participating. Weekly participation in the form of logging into Canvas, writing in a forum, or submitting a written assignment is mandatory. All assignments should be completed by the due date. Students should not work ahead. University attendance policies can be reviewed at the following website: https://www.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/vice-provost/student-services/attendance-policies

Title IX

Ball State University is committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment—including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, please know that you are not alone. The University offers support services and resources. For more information or to report an incident, please visit www.bsu.edu/titleix or contact the Title IX Coordinator at 765-285-1545 or at titleix@bsu.edu

As your instructor, I am a mandatory reporter under the Title IX policy and required to report any information I receive about possible sexual harassment. This includes information shared in class discussions, assignments, or private conversations.

What happens after I report? The Title IX Coordinator will email the person who experienced sexual harassment (complainant) and invite them to schedule a meeting. If the complainant **chooses** to meet with the Title IX Coordinator,

- Title IX Coordinator will offer supportive measures (e.g., counseling, extensions on deadlines, course-related adjustments, changes to work or class schedules, and/or referrals to campus offices), review the policy, and discuss options to move forward.
- If a complaint is filed by the complainant or the University, an investigation will begin following University policy.

University Grade Appeal Policy

If you believe you received a final course grade that does not reflect your performance due to fairness or a procedural issue, you have the right to file an appeal within 5 school days after final grades are posted by the Office of the Registrar. Review the University Grade Appeal Policy and Process.

Student Academic Ethics Policy

Honesty, trust, and personal responsibility are fundamental attributes of the university community. Academic dishonesty and other forms of academic misconduct threaten the foundation of an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and will not be tolerated. To maintain its credibility and reputation, and to equitably assign evaluations of scholastic and creative performance, Ball State University is committed to maintaining a climate that upholds and values the highest standards of academic integrity. Visit the VPAA's academic integrity website (Students tab) for resources on understanding academic integrity, citing sources properly, and avoiding inadvertent academic dishonesty. To learn about BSU's academic integrity expectations and students' rights, please read the University Student Academic Ethics Policy.

Academic integrity violations include giving or receiving an unfair academic advantage (cheating), presenting someone else's ideas or work as your own (plagiarism), and falsifying academic records. Unless otherwise indicated, you must work independently by yourself. Check with me if you are unsure whether something constitutes academic dishonesty. Examples of academic integrity violations include but are not limited to:

- Using resources not authorized by the faculty member (including devices, AI tools, hidden notes, and open books)
- Using commercial study websites to find answers to graded assignments (Chegg, Course Hero, StudyPool, OneClass, etc.).
- Without the instructor's written permission, giving away, buying, or selling graded assignments class notes, exams, study guides, or other course materials to other students or to third-party vendors (Course Hero, Chegg, 24HourAnswers, etc.).
- Working with another person on any assignment other than authorized group projects.
- Sharing or allowing others to access your files, whether done with permission or not.
- Reusing your own work from another semester, course, or section.

- Sharing answers with others during exams (passing notes, texting, whispering, gesturing)
- Discussing exam questions and answers with students who have not taken the exam.
- Soliciting others to complete work for you.

Generative AI Statement

Some Use of Generative AI Permitted Under Some Circumstances or With Explicit Permission
During this class, we may use ChatGPT or other generative AI applications. You will be informed as to when, where, and how these tools are permitted to be used, along with guidance for attribution. [Indicate your expectations regarding use of applications with AI built-in features]. Any use outside of this permission constitutes a violation of Ball State University's Student Academic Ethics Policy.

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is not acceptable, unless otherwise indicated for all assignments, you must work independently by yourself. Sharing of files is not permitted for any reason.

Potential Violations

Examples of academic integrity violations include but are not limited to:

- Working with another person on any assignment other than authorized group projects.
- Sharing or allowing others to access your files, whether done with permission or not.
- Use or possession of a file created by someone else.
- Reusing work from another semester, course, or section.
- Fraudulent submission of work.
- Using unauthorized materials during Exams.
- Impersonating someone else or having them impersonate you.
- Making fraudulent or dishonest statements regarding your work.
- Soliciting others to complete work for you.
- Posting course files and resources on study or content sharing websites.

