

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE STUDIES ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

October 2024



WELCOME!

We are excited to introduce our second edition of the American Sign Language Studies Newsletter! As a hub for our current students and esteemed alumni, this newsletter aims to connect, inform, and celebrate our vibrant ASL community!

Warmly,



Linda Pelletier, PhD
*ASL Studies Major
Coordinator & Advisor*



Ashley Guillot
*Interpreting Between
American Sign Language
and English &
Psychological Sciences
Major*



IN THIS EDITION...

- ASL Studies News
- Meet The Faculty
- Alumni Corner
- Student Spotlights
- 2023-2024 Events
- More ASL Events





ASL STUDIES NEWS



ASL COMMUNITY HOUSING

We are delighted to celebrate our third year of ASL Community Housing!

An accessible living community open to Deaf, DeafBlind, hard-of-hearing students, and American Sign Language users!

ASL Housing Features:

- Located in Alumni Quad, near the center of campus
- Participate in ASL community and social events
- Receive regular updates about the Connecticut Deaf community

For more information

 uconn.asl.community@gmail.com

For accessibility related inquires

 uconn.asl.community@gmail.com



NEW COURSE FOR 2025: WINTER ASL IN PUERTO RICO

EARN 3 CREDITS

Engage with the Puerto Rican Deaf community through American Sign Language (ASL).

- One week program in January
- Prerequisite: ASLN 1103 or consent
- Offered as ASLN 3293 Foreign Study

For more information:

 [Prof. Pelletier, linda.pelletier@uconn.edu](mailto:linda.pelletier@uconn.edu)
Or go to [Experiential Global Learning](#)



Raquel Gleicher

She/Her/Hers



The ASL Studies program was fortunate to have Raquel work with us as an intern last year as part of her UConn MA requirements in Higher Education and Student Affairs (HESA).

We are happy to report that Raquel accepted a position at Experiential Global Learning (EGL) as an EGL advisor. We are delighted she is close by and a member of our ASL UConn community. Congratulations Raquel!

MEET THE FACULTY



Dr. Diane Lilo-Martin
She/Her/Hers

Classes I'm Teaching: LING 2850 Introduction to Sociolinguistics in Deaf Communities; ASLN/LING 3800 Structure of American Sign Language

Why Teach ASL Linguistics: I have been fascinated by ASL linguistics for decades, and continue to enjoy learning new things about this field and sharing them with students.



Dr. Linda Pelletier
She/Her/Hers

Classes I'm Teaching: ASLN 2500 Introduction to Professional Interpreting, 2600 Process of Interpreting, 2700 Interpreting in Various Settings, 2800 Consecutive Interpreting

Why Teach Interpreting Courses: I am able to combine both passions, teaching and interpreting ASL and English.



Mike Schlang
He/Him/His

Classes I'm Teaching: ASLN 1101, 1102, 3305 and 3306W.

Why I Teach ASL Courses: I have a passion for teaching while putting smiles on students' faces.



Colleen Shaw
She/Her/Hers

Classes I'm Teaching: ASLN 1101 and 1103.

Why I Teach ASL Courses: Teaching lets me be creative and I love seeing how students' perceptions of the Deaf community change.



Dr. Kara Gournaris
She/Her/Hers

Classes I'm Teaching: ASLN 1101, 1102, ASLN 3650 Deaf Writers and ASL Literature, LING 2850 Intro to Sociolinguistics and the Deaf Community

Why I Teach ASL and Deaf Related Courses: We need more allies from the community and therefore the students are our future.



Dr. Brenda Brueggermann
She/Her/Hers

Class I Teach: ASLN/WGSS 3254 Women and Gender in the Deaf World.

Why I Teach this Course: It has been very exciting and energizing to bring together primarily WGSS and ASLN program students and see the magic they make as we cross many disciplines to study the embodiments and "comportments" of women and gender in the Deaf World.



Dr. Rebecca Rabinsky-Ankrom
She/Her/Hers

Class I Teach: ASLN 1101

Why I Teach this Course: The classroom is my happy place! I thoroughly enjoy student curiosity, am excited to guide their learning journey, and feel fulfilled witnessing human connection and kindness.



ALUMNI CORNER



Kayla Vernon
2024 Graduate

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

I am going to UConn for my Masters degree in Speech-Language Pathology! I am really enjoying learning and experiencing so much in the program already. I miss all of my ASL professors, signing with my friends, and IAing for classes to help beginners learn ASL.

