Accessibility for Students using ASL Interpreters: Online Lectures (Zoom)

The PMC hires professional interpreters for students that communicate using American Sign Language (ASL).   ASL Interpreting is extremely demanding, physically and mentally, so interpreters work in pairs so they can switch roles every 15 minutes or so. The "teamer" monitors and shares any missed information with the "signer".

Students using ASL Interpreters cannot watch their Interpreters and take notes at the same time, so they also have access to notetaking support from the PMC.

Interpreters follow a Professional Code of Ethics, according to which they:
1. Interpret everything said during a lecture, including questions and comments from the class.
2. Maintain confidentiality about the interpreting assignment.
3. Work solely to facilitate communication; do not comment on information they are interpreting.

Strategies to Improve Accessibility: Online Lectures (Zoom)

1. If the ASL interpreters can review class materials in advance their work is more accurate. Hunter Calder, PMC Student Support Officer, will send you the names and emails of the ASL interpreters assigned to your course. Please add them to your course Brightspace page under the 'PMC' role, by following the instructions to [Enroll a User](#). Also - Please send them any materials to be used or referred to in class that are not posted in Brightspace.

2. During synchronous online lectures, as well as Zoom discussion groups, tutorials or labs, students need a clear view of their ASL interpreters throughout. To make this possible, please use the **Zoom Spotlight** function to display the ASL interpreters' video panels at the top of the **Gallery**:

- At the beginning of class, the interpreters will turn on their cameras.

- Because you are the Zoom host, please hover over each interpreter's video panel, and click on the blue ellipsis (three dots) in the upper right-hand corner.

- From the dropdown menu, choose **Spotlight**.

If the **Zoom Spotlight** function doesn't work, please give the ASL interpreters **Co-host** ability, so they can manage their own visibility.

3. Please video-record your synchronous online lectures to post on Brightspace, and record it on your local device if possible, because Zoom Cloud can be problematic. In addition:

- Use the **Zoom Spotlight function** to highlight the interpreters (see number 2, above).

- Hover over the **Option** button (**...**) on the panel of any participant with their camera off, and select **Hide Non-Video Participants**.

4. Interpreting requires a slight pause between speakers, for example during class discussions. This is because the ASL interpreter finishes signing a few seconds after a speaker is done, and can interpret just one person's comments at a time. Please allow a brief pause between speakers.

5. The extra cognitive load required to actively in engage in a lecture is extremely demanding for the student using ASL Interpreters. They must mentally reconstruct the information from their interpreter's signs after a slight delay, while at the same time constantly trying to catch up with the ongoing stream of information. Please ensure that you provide a short break after every hour or so.

6. Please ask the class to use the **Zoom Chat** for questions or comments, which you can also read out loud for the Interpreters to translate (repeat as needed). The student cannot watch their interpreter and monitor the Zoom chat at the same time; however, they may benefit from having access to it to not only to read posts from classmates, but also to add their own. In addition, please repeat any questions or comments that are spoken aloud.

7. Students need time to transition between two visual inputs, e.g. their ASL interpreter and a lecture slide. If applicable, please post lecture slides and any another visual material in Brightspace in advance.

8. Please provide important information and announcements (e.g. changes to deadlines) on the class website. In addition, please advise all students in advance of any tests or exams as to how they may contact you to ask questions about the exam in writing, as well as receive any important communication from you in writing.

9. ASL is not just English converted to signs. It is a separate language with a distinct syntax, grammar and structure. Excessive use of idioms, synonyms, and extraneous details may lead to misinterpretation of spoken *and* written information, including exam questions. In addition, students that communicate using ASL typically need more time to read and write in English compared to their peers. Writing style may reflect the fact that ASL is their first language.

8. When speaking with the student in person (for example, during office hours), please face them and not their ASL interpreter. Be sure to use direct language (for example, "Do you know?" versus "Ask her if she knows").

Questions or concerns?

You can contact the student's PMC Coordinator: If unknown, please contact the PMC front desk: 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca

You can contact Hunter Calder, PMC Student Support Officer: hunter.calder@carleton.ca

For specific questions or support related to captioning, computer notetaking, or ???please contact Hunter Calder, PMC Student Support Officer (hunter.calder@carleton.ca)

Resources:

PMC: https://carleton.ca/pmc/faculty-and-instructors/resource-guides/universal-instructional-design/

Carleton Teaching & Learning: Accessibility Resources for Instructors - Teaching Resources (carleton.ca)

The Canadian Hard of Hearing Association's Virtual Meeting Platform Accessibility Guide (2021) covers Zoom, and other applications. Includes instructions for Closed Captioning and other accessibility tools: https://www.chha.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Virtual-Meeting-Platform-Accessibility-Guide-1.pdf

Guidebook for Instructors (Canadian Hard of Hearing Association, 1997)