

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE AND DEAF STUDIES

PROGRAM OF STUDY

The minor in American Sign Language and Deaf Studies combines language proficiency in American Sign Language (ASL) with interdisciplinary study of deaf culture, history, linguistics, and social issues. Students develop communicative competence while engaging academically with deaf communities and signed languages in their social and cultural contexts. ASL courses include sustained study of deaf language, culture, and history, and students build an understanding of deaf languages and lived experiences through ASL film, scholarship on language rights, and research in linguistics and the social sciences.

Our program trains students to develop strong ASL proficiency while engaging critically with deaf communities through interdisciplinary study. The minor is designed to complement a wide range of primary majors, and students are encouraged to integrate ASL and Deaf Studies into their broader academic and professional goals, such as:

- Working in healthcare or related fields while communicating effectively with deaf patients
- Engaging in accessibility, public policy, and legal advocacy related to deaf communities and sign language rights
- Conducting research or community-based work involving deaf populations, including studies of socioeconomic inequality, intersectionality, disability, and LGBTQ+ identities

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The minor in American Sign Language and Deaf Studies requires a total of six courses beyond the first-year (introductory) ASLG 10100, ASLG 10200, and ASLG 10300 sequence, which together satisfy the general language requirement.

Students complete the minor through two components:

- **Intermediate ASL Sequence (ASLG 20100, 20200, 20300)**
Students develop intermediate-high to advanced proficiency in American Sign Language. They strengthen production, comprehension, and mediation skills, engage in sustained signed interaction, and build the linguistic foundation necessary for participation in deaf communities and advanced academic work.
- **Electives (three courses)**
Students deepen their understanding of deaf culture, history, literature, and the linguistic structure of signed languages. These courses emphasize critical analysis of deaf experiences, visual gestural storytelling, and sociolinguistic variation, allowing students to connect language use with cultural and historical contexts.

Together, these components ensure that the minor combines advanced language proficiency with sustained academic engagement in deaf culture, history, linguistics, and social analysis.

SUMMARY REQUIREMENTS

ASLG 20100 & ASLG 20200 & ASLG 20300	Intermediate American Sign Language I and Intermediate American Sign Language II and Intermediate American Sign Language III	300
Three Electives		300
Total Units		600

APPROVED COURSES

The following courses have been approved for the minor in American Sign Language and Deaf Studies and are organized according to the two curricular components described above: Intermediate ASL and Electives. Course offerings may vary by year.

LANGUAGE SKILLS

ASLG 20100	Intermediate American Sign Language I	100
ASLG 20200	Intermediate American Sign Language II	100
ASLG 20300	Intermediate American Sign Language III	100

ELECTIVES

ASLG 20050	ASL Lit & Storytelling	100
ASLG 26030	American Deaf Community: Language, Culture, and Society	100
ASLG 26050	Deaf Representations in the Media	100
ASLG 26070	Reading and Research Course in ASL and Deaf Studies	100

ASLG 29700	Sign Linguistics: Structure and Diversity in Visual-Gestural Linguistics	100
LING 29412	Linguistics of American Sign Language	100

PLACEMENT AND ADVANCED PROFICIENCY

Students who enter the University of Chicago with prior ASL experience may request a placement Signed Interaction interview, along with a proficiency assessment that evaluates four language skills: Signed Interaction (conducted in person or via Zoom) and Production, Comprehension, and Mediation (conducted through online assessments in Canvas). For questions or issues regarding placement, please contact the American Sign Language and Deaf Studies Program Administrator, David Reinhart (davidreinhart@uchicago.edu).

PROCESS OF DECLARING THE MINOR IN AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE AND DEAF STUDIES

College students from any field of study may complete a minor in American Sign Language and Deaf Studies. Students are encouraged to construct individualized programs and should regularly consult with one of the ASL professors, Matt Andersen or David Reinhart, as well as their College adviser about their pathway through the program.

Students should confer with their College adviser and the American Sign Language and Deaf Studies Program Administrator, David Reinhart (davidreinhart@uchicago.edu) before formally declaring the minor. The minor will not be formally declared until the student submits a completed Consent to Complete a Minor Program Form (<https://college.uchicago.edu/sites/default/files/documents/College%20Dean%20of%20Students/Minor%20Consent%20Form.pdf>) to their College adviser.

