

Community Education – Fall Quarter 2026



Course Title: Basic American Sign Language

Instructor: Nicole Ekle

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Course Details

Time: Wednesdays 6:00 – 8:00 pm

Date: 10/7/2026 to 11/25/2026

Location: Clark College – Main Campus, 1933 Fort Vancouver, Way, Washington 98663 Hanna Hall (HHL) Classroom 110

Course Description

ASL Level I is an introductory course designed to help students develop foundational skills in American Sign Language (ASL). Students will learn commonly used ASL vocabulary, basic sentence structure and grammar, the manual alphabet, and numbers. Through interactive and practical activities, students will build beginning conversational skills in both expressive (signing) and receptive (comprehension) ASL.

The course also introduces students to culturally appropriate communication and behaviors within Deaf communities, as well as the history, culture, and experiences of Deaf people. No prior knowledge of ASL is required.

Required Textbook: To Sign the Fun Way? By Penny Werner, ISBN: 0761532633, ISBN13: 9780761532637

Learning Outcomes

This course will cover **Chapters 1–9** of the 18-chapter textbook. Students will be introduced to basic American Sign Language (ASL), Deaf culture, and everyday communication. Through classroom activities, practice exercises, and interactive communication, students will develop foundational ASL skills and confidence.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

Chapter 1 – Introduction to American Sign Language

- Identify basic information about American Sign Language (ASL).
- Understand the importance of ASL within the Deaf community.
- Learn basic tips for producing ASL signs clearly and accurately.
- Begin developing appropriate visual communication skills.

Chapter 2 – Fingerspelling

- Identify and use the ASL manual alphabet.
- Produce the letters A–Z using fingerspelling.
- Practice fingerspelling through guided exercises and classroom activities.
- Begin recognizing fingerspelled words receptively.

Chapter 3 – Numbers

- Recognize and produce numbers from 0–100.
- Practice counting by tens.
- Use basic numbers in simple ASL communication and activities.

Chapter 4 – People, Family, and Friends

- Recognize and produce basic signs related to people.
- Learn signs for family members, relatives, and friends.
- Use people and relationship vocabulary in simple conversations.

Chapter 5 – Animals

- Recognize and produce common animal signs.
- Learn signs for household and backyard pets.
- Learn signs for animals commonly seen at the zoo and in the wild.
- Use animal vocabulary in simple ASL communication.

Chapter 6 – Food and Favorites

- Recognize and produce basic signs for common foods.
- Learn signs for foods such as pizza, hamburgers, vegetables, candy, and sweets.
- Express simple likes, dislikes, and food preferences.
- Use food vocabulary in basic conversations.

Chapter 7 – Home

- Recognize and produce signs for common objects and items found around the home.
- Develop basic home-related vocabulary.
- Use home vocabulary in simple ASL sentences and conversations.

Chapter 8 – Clothing

- Recognize and produce basic signs for common types of clothing.
- Use clothing vocabulary to describe clothing and everyday items.
- Practice clothing-related signs through classroom activities.

Chapter 9 – Colors

- Recognize and produce basic ASL color signs.
- Use color vocabulary to describe people, clothing, objects, and everyday items.
- Practice using colors in simple ASL conversations.

Deaf Culture and Communication

Throughout Chapters 1–9, students will also be introduced to basic aspects of **Deaf culture and appropriate communication behaviors**. Students will learn the importance of visual attention, eye contact, facial expressions, body movement, and using the signing space appropriately. Students will also develop their ability to **“listen with their eyes”** and become more comfortable communicating through their hands, body, face, eyes, and space.

Continued Learning – ASL Part 2

Chapters 10–18 may be offered in **American Sign Language, Part 2**, during the winter term. ASL Part 2 will build on the vocabulary, communication skills, and cultural knowledge developed in Chapters 1–9.

Students who complete this course will have a foundation in basic ASL vocabulary, fingerspelling, numbers, everyday communication, and Deaf culture to support continued study of American Sign Language.

Class Evaluation

- Class evaluations are sent by email.
 - If you don't see it right away, check your **junk/spam folder**.
 - Evaluations are **anonymous** and come directly from Clark College.
 - If you don't receive one, contact:
 - Email: continuingeducation@clark.edu
 - Phone: 360-992-2939
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Inclement Weather

- If the college closes due to weather, updates will appear at www.clark.edu
 - Community Education may also cancel classes independently if travel is unsafe.
 - If canceled, you will be notified by both phone and email.
 - Please check that your contact information is correct on the class roster.
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