Course title: Multiculturalism and Ethnicity in Argentina
Course code: ANTH 3001 AFLA (SPAN) / LAST 3008 AFLA (SPA)
Programs offering course: Liberal Arts
Language of instruction: Spanish
U.S. semester credits: 3.00
Contact hours: 45.00
Term: Spring 2020

Course Description

This course introduces students to interethnic relations in Argentina, and to theoretical approaches to cultural identity, ethnicity, multiculturalism and interculturalism. Based on anthropological, historical and political sciences approaches, the course seeks to present and discuss Argentina’s ethnic complexity and to challenge widely held assumptions about its socio-cultural homogeneity, focusing on its ethnic diversity. We will explore the complex processes of incorporation and/or exclusion of Original peoples, the invisibilization of Afrodescendants, current migrant groups from a wide variety of countries and the relationships among them, the current situation of descendants of settlers from historical migrations and present-day social conflicts that stem from all such processes. The course aims will be accomplished through lectures, presentations by researchers specialized on the topics of the class, visits to museums and an ethnographic fieldwork experience.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Identify multiple components of Argentina’s cultural diversity.
- Examine widely held notions about Argentine cultural homogeneity and explain the historical processes that led to Argentina’s plural constituency.
- Analyze processes of ethnic segregation that operate through both marked and subtle ways.
- Compare similarities and differences in regards to ethnicity and discrimination in the U.S. and Argentina.

Course Prerequisites

None

Methods of Instruction

Lectures; video clips of current living conditions of Indigenous peoples, ethnic festivals, and political demonstrations; field trips to sites such as Ethnographic Museum (Museo Etnográfico), Immigration Museum (Museo de la Inmigración), La Boca neighbourhood, Museo Evita (Evita Museum), Feria de Mataderos; ethnographic fieldnote taking tour in Buenos Aires; guest speakers.

Note: This schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor to take advantage of current experiential learning opportunities.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Midterm Exam 30%
2. Written Assignments #1 10%
3. Written Assignments #2 10%
4. Final Exam 30%
5. Participation 20%
TOTAL 100%

Course Requirements

Midterm Exam

Take home. Student will have to answer four questions in essay form. The expected length of the exam is 2000
written assignments #1

A report on the visit to the Ethnographic Museum focusing on ways of public representation of the Indigenous peoples. 700 words. The students are expected to make a critical reflection on the museum exhibits and on the history of representation of Indigenous cultures.

written assignments #2

An ethnographic record based on notes taken on fieldtrip #3. 700 words. The evaluation of this assignment will assess the student’s ability to link empirical data with the theoretical concepts seen in class.

final exam

Students will have to answer six questions in essay form. The expected length of the exam is 2500 words. Students will be graded on the capacity to integrate and link different theoretical concepts with observations made in the previous assignments.

participation

Participation is valued as meaningful contribution in the digital and tangible classroom, utilizing the resources and materials presented to students as part of the course. Meaningful contribution requires students to be prepared in advance of each class session and to have regular attendance. Students must clearly demonstrate they have engaged with the materials as directed, for example, through classroom discussions, online discussion boards, peer-to-peer feedback (after presentations), interaction with guest speakers, and attentiveness on co-curricular and outside-of-classroom activities.

attendance

Regular class attendance is required throughout the program, and all absences will result in a lower participation grade for any affected CIEE course. Due to the intensive schedules for Open Campus and Short Term programs, absences that constitute more than 10% of the total course will result in a written warning.

Students who transfer from one CIEE class to another during the add/drop period will not be considered absent from the first session(s) of their new class, provided they were marked present for the first session(s) of their original class. Otherwise, the absence(s) from the original class carry over to the new class and count against the grade in that class.

For CIEE classes, excessively tardy (over 15 minutes late) students must be marked absent.