Plagiarism Detection

The campus subscribes to Turnitin, a plagiarism prevention service, through Canvas. You may need to submit written assignments to Turnitin. Student work will be used for plagiarism detection and for no other purpose. The student may indicate in writing to the instructor that he/she refuses to participate in the plagiarism detection process, in which case the instructor can use other electronic means to verify the originality of their work.

Student Support Services

The Learning Center

The Learning Center offers free Tutoring and Academic Coaching for many courses at Ball State. Students can make appointments for online (Zoom) or in-person (NQ 350) appointments. To make an appointment, visit myballstate.bsu.edu and click on "Navigate" in the Academic Tools section, or just go directly to bsu.navigate.eab.com.

Testing accommodations for students with disabilities are available for students who have received the appropriate documentation from Disability Services. Tests may be administered in the Learning Center.
Supplemental Instruction is available in select courses. If you have an SI leader for your course, that person will provide students with information the first week of school regarding weekly study sessions. For more information about Learning Center programming, visit bsu.edu/learningcenter or call 765-285-1006. Follow us on Instagram: BallStateLC.

The Writing Center

All writers improve with practice and feedback, so as a student in this course, you are encouraged to use the Writing Center (in Robert Bell 295 during weekdays, Bracken Library First Floor West in the evenings, or online during any of our regularly scheduled hours) to get additional feedback on your writing.
The Writing Center offers free planning, feedback, and accountability sessions (in person and online) to all students composing essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and other digital or print texts. To schedule a free appointment to discuss your writing, go to bsu.edu/writingcenter. Online and in-person appointments are available; however, plan ahead because appointments book quickly!

The Basic Needs Hub

If you are having difficulty affording enough food, do not have a safe and reliable place to sleep, and/or experiencing an emergency or crisis, help is available through the Basic Needs Hub. The Basic Needs Hub has information, resources, and provides individualized support to students. To talk with a supportive staff member about your experience, receive one on one assistance, or learn more about resources, you can submit a Basic Needs Assistance Form.

The Counseling Center

The Ball State University Counseling Center offers free and confidential services to all students. The Counseling Center is located in Lucina Hall, Room 320. To schedule an appointment, you can contact us at 765-285-1736. Ball State also offers a 24/7 Crisis Line, which can be reached at 765-285-HOPE (4673). The Crisis Line is a mental health resource for those who are struggling with any mental health concerns, including thoughts of self-harm and/or suicide.

At the Ball State Counseling Center, we see students for a variety of reasons, some of which include homesickness, relationship concerns, anxiety, and depression. At your first appointment, you will work with a therapist to create a plan that will connect you with resources that best fit your needs. We assist students with getting connected to therapy at our Center as well as connecting students to self-help resources, other on-campus resources, and community-based resources. All Ball State students also have access to several on-demand, self-help resources through a variety of different platforms. All of these resources, including a direct link to our website, can be found **here**.

The Speaking Center

The Speaking Center is a free resource available to all members of the BSU community wanting to improve their public speaking abilities. We offer personalized coaching designed to help you become a more confident and effective speaker. Our trained coaches provide constructive feedback and support throughout the entire speech preparation process, whether you are in the early stages of brainstorming ideas and organizing your thoughts, or you need to practice your

delivery and refine your message.

The Center is in the David Letterman Communication and Media Building, room 302. To schedule an appointment, please access us through your Navigate app or use this direct link to sign up for a time**.** Appointments are available both in person and on Zoom. Appointments are available in person, on Zoom, and in virtual reality (VR) for those interested in practicing in an immersive speaking environment.

