

**DFST 04**  
**American Sign Language 4: Spring 2010**



Course #	Class Days and Time	Location
	T/H 6:45 pm – 8:50 pm	Gateway, Room 219

**Welcome to class!**

I look forward to an exciting semester with you and getting to know each one of you. This class should be fun and engaging. We have a lot to talk about!

**Instructor:**

Belinda G. Vicars, MFA [BelindaGVicars@aol.com](mailto:BelindaGVicars@aol.com)  
 Office Hours: By appointment only.

**Course description:**

Everyday communication is the centerpiece of every lesson. Functions and grammar features, which are expanded from DFST 1, 2, and 3, are introduced in the context of storytelling. To master ASL, it is essential that students learn appropriate behaviors, showing awareness of and respect for Deaf culture is taught throughout the course through videotape presentations; native ASL signers model appropriate language and cultural behaviors, values and norms in various situations; discussions, activities and readings reinforce what students learn from the videotapes. Interactive activities allow you to rehearse what you have learned.

The course is designed to apply ASL grammar and to further develop language competency. Emphasis will be placed on students' conceptual understanding of the grammatical structure of ASL and the application of these concepts in language, skill development, and use. This course also is aimed at refining and strengthening the skills acquired in previous levels. Receptive exposure is included in order to assist students to understand nuances of the language. A deeper understanding of the Deaf culture will be incorporated.

**Course Format**

There will be lectures, activities and student participation. Student will need regular access to the internet in order to student the online materials.

**Curriculum and Course home page & syllabus:** [www.belindavicars.com](http://www.belindavicars.com)

**Textbook:** Vista Signing Naturally, Level 3 and workbook

**EXAMINATIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

Assignments and Exams	Points	Total
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(3) Narrative Presentations	100	300
(3) Exams	100	300
(1) Synopsis/Book Report	25	50
(1) Community Event	25	50
Student Participation (multiple)	varies	100
Final Presentation	200	200
Total Points		1000

**Grade Scale:** 100-95%=A, 90 = A-, 87=B+, 83=B, 80=B-, 77=C+, 73=C, 70=C-, 67=D+, 63=D, 60=D-, 59=F.

### **Attendance & Class Participation**

In general, I'm not a stickler about attendance. I understand that things happen. While I do not grade on attendance, I do grade on participation. Each class period will involve a number of activities that will require a certain amount of participation and from the students. For example: Students will be expected to take notes and offer critiques of the presentations. Videos will be watched and worksheets filled out, et cetera. All of which will count towards the total score. If you are absent, these points cannot be made up. You must be present in the classroom in order to receive credit for participation.

### **Narrative Presentations:**

There are three narrative presentations, 4-5 minutes each. You may select one of the themes covered during the preceding two lessons. A handout will be given on the specific requirements for each presentation. For some, some research may be required in order to do your presentation. For example, for Debating Issues, you might need to do more research on Gays in Military for statistics and data. The presentation will be conducted in front of class. If you are unable to make it on the day of the presentation, you are to submit a DVD of your presentation, or send it to be electronically via Youtube or Yousendit, by the next class period. After that, points will be deducted.

### **Exams:**

There are three exams, which will be comprised of two parts: receptive analysis (vocabulary & story analysis), questions concerning what you've learned during the preceding weeks (regarding grammar, classifiers, anything discussed during lectures, etc) and one or two essay questions. Exams will start on time, at the beginning of class. It is rude to expect others to wait, while you get settled. It's rude to interrupt the testing process. Once the class session begins, the door closes. After which there will be no admittance. None whatsoever.