Attendance policies also apply to any required co-curricular class excursion or event, as well as to any required field placement. Students may not miss placement/work hours at an internship or service learning site unless approved in advance by the Academic Director and placement supervisor. All students must complete all of the requisite 100 minimum work hours on site at the internship or service learning placement to be eligible for academic credit.

Students who miss class for personal travel, including unforeseen delays that arise as a result of personal travel, will be marked as absent. No make-up or re-sit opportunity will be provided.

Attendance policies also apply to any required class excursion, with the exception that some class excursions cannot accommodate any tardiness, and students risk being marked as absent if they fail to be present at the appointed time.

Absences for classes will lead to the following penalties:

N.B. Course schedule is subject to change due to study tours, excursions, or local holidays. Final schedules will be included in the final syllabus provided to students on site.
Class: 1.1 Introduction to class

The professor will introduce the main topics of the class and give a general overview of Argentine ethnic diversity. Relevant notions for the class like race, national and ethnic identity will be presented through online resources like games and quizzes. Also commonplace notions about Argentine identity and national foundational myths will be talked about through the analysis of travel books and other materials that students may have encountered before travelling or at their initial stages of the program. The syllabus will be read aloud and the requirements and assignments will be discussed.

Fragments of the educational video Pueblos Originarios will be shown in order to display the current living conditions of Indigenous populations.

Week 2
Class: 2.1 Indigenous peoples and the State:

Genocide, exclusion and incorporation. The Indigenous peoples as salaried workforce.

An invited lecturer, Dr. Diana Lenton, will provide a historical overview of the fate of the Indigenous peoples in Argentina. The main topics to be presented are the killing of the Patagonian and Chaco peoples. Fragments of films that deal with the tragic fate of entire populations at different historical periods will be shown (Napalpí, Octubre Pilagá). Maps that show the early geographic location of the Indigenous populations and their subsequent displacement will be displayed. The professor will later focus on the processes of proletarization of the Indigenous population and its incorporation to the labor market as cheap workforce.

The incorporation of Indigenous peoples to the Argentine nation-state will be discussed through the bibliographic materials assigned.

Readings:
- Bonfil Batalla (1972: 105-124)
- Perez (2015)

Week 3
Class: 3.1 Representations of Indigeneity in Argentina

Fieldtrip #1: Visit to the Ethnographic Museum of the Universidad de Buenos Aires (Museo Etnográfico). Guided tour.

Readings:
- Gordillo (2006), chapters 3-9 and 17.

Week 4
Class: 4.1 African peoples in Argentina.

An invited researcher (Perhaps Dr. Gisele Kleidermacher) will lecture on the history of Africans and afrodescendants in Argentina. A comparison between processes of slavery in different countries of the Americas and between different systems of racial classification will be done. The class will focus the processes of invisibilization of the African population that took place in Argentina. Another focus will be on the resurfacing of the Afrodescendants’ after decades of invisibility through contemporary cultural expressions like “candombe” and on the influence of African heritage in the development of popular expressive traditions like tango music, lyrics and dance through films. Folk literature and speech of African provenance will be discussed as well as its influence on Argentine Spanish language.

Readings:
- Frigerio (2006:77-98)
- Frigerio (2000: 45-71)

Due: Written Assignment #1

Week 5
Class: 5.1 The “mestizo” making processes: the “gauchito”

The professor will lecture on the shaping of the social category of the “gauchito” in the context of rural life in the Pampas region and the making of the “gauchito” a mythic national symbol. Fragments of literary pieces belonging to the “Criollista movement” that configured the “gauchito” figure like renowned Martin Fierro and Juan Moreira will be read in class.

Another process of mestizaje related to rural migrations to the cities in the context of the industrialization processes of the Peronist government in the 1940s and 1950s and the construction of complex social categories in the urban environment, the so-called “cabecitas negras” will be tackled through the discussion of ethnographic materials and literary works that show the urban “educated” sectors’ view of these social “others”, like short stories by Julio Cortázar.

A third focus of the class will be on the creolization of language and the creation of verbal art expressions.