Canvas and Student Privacy

Canvas Accessibility

Canvas provides a user experience that is easy, simple, and intuitive. Special attention has been paid to making Canvas screen readable. The Rich Content Editor encourages users to create accessible content pages (i.e. text formatting is accomplished using styles). Canvas is designed to allow limited customization of colors and schemes to be accessible for all users. The National Federation of the Blind granted Canvas the Gold Level Web Certification in 2010.

Find more information by visiting the Canvas Voluntary Product Accessibility Template (VPAT).

FERPA and Privacy

As a student, your educational records are considered confidential. Under FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), your records are confidential and protected. Under most circumstances, your records will not be released without your written and signed consent. However, some directory information may be released to third parties without your prior consent unless a written request to restrict this is on file. You can learn more about student rights to privacy by reading Ball State's FERPA and Privacy and Protection.

Video Conferencing Recording

In this class, software may be used to record live class discussions. As a student in this class, your participation in live class discussions may be recorded. These recordings typically will be made available only to students enrolled in the class, to assist those who cannot attend the live session or to serve as a resource for those who would like to review content that was presented. Students who prefer to participate via audio only will be allowed to disable their video camera so only audio will be captured. Students who prefer to listen only must disable their audio capability and visual camera. If you have concerns, please discuss these options with me.

Course Expectations and Policies

Participation Policy

- This course is designed with weekly activities, discussion, and other forms of regular collaboration and communication.
- It is recommended that you log into your course 3 to 4 times a week and check your official Ball State email account daily to view announcements and prepare for class.
- Complete all assignments, quizzes, tests, and any other activities by the stated due dates.

Feedback Policy

- I will respond to emails from your official Ball State email address within 24 hours during weekdays (Monday-Friday) and within 48 hours on the weekend.
- I will read every discussion post, but I will not always personally comment on posts.
- I will grade your quizzes, assignments, and discussions no later than within 5 school days of submission.
- Contact me directly if you have questions or concerns about your performance in class.

Late Assignment Policy

- All assignments are due by midnight (EST/EDT) time on the due dates indicated.
- Assignments posted after the indicated due dates will be subject to a decreased letter grade for each day late.
- Internet connectivity and technical issues may occur, impeding your ability to turn in work on time. Turn in work early and often, and set up a backup plan, such as visiting a local library or borrowing a peer's computer.
- You have one (1) permitted late assignment to allow for these issues, to which you can turn in one assignment 24 hours late.
- Canvas will not accept assignments for grading after 11:59 pm on the final day of class.

Assignment Submission Policy

- All assignments should be submitted as Canvas Text Entry or Word documents with extensions of .doc or .docx unless otherwise indicated in the assignment description.

Grading Policy

- It is my policy that appropriate evaluation of your academic performance is an integral part of your learning experience. In the absence of mistake, fraud, bad faith, or incompetence, I will be the key decision-maker on the assignment of grades. For information concerning grade appeals, consult the Ball State website

Engagement Expectations

To support a respectful and engaging academic community that encourages the free exchange of ideas and civil discourse, we will follow these ground rules:

- **Respect different perspectives.** Share your ideas and let others share theirs.
- **Challenge ideas, not people.** Disagree respectfully. No personal attacks or put-downs. Focus on exploring ideas critically and constructively.
- **Listen to understand.** Stay curious, ask questions to understand, and give others space to speak.
- **Assume good intentions.** Approach discussions with curiosity and compassion.
- **Keep it private.** What is shared in class stays in class. Do not share others' words or work without permission.
  Be respectful. Avoid hurtful language, stereotypes, or content that may demean others. Keep feedback constructive.

Course Schedule

Assignment and Examination Schedule:

To support a learning experience that is responsive to the needs, interests, and pace of our class community, the course schedule may shift over the semester. The most current version of the schedule will always be available on Canvas. I encourage you to check Canvas regularly for updates and contact me if you have any questions.

Modules will be presented in alternating white and blue colors. Please make sure to continue on to this section to complete your weekly learning activities! Some modules will contain multiple units.

Subject to Change Statement

This syllabus and schedule are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.