HOW HAS YOUR ASL DEGREE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN YOUR JOURNEY?

Diving into the ASL program at UConn was one of the most important things I did in my undergraduate experience. I made so many connections with the students and staff. Being part of a small program at such a big university gives the department such a strong sense of community and support. I can't wait to start applying everything I learned from the ASL department to my clinical practice!

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR CURRENT STUDENTS?

Ask for help. If something is not clear to you, if you need words of encouragement, if you have a question- reach out! Asking faculty creates connections and asking peers creates friendships.



Annalie Guzzo
2024 Graduate

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

I moved to Madison, Wisconsin for the next step towards my career goals. I am currently working on getting my masters in Speech-Language Pathology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. I am a first-year SLP student and hope to work in a school for the Deaf when I graduate.

HOW HAS YOUR ASL DEGREE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN YOUR JOURNEY?

I am beyond honored to have earned my ASL degree while navigating the world of speech pathology. My biggest motivator throughout this journey has been the end goal of ensuring accessible communication for all. With ASL, I am able to connect more efficiently with clients who do not use spoken language, like my 2-and-a-half-year-old client with Down syndrome. He struggles with articulation, but through ASL, he can express himself in ways that wouldn't be possible otherwise. It's incredibly rewarding to know that I can communicate with him and make a meaningful impact through accessible communication. I take great pride in having this degree, as it not only gives me an edge in my work but also allows me to educate my co-clinicians on the importance of alternative communication methods.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR CURRENT STUDENTS?

My advice for current students in the ASL program is, first and foremost, to be proud of what you do. You are actively creating a more accessible world, and that work is invaluable, even if it isn't always acknowledged. Additionally, I cannot stress enough how important it is to immerse yourself in the Deaf/ASL community. Your passion for this field shines through when you take the time to get involved, and it shows that you truly care about bettering your skills. The more you engage with the community, the more you'll grow as both a professional and an advocate for accessibility.



ALUMNI CORNER



Hanna Clark
2024 Graduate

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

I am currently a first year law student at Suffolk University Law School in Boston, Massachusetts.

HOW HAS YOUR ASL DEGREE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN YOUR JOURNEY?

My ASL degree has provided me with irreplaceable opportunities and experiences that I wouldn't change for the world. I got to work at a summer camp for the Deaf, intern at the American School for the Deaf, and I've met so many incredible people along the way. My degree gave me heightened awareness of the diversities of our world and how important it is to ensure accessibility and conscious awareness in all aspects of life. Learning ASL also pushed me to find my passion for the legal field, which inevitably led me to where I am today. My degree has made me want to become an advocate for unrepresented communities and use my platform to make a difference. I hope that I can continue to get involved in the Deaf community and work hand in hand with various organizations to bring more awareness about the Deaf community into the legal profession as a whole!

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR CURRENT STUDENTS?

Practice, practice, practice! ASL is an extremely beautiful and useful language that can open the door to many amazing relationships. Make sure that you spend time outside of the classroom to get involved within the Deaf community and meet as many people as you can. I also recommend interacting with your professors and stepping out of your comfort zone. I know it can be scary, but you will grow confidence the more you are able to utilize ASL in everyday conversations! But most importantly, have fun learning and don't be afraid to ask questions!



Bethannie Acosta
2023 Graduate

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

I am currently a Scheduling Coordinator for the Interpreting Department at The American School for the Deaf as well as an Intern Interpreter. After graduating from UConn, I teamed up with a friend, who is also an ASL Major and studied for the RID written exam over the summer. I am happy to say we both passed! In preparation for the performance portion of the RID exam I am gaining experience in interpreting under the mentorship of a wonderful team of very dedicated interpreters at ASD.

HOW HAS YOUR ASL DEGREE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN YOUR JOURNEY?

My degree has been the foundation to the beginning of my career in interpreting. Through my degree I have learned the building blocks of ASL as a language as well as developed an understanding of the many components involved in interpreting. I have been able to draw from knowledge learned in all my classes to problem solve and aid in the journey of a novice interpreter who is so eager to improve but understands it takes time.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR CURRENT STUDENTS?

