

# American Sign Language I

## Course Syllabus 2025-2026

<b>Instructor:</b>	Prof. Kelly Rickert <a href="mailto:kelly.rickert@amaizinggraceva.org">kelly.rickert@amaizinggraceva.org</a>
<b>Grade Level:</b>	10 – 12
<b>Course Length:</b>	2 semesters (Full Year)
<b>Credit:</b>	1 credit
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	None

If you have any questions or need clarification about the lessons, or have comments about the class, do not hesitate to contact me through email. Please address appropriately with your name, and a detailed message. I will respond to your message within 48 hours.



**Dates:** Semester 1: Tuesday,, August 26, 2025– Thursday, December 18, 2025.

Semester 2: Monday, January 5, 2026 – Friday, May 15, 2026.

### Description:

This is a beginning level course that focuses on the fundamental elements of American Sign Language (ASL) in a cultural context. Emphasis is placed on the progressive development of expressive and receptive skills in fingerspelling and thematic units while learning the visual language (short conversations) and culture of the Deaf.

### Course Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to...

- express letters by fingerspelling.
- display numbers by fingerspelling.
- produce correct ASL sign vocabulary words.
- integrate facial expressions on key phrases.
- understand the order of grammar in ASL.
- demonstrate classifier placement to convey objects.
- recognize word choices or context clues with perceptive skills.
- translate from ASL to English equivalency for conveying conversational dialogue.
- learn about daily life of Deaf individuals.
- gain awareness of American Deaf culture.

Above all, students will acquire learning strategies that will enhance ASL communication skills comfortably and fluently.

### Course Materials:

**Required textbook:**

*Master ASL! Level One (with DVD)*. Sixth Edition. Author: Zinza, Jason E. Burtonsville, MD: Sign Media, Inc, Published 2006. ISBN-10: 1-881133-20-6.

**Note:** The DVD provides short video clips with dialogue, conversation, and some Deaf Culture etiquette in related topic in each unit.

Other needed course materials will be made available via the Moodle online Learning Manage System (LMS).

## **Course Outline/Content:**

### **Topic 0: Fingerspelling ABCs and 123s**

Developing Handshapes, Rules of Etiquette

### **Topic 1: Greetings**

Greetings, Farewells, Question Markers, Exchanging Names, Facial Expressions

### **Topic 2: Getting Started**

Agreement Verbs, Iconic Signs, Deaf Culture, Day of the Week, Activities

### **Topic 3: Getting to Know You**

Background Information, Topic-Comment Structure, Colors, Seasons

### **Topic 4: Family and Friends**

Immediate & Extended Vocabulary, Gender Distinction, Shoulder-Shifting, Age Spots

### **Topic (Supplement #1): WELS Religious Signs \***

Terminology, Ordinal Numbers, Bible Storylines, Multimedia Archives, Case Studies

### **Topic 5: School Environment**

Coursework, Initialization, Floor Plans, Classifiers, Telling Time, Tense Markers

### **Topic (Supplement #2): Music Interpretation \***

Literal vs Abstract, Insights and Analysis, Deaf Preferences

### **Topic 6: Food Classifications**

Food Groups, Ordering & Listing

\* The Supplement units are not included in the textbook. The lesson material will be provided in Moodle.

The Master ASL textbook covers the **National Standards** covering the 5C's; Communication, Culture, Connection, Comparison and Communities. The online American Sign Language class strengthens competency in grasping the understanding of the form of structure in communication between ASL and English. The language is visually-oriented using receptive and expressive skills to enhance learning vocabulary words, along with incorporating facial expressions. The lessons contain basic conversations to build fluency skills. The Culture is of key importance to understand the rich history, signing etiquette, interaction strategies, and individual challenges the Deaf face in home life, school environment, and the community.

## **Evaluation & Grading Scale:**

**Activities:** Each graded activity in the course is graded according to the scale below and placed into a weighted category.

## **Grading Scale**

A+: 100 – 98	B+: 89 – 87	C+: 79 – 77	D+: 69 – 67	
A : 97 – 93	B : 86 – 83	C : 76 – 73	D : 66 – 63	F: 59 – Below
A-: 92 – 90	B-: 82 – 80	C-: 72 – 70	D-: 62 – 60	

**All coursework activities are completed and submitted in Moodle. Coursework will be weighted as follows:**

Assignments and Self-Video Demonstration .....	40%
Formal (textbook exercise) and Informal activities	
Discussion Forum Responses / Written Journal.....	20%
Quizzes .....	20%
Quizzes must be completed within the timeframe.	
Unit Exams .....	20%
Receptive and/or Expressive Exam format.	

**Extra credit:** Extra credit will NOT be provided at any time.

If you faithfully practice and complete your assignments, textbook readings, and guided practice readings, you will acquire the skills you need to be successful.

#### **Mid-Semester Grade Request:**

The instructor does not report mid-semester grades. Mid-semester grades are reported upon request and students may notify the instructor and ask for progress grades.

### **Instructor Policies:**

#### **Participation:**

Be an active participant learning the materials daily Monday through Friday. This is an online course which you should be working on at an assigned time each school day. This is not a 'live' class, however, so you will need to be proactive and navigate the learning the materials and complete the assigned activities on your own.

