University of Northern Colorado

Master of Arts in Teaching American Sign Language

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Course Overview

Purpose

Students will gain the necessary knowledge and skills to understand, evaluate, and conduct research surrounding the teaching and learning of ASL as a first or second language.

Impact

In recent years, the number of programs offering American Sign Language (ASL) instruction has grown exponentially. Despite significant growth in the field of ASL instruction, there has been minimal research conducted in this area. For the field to advance, it is necessary for practitioners to understand how to utilize the available research base, critique preexisting research, and conduct new research that responds to crucial questions surrounding best practices in ASL teaching and learning.

The knowledge base for the Teaching ASL program at the University of Northern Colorado is derived from the ASL Teacher Standards established by Colorado State Standards and Competencies. The content introduced in this course provides the knowledge and skills to evaluate and perform educational research topics related to ASL teaching, such as language acquisition, pedagogy, curriculum design, assessment, and evaluation for L1 and/or L2 students across multiple settings: elementary, secondary and post-secondary.

Objectives

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

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of research in formulating evidence-based practice.
2. Identify, evaluate, and discuss current research surrounding teaching and learning ASL.
3. Formulate a clearly written research question responding to current issues in the field of ASL instruction.
4. Select appropriate research design, methods, and data collection approaches to answer research questions.
5. Apply knowledge of research concepts to the development of a fully formed research proposal.
Plagiarism Policy

**Policy on Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the act of appropriating the written, artistic, or musical composition of another, or portions thereof; or the ideas, language, or symbols of same and passing them off as the product of one's own mind. Plagiarism includes not only the exact duplication of another's work but also the lifting of a substantial or essential portion thereof (UNC definition). Regarding written work in particular, direct quotations, statements which are a result of paraphrasing or summarizing the work of another, and other information which is not considered common knowledge must be cited or acknowledged, usually in the form of a footnote. Quotation marks or a proper form of indentation shall be used to indicate all direct quotes. Regarding class projects, you are not to use as your entire presentation the completed works of faculty members, fully imported websites, or any other body of work in which you are not the author. Of course, with proper referencing, you can import portions of such works and websites to enhance and illustrate your presentation, and you can provide references to these other works for students who have an interest in pursuing a topic further.

For further information, go to the following website: [http://unco.smartcatalogiq.com/current/Graduate-Catalog/General-Information/Policies-and-Procedures/Plagiarism.aspx](http://unco.smartcatalogiq.com/current/Graduate-Catalog/General-Information/Policies-and-Procedures/Plagiarism.aspx)

Inclusivity Statement

The College of Education and Behavioral Sciences (CEBS) supports an inclusive learning environment where diversity and individual differences are understood, respected, appreciated and recognized as a source of strength. We expect that students, faculty and staff within CEBS will be accepting of differences and demonstrate diligence in understanding how other peoples’ perspectives, behaviors, and world views may be different from their own. Furthermore, as stated by UNC, “The University will not engage in unlawful discrimination in...educational services against any person because of race, religion, gender, age, national origin, disability, or veteran status. It is the University’s policy to prohibit discrimination in...educational services on the basis of sexual orientation or political affiliation.” (See [http://www.unco.edu/hr/AAEO_TitleIX.htm](http://www.unco.edu/hr/AAEO_TitleIX.htm)).

Please visit the CEBS Diversity and Equity Committee website for more information on our commitment to diversity ([http://www.unco.edu/cebs/diversity](http://www.unco.edu/cebs/diversity)).

Students with Disabilities

**Accommodations Statement:** Students who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Support Services, Voice/TTY (970) 351-2289, or fax (970) 351-4166, or visit [www.unco.edu/dss](http://www.unco.edu/dss) as soon as possible to ensure that accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.
Grading Scale

The points for all the assignments in a course will add up to 100 and letter grades are assigned as follows for UNDERGRADUATE classes:

- **A** = 100 - 91 superior achievement of course objectives
- **B** = 90 - 81 above average achievement of objectives
  
  *(Reminder: you must maintain at least a “B” per class to meet graduation requirements)*
- **C** = 80 - 71 below acceptable achievement of objectives
- **D** = 70 - 61 below acceptable achievement of objectives
- 60 or below is considered not passing.

Late Assignment Policy

Late assignments will be accepted and graded for up to 72 hours after the due date and time but the final grade will be dropped one letter. Late assignments submitted after the 72 hours that have not been approved in advance with the respective Section Facilitator will NOT be graded and students will receive a zero as the assignment grade.