I strongly encourage current students to become as fully involved as possible. Immerse yourself in the language and in the Deaf Community. Do not be afraid to be more expressive and to use your signing space. ASL majors at UConn are so fortunate to have a safe space to practice their skills and resources to help build their confidence. Lean on each other. Be consistent. A visual language is unlike any spoken language. Give yourself grace. To interpret ASL is truly rewarding, and I applaud all who are on this path with me!



ALUMNI CORNER



Danielle Rubin 2020 Graduate

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

I am a Speech-Language Pathologist at Children's Center for Communication/Beverly School for the Deaf in Beverly, Massachusetts. The students at my school are either Deaf with additional disabilities or hearing with significant communication support needs. I did a semester internship at CCCBSD while in grad school and fell in love with the population. I started full time in 2022 and I absolutely love my job!

HOW HAS YOUR ASL DEGREE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN YOUR JOURNEY?

I quite literally could not have my job if I didn't know ASL. I interact with Deaf adults on a daily basis and I support my students using ASL. I am forever grateful to my professors at UConn (Sherry, Doreen, and Linda) for opening up the beautiful world of ASL and the Deaf community to me.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR CURRENT STUDENTS?

Immerse yourself in the Deaf community around you. UConn is lucky to be so close to American School for the Deaf. The best way to practice your ASL is with the Deaf community and you will learn so much from them about their culture! Might even make some friends. Get involved in all the many opportunities related to ASL or any other interests you have! UConn has countless ways to get involved, so try your best to take advantage of the opportunities.

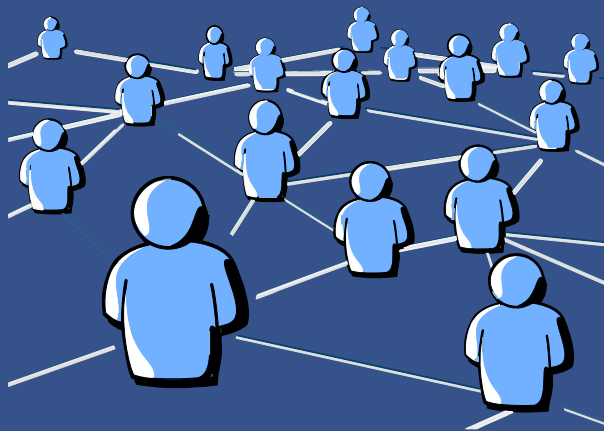
STAY CONNECTED SUBSCRIBE TO OUR LISTSERV

UConn ASL STUDIES-L

We have set up a Listserv to communicate with current students and alumni. In Spring 2024, UConn transitioned away from Gmail as our primary email provider. To ensure you can continue to receive important updates and stay connected, we strongly recommend you provide an alternative email address.

To add an alternative email to our listserv please...

1. Email listserv@listserv.uconn.edu from the desired email account
2. Leave subject title **empty**
3. Body of the email: "Subscribe UCONN_ASL_STUDIES-L [Your Name]"
4. Send!



Stay connected through the ASL Newsletter tab on our website!

LOOKING TO BE FEATURED IN ALUMNI CORNER?



Email linda.pelletier@uconn.edu

STUDENT SPOTLIGHTS

Nathania Charles 2025 Graduate

I joined the ASL program when I was a junior after taking my first ASL class and immediately falling in love with the language, I decided to declare American Sign Language and Deaf Culture as my minor. It quickly became one of my favorite classes to attend. The ASL teachers are incredible, full of energy, and make the learning experience truly enjoyable. The program is so inclusive, filled with great people, and provides an overall fantastic environment for learning and connecting with others.



Alissa Hansen 2024 Graduate

My experience in the ASL program at UConn has been nothing short of incredible. I originally came into UConn needing a language credit, and already being captivated by the beauty of ASL. Not only that, but my mother being hard-of-hearing sparked interest, as we use ASL here and there at home. After my first ASL class I knew that this was something I was more passionate about than I had expected. I am absolutely blown away by the amount of support and encouragement I have experienced throughout this program from the instructors and my peers. I can say with confidence that there is nothing like the unity and connections I have made throughout my time taking ASL classes. The program is so full of positivity, like nothing I've ever experienced in a program before. This type of uplifting energy and sense of community is truly one of a kind. Through the ASL program I have been given so many amazing opportunities as well, such as being an Instructional Assistant, and having been granted a position on ASL Club's Eboard.

