

## **Course Description: Medical American Sign Language (ASL) and Deaf Health Elective ENRH-191**

### **Course Director:**

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### **Course Instructor:**

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### **Faculty Sponsor: (if non-faculty course director)**

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### **Department:**

N/A

### **Student Liaison:**

Annie Kurian: [Annette.Kurian@UTSouthwestern.edu](mailto:Annette.Kurian@UTSouthwestern.edu)

### **Requirements:**

- Minimum participants for course to be conducted: 5-7
- Maximum number of students per course (if applicable): 50

### **Rationale:**

Introducing an elective course on Deaf Health is needed to cultivate a medical community that is not only proficient in delivering clinical care but is also attuned to the diverse needs of patients. This course addresses an existing gap in healthcare provision for the Deaf and hard-of-hearing population, where communication barriers and cultural nuances significantly impact health outcomes. By integrating ASL training and comprehensive insights into Deaf culture, the course seeks to empower future medical professionals with the necessary tools to provide equitable, patient-centered, and culturally competent care. Additionally, the exploration of related topics such as health disparities & inequities, interpreter utilization, disabilities, and ADA compliance ensures a holistic understanding of the challenges faced by not only linguistic minorities but those with disabilities as well, contributing to a more inclusive healthcare environment.

### **Objectives:**

Develop Skills & an Appreciation of ASL:

- Provide students with a foundational understanding of American Sign Language (ASL) to assist in direct communication with Deaf patients.

- Foster practical language skills through immersive learning experiences and interactive sessions.

#### Enhance Deaf Cultural Competency:

- Cultivate awareness and understanding of Deaf culture, emphasizing the importance of cultural sensitivity, respect, and appreciation.
- Equip students with the knowledge to navigate cultural nuances and preferences when interacting with Deaf individuals.

#### Facilitate Effective Interpreter Utilization:

- Educate students on the role and significance of interpreters in healthcare settings.
- Develop skills in working collaboratively with interpreters to ensure seamless communication between healthcare professionals and Deaf patients.

#### Examine Health Inequities Among Linguistic Minorities:

- Explore the disparities in healthcare access and outcomes among linguistic minorities, with a particular focus on the Deaf community.
- Foster a critical understanding of the socio-cultural determinants that contribute to health inequities.

#### Promote ADA Compliance and Disability Awareness:

- Provide an in-depth examination of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its implications for healthcare practices.
- Raise awareness about the diverse spectrum of disabilities and the importance of ADA-compliant healthcare environments.

#### **Format:**

The proposed Deaf Health elective will adopt an immersive and interactive classroom-based structure, ensuring students actively engage with the material and develop practical skills. Approximately 1/3 to 1/4 of each hour-long session will involve lectures and workshops, providing a foundational understanding of Deaf culture, health inequity and disparity research. The remainder of the course will be dedicated to hands-on, experiential learning, facilitated by a Deaf ASL teacher (to be provided likely after the initiation of the course) to learn and practice American Sign Language. A community partnership is currently being sought out with the Deaf Action Center to provide real-world experiences and interactions. Key components of the format include:

- **Interactive ASL Sessions:** The core of the course will feature interactive ASL sessions led by a Deaf ASL teacher, allowing students to actively practice and enhance their language skills.
- **Silent Dinners:** Once a semester-scheduled silent dinners will provide students with opportunities to engage with members of the Deaf community in a real-world setting, reinforcing language acquisition and cultural understanding.
- **Interpreter Training Assessments:** Practical assessments focusing on interpreter use with patients, ensuring students can effectively collaborate with interpreters in healthcare scenarios.

- **Role-Playing Exercises:** Simulated healthcare scenarios where students can apply ASL and cultural competency skills in a controlled environment, building confidence and practical proficiency.
- **Guest Speakers and Panel Discussions:** Inviting Deaf individuals, healthcare professionals, and advocates for guest lectures and panel discussions, providing diverse perspectives and real-world insights.
- **Multimedia Resources:** Integration of multimedia resources, including videos and online tools, to enhance theoretical knowledge and language acquisition.
- **Cultural Immersion Activities:** Beyond silent dinners, the course will incorporate additional cultural immersion activities, encouraging students to actively participate in Deaf cultural events and initiatives around North Texas.

This balanced approach aims to create a dynamic and inclusive learning environment. The course design recognizes the importance of real-world experiences and cultural sensitivity in fostering a deeper understanding of Deaf health.

***Student Evaluation:***

Students are required to complete an online REDCap Evaluation.

***Course Evaluation:***

Grading will be pass/fail. To receive transcript acknowledgment, students must:

- attend 10 of 12 participant hours
- complete the online REDCap course evaluation form