The format of the class consists of acquiring vocabulary, learning and practicing the parameters of ASL, and being exposed to deaf culture. What you learn is then enhanced with completing assignments 2-3 times a week. Good time management skills are necessary to optimize learning class material online. Some lessons may be more challenging than others.

The equation of success is to be self-motivated to learn the materials, be faithful with review, and ask questions. Reserve plenty of time to watch the videos. With practice over time, you will build skill with fingerspelling and acquiring sign vocabulary which will guide you in developing a flowing style of communication.

Attendance will be monitored in Moodle. If the student is not actively logged in daily Monday through Friday, for more than a few days, the instructor will send an email to follow up. The email will also be sent to your school proctor. If there is no response in turning in homework, one week after it is due, the

next step will be to contact parents. If you will be absent from class on a particular day, or if you miss class because of illness, be sure to let the instructor know.

### **Online Exams:**

End of Unit exams are required to be done during school hours and ALL students must complete them under supervision with the school proctor.

It is your responsibility to communicate (verbally or with a written note) with your school proctor when there are exams ahead.

### **Course Breaks:**

This online course follows a starting date and an ending date set by AGVA. If a break benefits the learning process, there may be a longer break around Thanksgiving and Easter.

In semester 2, spring break varies from school to school. There will be a one-week online spring break for this course built into the schedule. If your school's spring break is scheduled on a different week, you will still be responsible to complete the course activities on time. You may work ahead in this course if your school's spring break is at a later time. Please notify the instructor in the second semester which week you are on spring break with your school.

The AGVA policy on breaks is as follows:

*"Even if a student's local school does not have school on a particular day (snow day, teacher's conference, quarter break, choral fest, class trip, etc.) AGVA courses will continue to meet and students are expected to complete required work on time."*

### **Late Work:**

1. Students are expected to complete work on time within the deadline that is given. ALL assignments are to be submitted through Moodle.

2. Any late assignment will be assessed a small deduction for each day it is late, up to 20% of the assignment's point value, after assignment is two weeks late. Late work will still be accepted, but the 20% deduction will apply. If an assignment is never turned in, it will receive a grade of zero, which can have a great impact on a student's final course grade. I encourage you to complete and turn in assignments in order for you not to receive a grade of 0.

**NOTE:** If the assignment is submitted after the due date, the instructor will grade the assignment. However, the student will not receive feedback on that assignment.

### **Expectations for all students:**

Be faithful attending and participating in this course on a daily basis Monday through Friday. Generally, students are required to be present to take this course at an assigned time each school day. This is not a live (synchronous) class. Every student will need to figure out a plan and practice good time management skills during this course. You will work at your own pace. You must use your time wisely to navigate through the learning materials. Please ask for assistance if needed.

1 – Plan accordingly! Take action! You are expected to complete all the work in a timely manner. During your built-in online class time follow these steps for optimal learning:

- i. Upon entering the online learning environment, access materials to look at the guided practice,
- ii. Examine examples from the textbook, and practice the sign language without using your voice.

iii. If you are paired up with another student taking the same hour, it will help you improve your skills efficiently by not using your voice.

iv. If you are taking the class solo, it is a good practice not to use your voice. This will help you concentrate on the sentence structure.

2 – Establish Expectations! Expect to practice sign language skills as much as you can in class and outside of class. Every student needs to prioritize and balance commitments. Consistency will produce good results. Find strategies that work for you. Many rounds of practice can help you to feel confident and successful.

3 – Communication is the key! If you know you have a conflict ahead of time and want a time extension, you must notify your instructor of the extended absence in Moodle. If you are absent because you are sick, you can make a note in Moodle when you are able. If you request an extension in Moodle, that will help the instructor to verify the extended time requested. If you complete your request, you will not receive a penalty for that late assignment. There are some circumstances that will come up. Rather than waiting until after the deadline, make the request beforehand. Some students may feel intimidated to send a public posting. However, this will help the instructor to track the messages in Moodle.

4 –If you have questions or concerns at any time on a particular assignment or activity, please create a public posting in the Instructor's Office Forum. Whether the question is big or small, good two-way communication is very important to have a successful experience!

5 – Check email and/or instructor's announcements at the top of the page in Moodle at least once a day. Remember your attendance will be monitored in Moodle. Find a good balance for both logging in daily and turning in assignments. If you stumble on a certain assignment, ask for help from a classmate who is taking the class and/or ask questions by publicly posting in the Instructor's office at the top of the page in Moodle.

## **Disability Statement:**

Any special accommodations needed by the student are the responsibility of the school where you are enrolled as a full-time student. If those special accommodations also affect your work in this course, the school proctor and/or student will need to inform the instructor the first few weeks of school so that he is aware of the disability and needed accommodations.

## **AGVA Policies:**

AGVA policies are listed in the ***Student Handbook***, available on the [AmazingGraceVA.org](http://AmazingGraceVA.org) website under [Resources, Handbooks](#). This includes policies on non-discrimination, anti-harassment, student expectations, attendance, academic honesty, student discipline, student grades, course add/drop, etc.

Please note the policy on **attendance** that states in part:

***“Even if a student’s local school does not have school on a particular day (snow day, teacher’s conference, quarter break, choral fest, class trip, etc.) AGVA courses will continue to meet and students are expected to complete required work on time.”***

If students are not full-time students at AGVA, they also fall under the policies of the school where they attend as a full-time student. When applicable, that school's policies will also be applied to enrollment in AGVA courses.