

# Sign Languages and Deaf Culture in the U.S. and France

## *Linguistics 9GS*

Global Seminar 2022  
University of California, San Diego  
Monday June 27 to Friday July 29

### **Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday**

Lecture and discussion  
Time TBA

### **Thursday**

Excursions

### **Instructor:**

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**Objective:** The course is an introduction to the relationship between the vocabulary and grammar of American Sign Language (ASL) and langue des signes française (LSF). The course is taught in sign language and no prior signing experience is required. Class interactions focus on comparative analysis of ASL and LSF, description of the American and French Deaf cultures, and acquisition of basic conversational skills in LSF.

**Background:** ASL is the sign language used by Deaf and hearing people in the United States and parts of Canada and is a member of a family of sign languages that trace their heritage to the use of LSF in Paris in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The world's first public school for the Deaf was founded in Paris in the 1760's at the home of the Abbé de l'Épée and later established at 254, rue St. Jacques where l'institut national des jeunes sourds (INJS) still operates today. In 1817, Laurent Clerc, a Deaf teacher trained at rue St. Jacques, helped establish the first public school for Deaf children in the United States, employing LSF and other sign language varieties used in North America. As Padden and Humphries (1988) note, "Some signs and structures in ASL today still reflect their French

Sign Language origins, although the two languages are distinct.” In order to more deeply understand the structures of ASL, we explore lexical and grammatical roots in LSF.

Key scholars who inform our understanding of sign languages and Deaf cultures include:

- \* Bill Moody and Philippe Gallant
  - “La langue des signes” tome 1-4
  - “Dictionnaire bilingue LSF/Français”
- \* Emmanuelle Laborit
  - “The Cry of the Gull”
- \* Carol Padden and Tom Humphries
  - “Learning American Sign Language”
  - “Deaf in America, Voices from a Culture”
  - “Inside Deaf Culture”
- \* Emily Shaw and Yves Delaporte
  - “A Historical and Etymological Dictionary of ASL”
- \* Ted Supalla and Patricia Clark
  - “Archaeology of Sign Language”

**Learning Activities:** We view and discuss LSF and ASL samples, exploring useful LSF expressions, question forms and responses, verbs, adjectives, daily life activities, foods, animals, clothing and other objects, the manual alphabet and representation of numbers. We examine meaning embedded within the handshapes, movements and locations of LSF signs and explore the iconic motivations with which signs and inflections evolve. We practice use of role-shifting to conceptually represent dialogue, actions and thoughts. We read, translate and enact scenes from Emmanuelle Laborit’s memoir, discuss Deaf people’s ideas of being, and view films about the history and practices of Deaf culture in France, and Deaf people’s human rights. We seek opportunities to engage in signed conversations with Deaf people from many nations on our excursions and enrichment activities.

**Prerequisites:** None. The course is designed for undergraduates with an interest in sign languages but does not presume or require prior experience with ASL, LSF, or formal coursework in Linguistics. Knowledge of French is also not required.

**Weekly responsibilities:** Active participation in signed discussions, role plays and Q & A interactions with the aim to continually link forms and meanings. Arrive at class meetings having read the assignments in “The Cry of the Gull” (and other readings on Canvas), viewed any videos included in the week on Canvas and having reviewed the vocabulary for the day’s lessons in the Petit Guide (laminated brochure provided by CEA, video notes on Canvas). Fully participate in all activities during class meetings and excursions, using sign language to communicate when possible. Language and culture quizzes will be conducted on Canvas during class.

**Texts and videos:** In addition to texts and videos posted on Canvas, students need access to the book “The Cry of the Gull” by Emmanuelle Laborit and the Petit Guide (provided by CEA).

### **Grading:**

- 1) Participation in class activities and discussions (weeks 1-5): 20%
- 2) Three language quizzes (weeks 2-4): 25%
- 3) Three culture quizzes (weeks 2-4): 25%
- 4) Conversation Final Exam by appointment (week 5): 30%

**Contingency:** Our default class meeting location is the CEA building in Paris. Depending on a number of circumstances, it is possible that some class meetings will take place at different locations (including outdoor locations where we may need to sit on grass) or we may meet occasionally on Zoom. Changes to meeting locations announced on Slack will require a reply so we can be sure everyone is aware of the change.