### **Book Synopsis and Review**

- 1) Select *any* book from the "Deaf Biographies and Memoirs" handout, which specifically lists books that are available at your local public and college libraries. Pick one that interests you. (Note: you do not have stick with the list. If another deaf biography or memoir piques your interest – run it by me first.) Paste the bibliography of your choice in the body of an email to me, in the following format: Author's last name, first name. Title of book. Place of publication: Publisher, Year. (Be sure to incorporate the periods, commas, and

- colons. Example: Steinbeck, John. Grapes of Wrath. New York: Penguin, 1939. The subject heading of the email should read: **Last name, first name Bibliography**
- 2) A synopsis is an overall summary of what the book is about, that list some of the more pertinent key points. Do *not* rattle off a list of key points. The point is to create a cohesive and thoughtful synopsis of what the book is about and what message the author is trying to convey. And then include your assessment of the book. Did you think it was any good? Why and why not? Did you agree with the author's message or point view? Again, why or why not? Were there any points that you agreed or disagreed with? Be frank, be bold. For example, if you felt the tone of the book was abrasive, self-pitying, or even inspiring, etc – say so and then tell me why. Be the critic. 400-500 words, single spaced  
Always grammar and spell check your work. Showcase your finest writing.  
Paste your S & R into the body of an email to me, with the subject heading of: **Last name, First Name . Synopsis. Example: Doe, J. Synopsis.**
  - 3) Create a list of 5 questions about the contents of the book that you would be willing to ask about or discuss when conversing with a deaf person for your deaf community event. Paste your questions into the body of an email and send them to me with the subject heading of **Last Name, First Name 5 Questions.**

### **Community Event and Report**

You are level four students. It's time to spread your wings a bit. Be creative. You can use the questions you've drafted from the S & R to initiate conversations or questions you have about a deaf related topic. For example: *what do you think about cochlear implants?* Conduct a survey, if you wish. Get into deep conversations. Take your notes. Report your findings by writing up a a report. Be specific. Who you chatted with, your observations, etc. One page, double spaced.

### **Final Narrative Presentation**

For this project, you can either use the book you've read or select a deaf related topic. You will share your thoughts, report your findings, and share the results of your discussion with the deaf community in regards to your topic. A handout with the specifics will be given .

### **No-Voice Rule**

This is an advanced class. No voicing, whatsoever. During this class, you are expected to ask questions, engage in conversations, and offer opinions in ASL.

### **Open-Communication**

You are welcome to ask questions anytime. If you need further clarification, do not ever hesitate to talk to me after class or to email me during the week.

### **Commitment**

You are expected to invest eight hours a week studying outside the classroom. Come to class prepared. Know the material.

You will be expected to actively participate in class drills and interaction. Passively sitting in your chair, checking your text messages, doodling, or doing something other than conversing in ASL conveys that you hadn't studied and would rather be somewhere else. Like any conversation, it requires two or more people to participate and like any foreign language, you need to practice in order to retain. Thus, coming to class ill-prepared upsets the balance of the

classroom and robs your classmates of the opportunity to practice effectively. Come prepared.

### **Cellphones**

Turn off your cell phone and put it away. Absolutely NO TEXTING in class. No checking the time. Nada. Because if I catch you checking your mail, texting, or even having a cell phone in hand or on your desk, I'll stop whatever I'm doing, walk up to you, and take it. I'm that ornery. After class, you can come talk to me about your phone.

### **Also:**

Take your baseball caps off or turn it backwards when entering the classroom. It is difficult to sign effectively with it on. Try signing "father" with it on.

Spit out your gum. Chewing gum is distracting to the reader.

Stow away all non-class related materials (phones, newspapers, etc) once class begins.

Be kind and respectful to others. Be part of the effort in creating a fun and engaging environment, that is ideal for learning.

### **Make-ups**

Exams cannot be made up *without* a valid reason and proof of reason for your absence. Such reasons fall in category of calamities such serious illnesses, unavoidable accidents, or death in the family. Traffic delays (or tickets), sickness not requiring a doctor's visit, hangovers, family responsibilities, trips to Hawaii, and so forth, do **NOT** count.

