Sign Language Through Pop Music:
A Student-Taught Course

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Purpose:
In this class we will learn sign language to the rhythm of well-known music! Each class will cover a different topic, starting at fingerspelling and basic conversation and moving to signs for school and family topics. The history of sign language and deaf culture will be explored as well. Each week the assignment will be to learn the signs for the chorus of a song that uses words learned in class. The final project is to create a sign language music video or present a live choreography.

Topic Plan:

Week	Class Date	Topic	Song	Song Due
1	8/31	Fingerspelling	ABC	9/13
2	9/14	Greetings	?	9/20
3	9/21	Conversation	?	9/27
4	9/28	Time	?	10/4
5	10/5	School	?	10/18
	10/12	**MAIN STREET EVENT**	--	--
6	10/19	Places **(MIDTERM)**	?	10/25
7	10/26	Family	?	11/1
8	11/2	Clothes, Colors	?	11/8
9	11/9	Food	?	11/15
10	11/16	Animals, Weather (Song Choices Due)	Project	
	11/23	Workshop	Project	
	11/30	FINAL PRESENTATIONS	Project	
	12/7	End-of-Class Party		

Course Objectives:
  By the end of this course, students should be able to:
  1. Have a working sign language vocabulary.
  2. Interact in basic sign language conversation.
  3. Use facial expression and body language with sign.
  4. Learn about what it's like to be deaf or hard-of-hearing.
  5. Better understand deaf culture.
  6. Know about deaf history and the societal changes surrounding deafness.

Reference Materials:
  There is no textbook for this course.

However, here are several helpful websites with collections of videos that serve as a sign language dictionary:

http://www.aslpro.com/cgi-bin/aslpro/aslpro.cgi
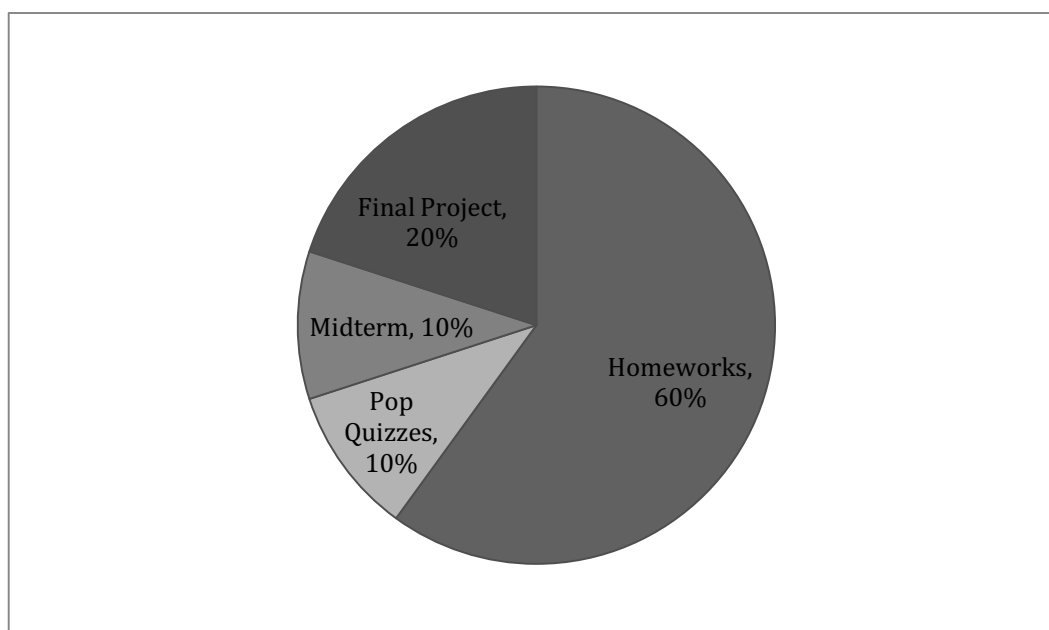http://www.handspeak.com/word/

Course Help:

For each week, I will post a video of the homework assignment for your reference. If you cannot find a sign that you are interested in learning (especially for the final project), feel free to contact me. I can meet you in person, post a video, or try to describe it in words.

Grading Weights:

Assignments:

Each week the assignment is to learn the correct signs for the chorus or verse of a song. You will submit to Dropbox a video of you signing the chorus. For each incorrect or missed sign, I will deduct points, depending on the mistake. However, I will be lenient, and will take into account speed of lyrics and the difficulty of the song. You may use the audio from the reference video while you sign, but you are not allowed to watch the video as you sign it (and should be making eye contact with the camera).

These assignments will be due every **Sunday at 11:59 PM** on Dropbox. Make a shared folder on Dropbox with title of pattern "andrewid-firstName" and then share it with my email: epintar<at>andrew.cmu.edu. Turn in your assignments in this folder each week.

Late Policy:

For late assignments, one day late is a max grade of 80%. After that, you can turn assignments in at any point before the last day of the semester for a maximum of 60%.

For pop quizzes and the final, there will be no late work accepted. If you miss the midterm class period, you will have to schedule a makeup with me that can only receive a max score of 70%.

Pop Quizzes:

At the beginning of class each week, I will ask each person a word from the previous week's vocabulary list (or perhaps even older vocabulary). If you get the word, you will get a point. Six points throughout the semester will get you full credit (out of 11 weeks of vocab). Extra points give you extra credit.

These will be done in the first 2 minutes and before class starts, so if you come late to class, you cannot make up these points. Be on time!

Extra Credit:

Extra credit opportunities may arise. Small opportunities will give you a Pop Quiz point. Large ones can give you a whole assignment grade.

Midterm:

The midterm will take place at the beginning of class the seventh week. For each of the previous weeks' songs, a random group of students will sign the song in front of the class. Grade will be based 50% on sign completeness and 50% on effort.

Final Project:

For the final project, students will pick a song with lyrics to present to the class. You are encouraged to work in groups, and for the size of the group, the minimum time required is variable as shown below.

This project may be in the form of a live class presentation, or a well-crafted music video. You will be graded 50% on sign correctness and 50% on creativity, showmanship, and effort.

We will have a class period to go over needed signs for songs that we haven't learned. Also, online dictionaries are a good resource for looking up new signs.

Even though there is a minimum time, doing the whole song is encouraged. If you are doing minimum time, the time begins when the lyrics begin. You are allowed to edit the songs, do a mashup, take turns on the verses, create a boyband dance, etc. Be creative! Have fun.

Group Size	1	2	3	4/5
Min Song Length	1:00	1:20	1:30	2:00

Attendance:

Since this is a very visual and interactive course, attendance is highly important. It will be hard to catch up on the material presented and I am not going to "make up" classes for people who miss class.

Along with the StuCo policy, if you have more than three unexcused absences, you will receive a failing grade for the course. Make sure to email me about any planned class absences.

Classtime Structure:

Each weekly session will be 80 minutes. The class will begin with a Pop Quiz/Review of prior vocabulary, for 10 minutes. Following that, we will learn the new vocabulary for the week for about 30 minutes. Then depending on the length of the assignment chorus and the deaf culture topic, we will spend the rest of the 40 minutes first learning about an aspect of deaf culture and then going over the new chorus for the week.