For excursions, in some cases we will leave together from CEA to head to the location, other times we will travel independently and meet at the assigned location. Be sure to stay current with Canvas and Slack announcements each day during our program.

## **Summary of Topics in Ling 9**

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### **Week 1**

**6/27-7/1** handshapes & other parameters of sign languages

**STUDY PETIT GUIDE:**

“des personnes”... people and identities

“des expressions” ... introductions and useful phrases

“des questions” ... question forms, affirmatives and negatives

“des expressions de temps” ... expressing & incorporating time

“alphabet de la langue des signes française” fingerspelling &

“compter” ... numbers 1-20 in ASL and LSF

**READ:** The Cry of the Gull, chapters 1-6 (pgs 1-28)

**3 Day EXCURSION:** Festival Clin d'oeil 2022  
Reims, France (Friday-Sunday)  
Tour of Reims Cathedral & dinner

**LEARN AS MUCH LSF AND INTERNATIONAL SIGN AS YOU CAN FROM OUR FRENCH DEAF GUEST INSTRUCTOR BRUNO MONCELLE (Wed. 6/29) & PRACTICE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN ON OUR EXCURSIONS IN REIMS!**

## **Week 2**

**7/4-8** introduction to studies of iconicity and inflection

**STUDY PETIT GUIDE:**

“des verbes” & “des adjectifs” verbs, adjectives

**Language Quiz #1 during class (covers vocabulary from week 1)**

**Culture Quiz #1 during class (covers The Cry of the Gull chapters 1-6)**

**READ:** The Cry of the Gull, chapters 7-12 (pas 29-63)

**EXCURSION:** INJS rue St. Jacques  
Walking tour of Jardin du Luxembourg

**LEARN AS MUCH AS YOU CAN ABOUT 18TH/19TH CENTURY LSF FROM OUR FRENCH GUEST INSTRUCTOR Dr. SABINE ARNAUD (Tues**

**7/5)**

## **Week 3**

**7/11-15** cultural iconicity

**STUDY PETIT GUIDE:**

“des aliments” & “des fruits et legumes”... foods... fruits and vegetables

**Language Quiz #2 during class (covers vocabulary from week 2)**

**Culture Quiz #2 during class (covers The Cry of the Gull chapters 7-12)**

**READ:** The Cry of the Gull, chapters 13-19 (pages 64-108)

**EXCURSION:** TBA

**LEARN FROM OUR FRENCH DEAF GUEST INSTRUCTOR: TBA**

## **Week 4**

**7/18-22** iconicity maps on the human body

### **STUDY PETIT GUIDE:**

“des lieux du quotidien” & “au magasin”... locations... places to visit  
“des animaux”... animals

**Language Quiz #3 during class (covers vocabulary from week 3)**

**Culture Quiz #3 during class (covers The Cry of the Gull chapters 13-19)**

**READ:** The Cry of the Gull, chapters 20-21 (pgs 109-118 - no culture quiz on these chapters but it may be included on the final exam in Ling 9)

**EXCURSION:** TBA

**LEARN FROM OUR FRENCH DEAF GUEST INSTRUCTOR:** TBA

## **Week 5**

**7/25-29** variation and more comparisons

### **STUDY PETIT GUIDE:**

“des vêtements” & “des choses” ... clothing and descriptions... objects

**Final Exam** by individual appointment during week 5

Assigned readings and due dates for both Linguistics 9 and Linguistics 149 are in the chart below. Assignment due dates and are posted on Canvas.

Attendance and active participation in all class meetings and all scheduled excursions is a key component of both courses (see rubric in Canvas).

All members of the seminar are expected to honor the UC San Diego Policy on Integrity of Scholarship

[https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/process/policy.html?  
\\_ga=2.96424028.1594427241.1560881570-842173471.1557185886](https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/process/policy.html?_ga=2.96424028.1594427241.1560881570-842173471.1557185886)

and the UC San Diego Principles of Community <https://ucsd.edu/about/principles.html>