Extensions for assignment due date and time must be approved in advance with the respective Section Facilitator based on the following criteria:

- The extension is requested at least 24 hours in advance of the due date and time.
- An extension is requested no more than once during any given semester.
- **No late work will be accepted in the last three days of this course.**

Exceptions to the above criteria will only be considered based on documented evidence of special circumstances—such as illness, hospitalization or death of a family member.
Required Text/Readings

Textbooks


Additional Materials from Prior Courses


Web Links


Readings (eReserves)


**Course Preview**

During this course you will explore a variety of methodological approaches and considerations surrounding research in second language teaching settings. You will understand how research contributes to practice, and to use the research literature to inform your work. As you work towards completing a research proposal, you will make methodological decisions surrounding design choices, measures, data collection protocols, and analysis strategies. At the end of this course, you will have completed a research proposal and be familiar with approaches to disseminate research findings. You will have accumulated a comprehensive list of research resources to use in your future work.

**Lesson Outlines**

**Lesson 1 – Overview of Research**
- Limitations that may be found in research
- Evidence-based practice
- Challenges in identifying evidence-based practice in the field
- Strategies unique to signed language instruction
- Limitations in the evidence base

**Lesson 2 – Formulating a Research Question**
- The role of literature reviews in research and practice
- Capturing multiple perspectives of the issue
- Synthesizing the literature
- Primary vs. secondary sources
- Narrowing the scope of literature reviews
- Creating links within the literature
- Creating and evaluating research questions
Lesson 3 – Research Methods in Language Teaching

- Selecting an appropriate research method
- Advantages and disadvantages of each method
- Differences between methods
- Common terminology for each method
- Action research for classroom teachers
- Community involvement in identifying the problem
- Identifying and describing the population
- Protocols and procedures
- Threats to validity
- Emic and etic perspectives

Lesson 4 – Data Collection

- Methods of data collection
- Linking method decisions and data collection strategies
- Standardized measures of sign language
- Assessment specificity to language or population
- Assessment translation or modification
- Involving native signers with data collection
- Video recording of sign language data
- Naturalistic vs. elicited data
- Sensitivity to demands on participants
- Designing surveys
- Resources for data collection

Lesson 5 – Data Analysis

- Common analytical approaches
- Coding
- Cyclical nature of qualitative analysis
- Quantifying qualitative data
- Measurement scales
- Top-down vs. bottom-up approach
- Coder reliability
- Practical significance
- Interpretation issues
- Creating a methods section
- Evaluating methodology decisions
Lesson 6 – Writing, Dissemination, and Replication

- The role of public engagement
- Three types of public engagement
- Disseminating information in ASL
- Involving deaf individuals in all stages of research
- Multiple strategies to disseminate information
- Reaching the stakeholders
- Replicating findings across populations
- Cross-cultural validity
- Why, when, and how to do a study replication
- Need for research replications in the field
- Identify and analyze venues for publication
Course Roadmap

Use this as your “map” while traveling on your distance learning journey. Use the last column to check off each item as you complete it. Icons in the roadmap are used to indicate activities/assignments worth points for grading. Dates before or next to any activity indicate specific dates for that item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Activity Code</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Done!</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Lesson 1 – Overview of Research</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8/24-8/25</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td><strong>Blackboard Introduction</strong>: Post an introduction in the online discussion describing your goals in this class and research interests.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8/26</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td><strong>Video Link</strong>: What is research?</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8/27-8/28</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td><strong>Reading #1</strong>: Odom et al., 2005; Luckner, 2006.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8/31-9/1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td><strong>Reading #2</strong>: Quinto-Pozos, 2011.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9/2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td><strong>Assignments 2 and 3A, Building a Literature Base</strong>: Post a summary and analysis of one article to the appropriate wikis.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9/2-9/4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td><strong>Online Discussion</strong>: Post responses to two thought questions, and respond to at least two of your peers.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Lesson 2 – Formulating a Research Question</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>9/8</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td><strong>Video Link</strong>: Literature Review and Focusing the Research</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9/9-9/10</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td><strong>Reading #1</strong>: Golonka et al., 2012.</td>
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<td>Points</td>
<td>Dates</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/11</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Assignment 2, Reviewing the Literature: Post an analysis of one article.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/14-</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Assignment 4, Writing Workshop A: Post your research question for review and feedback. Provide feedback to at least 2 of your peers’ research questions.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/15-</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Online Discussion: Post responses to two thought questions, and respond to at least two of your peers.</td>
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**Lesson 3 – Research Methods in Language Teaching**

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<th>Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/21</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Reading #1: Chapter 4, <em>Research Methods in Second Language Acquisition</em></td>
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<td>9/22</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Reading #2: Napier et al., 2007.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/23</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Reading #3: Chapter 15, <em>Research Methods in Sign Language Studies</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/24-</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Video Link: Experimental and quasi-experimental research</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/28</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Assignments 2 and 3A, Building a Literature Base: Post a summary and analysis of two articles.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/29</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>Online Discussion: Post responses to two thought questions, and respond to at least two of your peers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/30-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>Online Discussion: Post responses to two thought questions, and respond to at least two of your peers.</td>
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<td>10/2</td>
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<td>Points</td>
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<td>10/5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Reading #1: Chapter 19, <em>Research Methods in Sign Language Studies</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>10/6-10/8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Assignment 3B, Web Exploration: Post a summary and analysis of ASL measures</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10/9</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Reading #2: Chapter 4, <em>Research Methods in Sign Language Studies</em>; Willoughby et al., 2015.</td>
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<td>10/12</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Reading #3: Chapter 5, <em>Research Methods in Second Language Acquisition</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>10/13-10/16</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Assignments 2 and 3A, Building a Literature Base: Post a summary and analysis of two articles.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10/19-10/20</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Assignment 4, Writing Workshop B: Develop a survey for review and feedback. Provide feedback for at least 2 of your peers' surveys.</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10/21-10/23</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Online Discussion: Post responses to two thought questions, and respond to at least two of your peers.</td>
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**Lesson 5 – Data Analysis**

