**Course Title:** LIN 5108 Topics in Sign Language Research

**Description:**
This course provides an introduction to a relatively new area of linguistic exploration: sign language as a natural language system. We will lead students into a variety of disciplinary studies that adopt sign language as a focus of research. Examples of these disciplines are linguistics, language in education, language and brain, language and cognition, language development, language and society, and language and culture. The course aims to tackle these issues in light of the current developments in sign language research and see how they shed light on our understanding of deaf issues.

**Content, highlighting fundamental concepts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Contents/fundamental concepts</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Misconceptions about sign language</td>
<td>● Hearing people’s common misconceptions about sign language grammar and sign language use.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Linguistic properties of sign languages</td>
<td>● Natural signing system as opposed to manual representation of spoken language, sign language phonology, morphology, syntax, polycomponential constructions, metaphorical use of language, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Sign Language, the Deaf Community and the education of the Deaf</td>
<td>● How essential is the use of sign language to the development and cohesion of the Deaf Community and why sign language is of paramount importance to the education of the Deaf.</td>
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</table>

**Learning outcomes:**
- Understand and appreciate that sign languages are natural language systems comparable to spoken languages
- Become able to identify the similarities and differences between sign languages and spoken languages
- Develop basic analytical capability in conducting linguistic analysis on natural sign language data.

**Assessment scheme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task nature</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class attendance</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign language data analysis</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Quiz</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
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</table>

**Requirement of Term Paper:**
Students are required to write a term paper on a selected topic of any sign linguistic issues covered in this course. The paper can be a small-scaled research project based on natural sign language data or a critical and comprehensive review on a sign linguistic issue. The requirements on length and format are: double-spaced, font 12, Times New Roman, all margins 2.5 cm, at least 15 pages excluding bibliography.

**Feedback for evaluation:**
Students are welcome to give comments and feedback to the instructor via the following means:
- Mid-term and course-end evaluation
- In class discussions
- Moodle’s discussion forum, personal emails or individual appointment with the instructor
Week | Date       | Topic                                           |
-----|------------|-------------------------------------------------|
Week 1 | 15 January 10 | Introduction: deafness, deaf people and sign language |
Week 2 | 22 January 10 | What is natural sign language?                 |
Week 3 | 29 January 10 | Phonology                                       |
Week 4 | 5 February 10 | Spatialized Syntax                              |
Week 5 | 12 February 10 | Lexicon/Morphology                             |
     | 19 February 10 | Lunar New Year Holiday                         |
Week 6 | 26 February 10 | Non-manual signals                             |
Week 7 | 5 March 10 | Classifiers and classifier constructions       |
Week 8 | 12 March 10 | Acquisition of sign language                   |
Week 9 | 19 March 10 | Brain and sign language                        |
Week 10 | 26 March 10 | Gesture and sign languages                     |
     | 2 April 10 | Easter Holiday                                  |
Week 11 | 9 April 10 | Sign language metaphors                        |
Week 12 | 16 April 10 | Sign language in deaf education: issues and controversies |
Week 13 | 23 April 10 | Future survival of sign languages and the Deaf Community |

Reading Materials

RECOMMENDED READING MATERIALS

Basic Readings
Week 1:


Week 2:


Week 3:


Week 4:

Week 5:


Week 6:


Week 7:


Week 8:


Week 9:


Week 10:


Week 11:

Week 12:


Advanced readings:

Week 2:


Week 3:

Week 4:


Week 5:


Week 6:

Week 7:


Week 8:


Week 9:

Week 10:
Week 11:

Week 12:

Wilbur, Ronnie B. 2000. The use of ASL to support the development of English and literacy. *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education* 5: 1, pp. 81-104 (PDF)
Teachers’ or TA’s contact details

- List both the teachers’ and TAs’ contact details such as name, office location, phone number and email address in order to help students easily locate your contact information.
- Additional information such as personal background and research interest of the teachers and/or the TAs may also be included to improve understanding and relationships between teachers/TAs and the students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professor/Lecturer/Instructor:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name:</td>
<td>Dr. Felix Sze Yim Binh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office Location:</td>
<td>Rm 203, Academic Building 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Telephone:</td>
<td>31634178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:felix_csls@cuhk.edu.hk">felix_csls@cuhk.edu.hk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Venue:</td>
<td>HYS LG04, Fri 6:30pm - 9:30pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at [http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/](http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/). With each assignment, students will be required to submit a statement that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures.