

**Committee on General Education
Report to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee**

See <http://www.ric.edu/faculty/organic/coge/> for the latest documents.

COGE approved the recommendation of the Modern Languages Department that

Rhode Island College students may use American Sign Language to fulfill the Second Language Requirement by completing two semesters of introductory college-level ASL or by demonstrating Novice-Mid level proficiency by taking the American Sign Language Proficiency Interview.

Currently, Rhode Island College offers one introductory semester. Two semesters are offered at CCRI and at Bristol Community College. The full ML Department proposal is appended. This change increases the range of opportunities for students to complete the Second Language Requirement.

Respectfully submitted,

James G. Magyar
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From: Olga Juzyn

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE

The department of Modern Language is in agreement that ASL may be used to fulfill the Second Language Requirement. The following could be included in the Second Language Requirement section of the catalog:

RIC students may use American Sign Language to fulfill the Second Language Requirement by completing two semesters of introductory college-level ASL or by demonstrating Novice-Mid level proficiency by taking the American Sign Language Proficiency Interview.

The Novice-Mid level is currently expected of the average student. It has become widespread practice to use the ACTFL (The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) standards as well as the proficiency levels to speak about the teaching and assessment of ASL. ACTFL has included the following statement regarding ASL in their *Performance Descriptors for Language Learners*:

UNIQUE APPLICATIONS TO AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (ASL):

These Performance Descriptors are equally applicable to learners of ASL, with slight adaptations according to each mode of communication. In the interpersonal mode (signing), the visual language signed underscores the communicative importance of facial gestures and other physical clues to meaning, but learners employ basically the same communication strategies as other languages within each of the ranges of performance. The word “interpretive” needs special definition for ASL: its use to identify a mode of communication denotes receptive language or understanding, rather than the act of serving as an ASL interpreter. The “text” is either live or recorded, such as a signed message, commentary, discussion, song, or play. In the presentational mode users of ASL use the same communication strategies as other languages; however, educators may act more as coaches to assist ASL language learners with the editing and revising process in the presentational mode. Examples of ASL presentational or productive language include messages, stories, or videos. Language educators and learners need to remember that the levels of cultural awareness as described in the Performance Descriptors are as important in ASL and within the Deaf community as in other languages and cultures. (ACTFL Performance Descriptors for Language Learners 2012 Edition)

Students will not be able to use ASL study at RIC to satisfy the Second Language Requirement at RIC because the Communication department teaches only one beginning ASL course: COMM 223 Introduction to Sign Language, whose description is:

The basic vocabulary of Signed English and finger spelling are introduced. Discussion includes the needs and problems of the deaf community. A vocabulary of 600 signs should be attained at the completion of this course. 3 credit hours.

Students may, however, transfer ASL courses from other institutions. In our area, CCRI offers 3 ASL levels through their Human Services department. Students can fulfill the Second Language Requirement at RIC by transferring **HMNS 1060 - American Sign Language I and II**.

HMNS 1060 - American Sign Language I (3 Credits)

This is a beginner's course in the sign language of the deaf in the United States. The course equips students with skills that enable communication in American Sign Language, both expressively and receptively. Topics relevant to the use of sign language include: the role of signs in American education of the deaf, the oral versus manual controversy, the philosophy of total communication and standards and ethics of sign language interpreting. Students are expected to attain competency with 600 common signs and to adhere to acceptable standards in utilizing this skill. Elective for Liberal Arts program. *Note: Grade of "C" or better is required for Human Services program students. Lecture: 3 hours*

HMNS 1070 - American Sign Language II (3 Credits)

This is an intermediate-level course in the sign language of the deaf in the United States. This course concentrates on improving skills acquired in HMNS 1060 and focuses on effective conversational skills, both expressive and receptive. Students are expected to attain competency with 600 signs and a working knowledge of American Sign Language. Elective for Liberal Arts program. *(Prerequisite: HMNS 1060) Note: Grade of "C" or better is required for Human Services program students. Lecture: 3 hours*