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<th>Points</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<th>Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10/26</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Video Link: Data analysis, interpretation, and use</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10/27</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Reading #1: Chapter 11, <em>Research Methods in Second Language Acquisition</em></td>
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<td>11/3-11/6</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td><strong>Assignments 2 and 3A, Building a Literature Base:</strong> Post a summary and analysis of two articles.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11/9-11/10</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td><strong>Assignment 4, Writing Workshop C:</strong> Post your research methods for review and feedback. Provide feedback for at least 2 of your peers’ research methods.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11/11-11/13</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td><strong>Online Discussion:</strong> Post responses to two thought questions, and respond to at least two of your peers.</td>
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**Lesson 6 – Writing, Dissemination, and Replication**

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<th>Activities</th>
<th>Done!</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11/16-11/17</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td><strong>Reading #1:</strong> Chapter 3, <em>Research Methods in Sign Language Studies</em></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11/23-11/24</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td><strong>Assignments 3A, Journal Review:</strong> Post a summary of two journals of interest to ASL teaching and learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11/30-12/1</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td><strong>Assignment 4, Writing Workshop D:</strong> Post your research proposal for review and feedback. Provide feedback for at least 2 of your peers’ research proposals.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12/2-12/4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td><strong>Online Discussion:</strong> Post responses to two thought questions, and respond to at least two of your peers.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12/7</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Assignment 5:</strong> Complete research proposal due.</td>
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<td>By 12/7</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>End of Semester, congratulations!</strong> Complete online course evaluation.</td>
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<td><strong>Final grades will be posted within 3 days of the end of the semester.</strong></td>
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# Assignments

## Assignment Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Pts</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td><strong>Online Discussions:</strong> Generate 12 original responses to study questions relating to the course readings and activities. Respond to at least 12 postings by online peers. Additional postings are encouraged to foster the greatest degree of learning and participation possible. However, only 12 original and 12 response postings will be graded. Each posting is worth 1 point; the online introduction is worth 1 point.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 2</td>
<td><strong>Wiki Article Analysis:</strong> Post 8 article analyses, responding to questions posted in each lesson. Each article analysis is worth 2 points.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Assignment 3 | **Group wiki:**  
  A. Annotated bibliography  
  B. Measures in ASL research  
  C. Relevant Journals  
Each bibliography posting is worth 1 point, the measure posting is worth 3 points, and each journal posting is worth 2 points. | 14 | Ongoing |
| Assignment 4 | **Writing Workshop:** You will be expected to review your peers’ work and offer feedback on components of their research proposal.  
  A. Research Question  
  B. Survey  
  C. Methods  
  D. Research Proposal  
Each Workshop is worth 5 points. | 20 | Ongoing |
| Assignment 5 | **Research proposal:** The complete research proposal will be submitted as a final project. | 25 | 12/7 |
Course Summary

Conclusion

During this course you have been introduced to key components of research methods in second language acquisition, as may be applicable to signed language acquisition. You understand how research contributes to practice through the formation of an evidence base, and how to use research literature to inform your work. You have examined multiple methodological approaches, and become familiar with the procedures involved with each approach. You can identify approaches and venues for disseminating research findings. As this course concludes, you are now able to formulate a well-written research proposal that can make a contribution to the field of ASL instruction and have accumulated a comprehensive list of research resources to use in your own work.

Key Points

- Research is not infallible. Limitations may be present due to issues such as researcher bias, limited sampling, or weak validity.
- Effective instructional strategies for teaching a visual language may be different than for other spoken languages.
- It may be necessary to draw upon findings from research conducted with different populations or target languages, and to link these findings to research studies within your target population or language.
- All methodological decisions are important components in the formation of a well-designed research study.
- Measures designed for one target language may not be applicable to another target language.
- Strategies for data collection need to demonstrate sensitivity to the demands that may be placed on research participants.
- Surveys can meet multiple needs, whether in research or in the classroom, but must be well designed in order to be useful.
- Approaches to analysis may take a top-down, or a bottom-up approach, depending on the goal of the study.

Next Steps

While this course is still fresh in your mind, pause to review your learning, looking through the lens of your final portfolio that is due at the end of your TASL journey. Consider the following:

1)
Quality Instruction
Preparing Qualified Instructors