There are also tons of open outlets that are available to students to explore and appreciate the Deaf community and culture on a regular basis as well. These include panel discussions, 'Signing Dinners', virtual events, and on-campus functions. In addition, there are many experiential learning and study abroad opportunities that are available to students in the program too. I've since declared a minor in Interpreting Between ASL and English, and couldn't be more excited to continue pursuing it. Not only that, but I have found a true passion for interpreting and appreciating Deaf culture. I am endlessly grateful for the opportunities and encouragement I've experienced, and thank you to all of the instructors throughout the program for your endless support. I know I can speak for most, if not *all* of us ASL/Deaf studies students, that we appreciate everything you do, and the positive energy you bring to the table everyday!

Melanie Miga 2025 Graduate

During the Spring semester of 2024, I had an incredible opportunity to complete my Field Study at American School for the Deaf (ASD). During my time at ASD, I had the opportunity to observe interpreters and ask them questions about their interpreting journey and experiences, gaining valuable insights into the field of interpreting. I also had the chance to step into the "hot seat" and interpret, which pushed me to apply what I've learned in class to real-life scenarios. One of the highlights was working alongside a Deaf interpreter, whose unique perspective and expertise enriched my understanding of the interpreting process. This experience has deepened my passion for ASL and strengthened my commitment to becoming an interpreter.

Robyn Maytas 2025 Graduate

I'm actually a transfer student, so UConn wasn't my first university. I started with a different major and everything! During my first semester, though, I felt like my major wasn't the best fit for me, so I reached out to my high school ASL teacher. She recommended checking out UConn since it had a four-year ASL degree and if I felt that degree wasn't a good match, then there's plenty of diversity in courses and focuses that I could choose from. Needless to say, the ASL program was a perfect fit for me. Through it I've gotten involved in ASL Club, ASL Community Housing, the Instructional Assistant Program, and plenty of other events held by the ASL department. I love having a multitude of opportunities to practice signing with my peers and encourage new students to pursue the language and get immersed in Deaf culture. I'm glad that I ended up at UConn in the end, and I'm grateful for the people and experiences it has provided me.

2023-2024 EVENTS

DeafFest



I have so many favorite events that I've attended, it's hard to pick one! One that stands out to me is DeafFest, a yearly convention where hard-of-hearing and Deaf vendors come to the Mansfield Community Center and so graciously chat with ASL students, and other members of the community. I have been to this event every year since I've been attending the University of Connecticut and always have a blast. There are tables to play games and socialize, bake sales, and everything from jewelry and soaps to woodworking etc. it really is a great time and an open and positive space to learn about Deaf culture and the community. - **Alissa Hansen**

Alternative Spring Break Trip



Earlier this year I went on the ASL Alternative Spring Break trip to Washington D.C.. This was a great opportunity to get more practice signing, as well as get closer to other people in the ASL program! We did many fun activities such as touring Gallaudet University, dining at Mozzarella (A Deaf-owned restaurant), visiting the signing Starbucks, exploring the city, and more! - **Leah Zmudzinski**

NEW FOR 2024-2025



The ASL Studies program, in collaboration with Early College Experience (ECE) and in partnership with our high schools, now offer high schoolers the opportunity to earn UConn college credits for ASL courses studied at their high school. The ASL Studies program proudly supports the growing interest in learning ASL beyond our community.

For more information



*Prof. Pelletier, linda.pelletier@uconn.edu
Or go to [UConn Early College Experience](#)*

MORE ASL CLUB EVENTS

Game Night



Dairy Bar & Sunset



Poetry Night



Tea Party



Intro to ASL



Oozeball



Signing Dinners



ASD Homecoming



COMING SOON!

The ASL Studies major will be celebrating 5 years with a gathering of students, friends, and faculty on **Sunday, April 6th, 3:00pm at Margaritas Mexican Restaurant, 350 Roberts Street, East Hartford, CT.**

Please join the celebration!



THANK YOU

October 2024



This marks the conclusion of our 2nd Annual ASL Newsletter! We are delighted to recap our annual progress, highlighting the ongoing initiatives like ASL Community Housing, the Winter Sign trip in Puerto Rico, and the introduction of new team members. Our alumni's achievements serve as a constant reminder of our passion for our work.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to you for being an integral part of our community. Your support is our driving force, propelling us toward a brighter future.

Stay tuned for our next newsletter.

Huskies Forever!

UConn ASL Team

