Sussex Centre for Language Studies
Open Courses in Modern Languages

ONLINE OPEN COURSES
(January-May 2022)
What to expect

Since March 2020, we have been running a successful programme of online language courses at the University of Sussex. We had hoped to return to on-campus teaching from January, but considering the ongoing uncertainties surrounding the covid pandemic we have taken the decision to continue this format until the end of the Spring Term 2022 (April/May). We are committed to ensuring safety as well as stability for all our staff and students.

If you are joining one of our new 12-week courses starting in the Spring Term, please familiarise yourself with the following information.

What the courses involve

- If you are new to this mode of learning, you may find the virtual classroom a little different at first, but our experienced teachers will guide you through the process so that you can start/continue learning the language in a fun and stimulating class. The emphasis of the classes is as always: to provide a structured and enjoyable learning environment for developing your language skills and learning about the cultures and customs associated with the language.
- Your weekly classes will be delivered using **Zoom.** Zoom is a video conferencing platform we used to create an online classroom experience. Every week, you will use a weblink to access this virtual classroom.
- Materials from the week's class is posted on **Canvas.** When you join an Open Course, you will be given access to a Canvas site specific to your class. We recommend you check this site on a weekly basis to find resources, homework and other communication.
- Sometimes, tutors and students agree to record the lesson so that it can be used by the students for review. This is only done by agreement and the recording will not be available to anyone outside of the class. The recorded lessons are found on Canvas, under 'Panopto'.

What you need to participate in an online Open Course

- A device with a microphone and webcam. Laptops, desktops and tablets are the best devices for participating in our classes. Being able to see your tutor and other students on your screen is important, so smartphones are not ideal.
- Broadband internet with a download speed of 1.5Mbps or higher and an upload speed of 1.5Mbps or higher.
- Access to a web browser (Chrome, Firefox, Safari or Edge) which is kept up-to-date.

Online lesson etiquette

1. Please turn your camera on during the Zoom class wherever possible. This helps everyone in the group to get to know each other, and it enables your tutor to give you better feedback.
2. Find a suitable space for attending the class – this would ideally be quiet and away from distractions, although we know this can sometimes be hard at home! If this is the case, you may wish to use the 'blur background' setting (instructions available at: 'https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360061468611-Using-blurred-background-).
3. Please use the 'unmute' button on Zoom when speaking, and the 'mute' button when other people are speaking, especially if there is noise in your background.
4. Don't be afraid of making mistakes – this is a part and parcel of the whole process of learning a language. Think of the Open Course as a community of language learners. Everyone is keen to learn and there to encourage and support each other in this process. Repetition and group practice is an important step towards acquiring the language.
5. Do the homework and try to practise the language regularly. Check your Canvas site each week for materials and homework tasks.
6. Attend regularly, and use the materials on Canvas to catch up if you have to miss a class.

Online lesson etiquette (British Sign Language)

All of the above points are relevant to BSL classes, but here are particular requests which are important for those learning BSL:

1. Make sure your camera is on and sound is off when you enter the Zoom session. As BSL is a visual language, having the camera on is essential for you to receive feedback on your signing and make progress.
2. During the taught sessions, BSL is the language of the class and not English. Please try to refrain from using English in taught sessions wherever possible.
3. When using or practising BSL, do not use your voice – it will only distract your learning.
4. Watching, signing and practising BSL with partners, or in front of peers, is part of the learning process. Similar to any language, the best way to learn a language is to use it.
5. Eye and physical contact are important elements of Deaf culture – do expect to look at others and be watched by others.
6. Where possible, the tutor will video record sessions to help you to remember the signs you need to learn. Spend time practicing what you have learned after the session. For every hour in class, expect to practise another hour on your own or with a partner. Written notes are only helpful if you use them for practise.
7. Students who attend regularly are likely to receive better marks.
8. Use Canvas. There are more materials on Canvas and some weeks have additional tasks.