

**Fall 2017: LING 6040 - 001**  
**Structure of Sign Languages**

Day/Time: Tu 9:30AM - 12:30PM

Room: OAK 338

Professors:

Diane Lillo-Martin – Oak 352 – [diane.lillo-martin@uconn.edu](mailto:diane.lillo-martin@uconn.edu)

Harry van der Hulst – Oak 362 – [harry.van.der.hulst@uconn.edu](mailto:harry.van.der.hulst@uconn.edu)

Office hours: By appointment

Course description:

The goal of this seminar is to review seminal proposals for the analysis of sign languages, with a specific focus on American Sign Language, but also taking into account comparative and typological work that considers other sign languages. We will examine all levels of grammatical structure (phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics). We will read and discuss articles and book chapters that provide introductory surveys, as well as works that specifically focus on how linguistic structures interface with each other and/or with extra-linguistics systems. Manners in which sign languages resemble, as well as differ from spoken languages will also be discussed. No prior knowledge of sign linguistics or ASL is required.

Expectations:

All participants should read the assigned papers and come to class ready for discussion. To facilitate discussion, we ask that participants post comments about the readings on HuskyCT by 24 hours prior to the start of each class. These comments will help to guide each class discussion. Those who are taking the course for a grade should conduct a course project. We will discuss the expectations for the project on the first day of class. Students will present a summary of their project on Tuesday, Dec. 5, and submit a written report of their project by Tuesday, Dec. 12.

Schedule:

Unit 1: Introduction, week 1

Unit 2: Phonology ~ conceptual structure/iconicity, weeks 2-5

Unit 3: Morpho-syntax ~ formal semantics/depiction, weeks 6-9

Unit 4: Iconicity, week 10

Unit 5: Syntax ~ prosody/discourse, weeks 11-13

Unit 6: Presentations, week 14

<b>WK</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
1	August	29	Introduction	Lillo-Martin & Gajewski (2014)
2	September	5	Phonology – overview	van der Hulst & van der Kooij (to appear)
3	September	12	Phonology and iconicity	Taub (2012)
4	September	19	Phonology	van der Kooij & Zwitserlood Channon & van der Hulst
5	September	26	Phonology	Lepic et al. (2016)
6	October	3	Morphology – overview	Aronoff et al. (2005)
7	October	10	Morphology – 'classifiers' formal	Zwitserlood (2012) Benedicto & Brentari (2004)
8	October	17	Morphology – 'classifiers' depiction	Dudis (2004) Davidson (2015)
9	October	24	Morphology – 'agreement'	Lillo-Martin & Meier (2011) Fenlon et al. (in press)
10	October	31	Iconicity	Meir et al. (2013) Schlenker (2016)
11	November	7	Prosody – overview	Sandler (2012) Fenlon & Brentari (to appear)
12	November	14	Syntax & prosody	Cecchetto et al. (2009) Lillo-Martin & Quadros
13	November	28	Syntax & discourse	Kimmelman & Pfau (2016)
14	December	5	Student Presentations	n/a

## READINGS

### Introduction:

Lillo-Martin, Diane & Gajewski, Jon (2014). One Grammar Or Two? Sign Languages and the Nature of Human Language. *WIREs Cognitive Science* 5, 387-401.

### Phonology:

Hulst, Harry van der & van der Kooij, Els (to appear). Phonological structure of signs – theoretical perspectives. In Josep Quer Villanueva, Roland Pfau and Annika Herrmann (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Theoretical and Experimental Sign Language Research*. Routledge.

Taub, Sarah (2012). Iconicity and Metaphor. In Roland Pfau, Markus Steinbach and Bencie Woll (eds.), *Sign Language: An International Handbook*, pp. 388-412. de Gruyter: Berlin.

Kooij, Els van der & Inge Zwitterlood: Word formation and simultaneous morphology in NGT.

Channon, Rachel & Hulst, Harry van der: Iconicity (presentation and possibly paper to read)

Lepic, Ryan, Börstellö Carl, Belsitzman, Gal, & Sandler, Wendy. (2016). Taking meaning in hand: Iconic motivations in two-handed signs. *Sign Language and Linguistics*

### Optional background readings for phonology:

Sandler, Wendy (2017). The challenge of sign language phonology. *Annual Review of Linguistics*. 2017/3.

Goldin-Meadow, Susan & Brentari, Diane (2017). Gesture, sign and language: The coming of age of sign language and gesture studies. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. [Includes commentaries by other authors].

### Morphology

Aronoff, Mark, Meir, Irit & Sandler, Wendy (2005). The paradox of sign language morphology. *Language* 81, 301-344.

Zwitterlood, Inge (2012). Classifiers. In Roland Pfau, Markus Steinbach and Bencie Woll (eds.), *Sign Language: An International Handbook*, pp. 158-186. de Gruyter: Berlin.

Benedicto, Elena & Brentari, Diane (2004). Where did all the arguments go? Argument-changing properties of classifiers in ASL. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 22, 743-810.

Dudis, Paul (2004). Body portioning and real-space blends. *Cognitive Linguistics* 15, 223-238.

Davidson, Kathryn (2015). Quotation, demonstration, and iconicity. *Linguistics & Philosophy* 38, 477-520.

Lillo-Martin, Diane & Meier, Richard P. (2011). On the Linguistic Status of ‘Agreement’ in Sign Languages. Target article, *Theoretical Linguistics* 37, 95-141.

Fenlon, Jordan, Schembri, Adam, & Cormier, Kearsy (in press). Modification of indicating verbs in British Sign Language: A corpus-based study. *Language*.

### Optional background readings for morphology:

Sandler, Wendy & Lillo-Martin, Diane (2006). *Sign Language and Linguistic Universals*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chapter 3: Inflectional Morphology

Chapter 5: Classifier Constructions

### Iconicity

- Meir, Irit, Padden, Carol, Sandler, Wendy, & Aronoff, Mark (2013). Competing iconicities in the structure of sign languages. *Cognitive Linguistics*, 24(2), 309–343.
- Schlenker, Philippe (to appear). Logical Visibility and Iconicity in Sign Language Semantics: Theoretical Perspectives. In Josep Quer, Roland Pfau, and Annika Herrmann (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Theoretical and Experimental Sign Language Research*.

### Syntax & Prosody

- Kimmelman, Vadim & Pfau, Roland (2016). Information structure in sign languages. In C. Fery and S. Ishihara (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook on Information Structure*, 814-833. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sandler, Wendy (2012). Visual prosody. In Roland Pfau, Markus Steinbach, & Bencie Woll (Eds.), *Sign Language. An International Handbook*, 55-76. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Fenlon, Jordan & Brentari, Diane (to appear). Sign language prosody. In Josep Quer, Roland Pfau, and Annika Herrmann (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Theoretical and Experimental Sign Language Research*.
- Cecchetto, Carlo, Geraci, Carlo & Zucchi, Sandro (2009). Another way to mark syntactic dependencies: The case for right-peripheral specifiers in sign languages. *Language* 85, 278-320.
- Lillo-Martin, Diane & Quadros, Ronice Müller de (2010). Interfaces and WH-Questions in Sign Languages. (presentation and possibly part of a paper)

Optional background readings for syntax:

Sandler, Wendy & Lillo-Martin, Diane (2006). *Sign Language and Linguistic Universals*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Chapter 22: Topic and Focus

Chapter 23: WH-Questions