LESS COMMONLY TAUGHT LANGUAGES

Instruction in the less commonly taught languages is offered at Wesleyan through coursework and through the Self-Instructional Language Program (SILP), which allows students to work independently with the assistance of a native speaker and use of texts and technological resources.

Courses in languages such as American Sign Language or Hindi are offered periodically, when student academic interests and/or when courses in various departments support the study of such languages. Such courses are offered under the LANG (Language) designation, are usually yearlong courses, and may be used in preparation for study abroad and in support of academic interests.

Through SILP, students can petition to continue the study of a language offered through the Less Commonly Taught Language Program. If relevant to their academic endeavors, students can petition to study a language not in the curriculum. The application process is competitive, and priority is given to SILPs that are continuations of languages already offered at Wesleyan.

FACULTY

Emmanuel Paris-Bouvret
Director, Language Resources and Technology; Director of Language Resources and Technology; Coordinator, Less Commonly Taught Languages; Visiting Instructor in Romance Languages Literatures

VISITING FACULTY

Joseph M. Basile
BA, University of Connecticut; MA, New York University
Visiting Instructor in American Sign Language

Keith Vinci
BS, University of Connecticut; MA, Southern Connecticut State University
Visiting Instructor in American Sign Language

Leslie A. Warren
BA, University of Vermont
Visiting Instructor in American Sign Language

LANG190 American Sign Language I

This course introduces students to the fundamentals of American Sign Language (ASL), the principal system of manual communication among American deaf people. Not to be confused with Signed English (to which a certain amount of comparative attention is given) or with other artificially developed systems, ASL is a conceptual language and not merely encoded or fingerspelled English. As such, while to some extent influenced by English, depending on the individual signer, it presents its own grammar and structure, involving such elements as topicalization, spatial indexing, directionality, classification, syntactic body language, etc. By the end of the semester, students should have learned between 700 and 800 conceptual signs and their use. They will also have been introduced to aspects of American deaf culture—sociology, psychology, education, theater, etc.—through a variety of readings and discussions.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-LANG

Prereq: None

LANG191 Beginning American Sign Language II

Beginning American Sign Language II will provide a continuation of the work done in LANG190. The course will cover grammatical and linguistic material in some depth, as well as teach additional vocabulary. There will also be a focus on students’ use of the language in class to improve their conversational abilities. The course will also introduce students to deaf culture and the signing community and will include ethnographic and analytical readings related to culture, linguistics, and interpretation.

Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-LANG
Prereq: LANG190

LANG290 American Sign Language and Current Issues

During this third semester of American Sign Language (ASL) study, students will continue to focus on language acquisition while also examining the related ethics and controversies surrounding ASL, deaf culture, and disability issues in America. Several key questions will be considered: How are advances in genetic testing impacting the deaf community? What is the cause of a recent emergence of ASL in popular culture and the huge increase in university course offerings and enrollments? What is the “least restrictive environment” according to the Americans with Disabilities Act compared to day-to-day reality? Is the deaf community a cultural-linguistic minority group or a disabled population? Are cochlear implants a miracle cure, or are they a tool that is misrepresented in the media and/or an attempt at a form of cultural genocide? Why are many parents of deaf children forced to choose a faction of the ongoing oral vs. signing debate, often made to feel guilty by the advocates of the differing methods of education? Guest lectures and discussions will be conducted in a variety of modalities, such as spoken English, ASL, or simultaneous/total communication.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-LANG
Prereq: LANG191

LANG419 Student Forum

Student-run group tutorial, sponsored by a faculty member and approved by the chair of a department or program.

Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U

LANG420 Student Forum

Student-run group tutorial, sponsored by a faculty member and approved by the chair of a department or program.

Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U

LANG466 Education in the Field, Undergraduate

Students must consult with the department and class dean in advance of undertaking education in the field for approval of the nature of the responsibilities and method of evaluation.

Offering: Host
Grading: OPT