However, if you are required to miss an exam in order to participate in pre-approved college or work program non-optional events such as being on an athletic team or having to attend a special training session--show me the letter from your coach or employer and then email me for instructions on how to make up the test and/or presentation. In making accommodations for the exam, I reserve the right to give you a different but equivalent test to the one given in class.

A schedule has been provided. You know in advance, what will be covered in class that day or when exams will be given. Plan your schedule accordingly. If you know you are going to be absent on the day of an exam or presentation and have a valid reason for doing so, inform me ahead of time.

**A word to the wise:** It has been my experience that many low performers always have an excuse. Good students head to school early so that traffic doesn't become a problem and allow time to find a parking spot in a crowded lot. They pre-arrange babysitting, back-up transportation, talk to their bosses, and work to avoid conflicts that might interfere with their class schedules, and/or they do well enough on their overall assignments and tests that if they need to, missing a single day, assignment, or test will not hurt their grade.

So, I encourage you to do the things that good students do so that YOU can get the grade good students get. Good students, for example, don't oversleep, get hung over, miss class and then show up later with an elaborate, albeit, entertaining story. And if calamity does happen (which I most sincerely hope it doesn't), please keep me in loop. Email me. I will work with you.

### **Plagiarism & Cheating**

Students are always expected to work independently on graded quizzes and/or assignments unless specifically directed otherwise by the instructor. Assignments turned in late for any

reason may receive half or no credit. For information on the College's policy regarding cheating and plagiarism, refer to the Schedule of Courses (Legal Notices on Cheating and Plagiarism) and the College Catalog (Policies and Regulations). Penalties for cheating and plagiarism may include receiving an F for a particular assignment, an F for the course, or expulsion from the college.

### **Students with Disabilities**

After themselves to the instructor and the college, students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodation for learning and evaluation. For more information, contact the office of Services to Students with Disabilities.

This syllabus and the schedule are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to check for any announcements made during your absence.

### **Pep talk**

You can do this. I have near infinite patience. I love teaching and explaining. If you have questions, ask in class or email me with your first and last name and the hour of your class in the subject line and I'll strive to get back to you within 48 hours. If there is something I can do to make the class better for you please suggest it. This class may be one of your more challenging accomplishments but I know if you work hard and put in the time--you will succeed.

### **SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND ASSIGNMENTS**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>		<b>Assignment</b>
<b>1</b>	Tue	25-Jan	Lesson 1: Accidents & Mishaps
	Thu	27-Jan	
<b>2</b>	Tue	1-Feb	
	Thu	3-Feb	
<b>3</b>	Tue	8-Feb	Lesson 2: Explaining the Rules
	Thu	10-Feb	
<b>4</b>	Tue	15-Feb	
	Thu	17-Feb	Narrative Presentation #1
<b>5</b>	Tue	22-Feb	Lesson 3: Talking About Money
	Thu	24-Feb	
<b>6</b>	Tue	1-Mar	
	Thu	3-Mar	Test
<b>7</b>	Tue	8-Mar	Lesson 4: Debating Issues
	Thu	10-Mar	
<b>8</b>	Tue	15-Mar	
	Thu	17-Mar	Narrative Presentation #2
<b>9</b>	Tue	22-Mar	Lesson 5: World Cultures
	Thu	24-Mar	No Class

<b>10</b>	Tue	29-Mar	
	Thu	31-Mar	Test
<b>11</b>	Tue	5-Apr	Lesson 6: Health Conditions
	Thu	7-Apr	
<b>12</b>	Tue	12-Apr	
	Thu	14-Apr	Narrative Presentation #3
<b>Apr 18-23</b>		<b>SPRING BREAK</b>	
<b>13</b>	Tue	26-Apr	The Outdoors
	Thu	28-Apr	
<b>14</b>	Tue	3-May	
	Thu	5-May	Test
<b>15</b>	Tue	10-May	Deaf Culture
	Thu	12-May	
<b>16</b>	Tue	17-May	
	Thu	19-May	Final Narrative Presentation