Readings:
- Slatta (1994: 151-164)

Week 6
Class: 6.1 Argentina as a country of migrations

The professor will lecture about Argentina as a country of migrations. In this class a general contextualization of migrations will be provided and a Powerpoint presentation will address the successive phases of migrations from the XXth century to the present. European migrations to Argentina of the XIXth and XXth Century will be discussed in the context of migrations to the “New World”. The reasons for Italians and Spanish immigrants as the mainstream population of Buenos Aires will be dealt with as well as the settlement of European immigrants in rural communities. An educational film “La gran inmigración” will be shown in order to tackle some of the social, economic, and political issues of the migrations of the early XXth century.

Readings:
- Devoto, Fernando (2003: chap. 6)
- Djenderedjian, Julio (2008: 103-118; 133-148)

Week 7
Class: 7.1 Argentina as a country of migrations

Fieldtrip #2 Visit to the Museo de la Inmigración (Immigration Museum).

Due: Midterm Exam.

Week 8
Class: 8.1 The processes of mestizaje: the “cabecita negra”

Fieldtrip #3: Museo Evita

Another process of mestizaje, this one related to rural migrations to the cities in the context of the industrialization processes of the Peronist government in the 1940s and 1950s and the construction of complex social categories in the urban environment, the so-called “cabecitas negras” will be tackled through the discussion of ethnographic materials and literary works that show the urban “educated” sectors’ view of these social “others”, like short stories by Julio Cortázar.

A visit to the Museo Evita will be used to trigger discussions about the derogatory views the “porteños” (the people of Buenos Aires) hold of the people from the provinces and the social and political roots of such views.

Readings
- Margulis and Belvedere (1998: 79-122)
- Guber, Rosana (2004: 115-124)
- Ratier (1971: 61-77)

Week 9
Class: 9.1 Jewish immigrants and the configuration of the Jewish-Argentine community

The professor, who has been doing research on the Argentine Jewish community for over two decades, will lecture on Jewish migration and the setting up of a Jewish Argentine community. Some of the issues that the professor will tackle in his lecture are: The different migratory waves and places of origin (Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa), the Ashkenazic and Sephardic communities, beliefs and attitudes towards religious practice, the development of diverse religious movements: Conservatism and Ultraorthodoxy, the Argentine as a diaspora community with both local traits and global connections, current political trends in the Jewish-Argentine community.

Fragments of films that deal with different aspects and periods of the Jewish community will be shown (“Los gauchos judíos”; “El abrazo partido”) and fragments of humor TV programs in which Jews are represented.

Readings:

- Fischman (2006: 43-58)
- Fischman (2011: 37-61)

Week 10
Class: 10.1 Asia in Latin America: Chinese and Korean immigrants.

Ethnic Discrimination and economic Competition

A researcher who specializes on Asian migration (probably Corina Courtis) will draw upon academic works and media resources like films, TV shows and newspaper clips to show how a discourse of discrimination against Asian has been widespread until recently. She will also address migration of people from different Asian countries using statistical data and will deal with specific business patterns and relationships of complementarity and conflict with other migrant and ethnic groups like Jews and Bolivians.

Readings:

- Courtis (2005)
- Courtis (2000: 93-114)

Week 11
Class: 11.1 Fieldtrip Flores Norte

Avellaneda Avenue Jewish- Korean- Bolivian- Peruvian- Paraguayan- Senegalese interactions

Week 12
Class: 12.1 Public displays of “multiculturalism” in Buenos Aires.

Pluralism and ethnic discrimination

The class will be divided into two segments. In the first one, the professor will survey rituals, festivals, and ceremonies performed in public spaces (streets, parks, plazas) as well as demonstrations and rallies, through the use of fragments of films and footage of his own fieldwork research on these topics.

In the second part of the class the professor will address urban and school discrimination based on ethnicity and social class. Through examples taken from TV reports that stigmatize populations from poor areas and the analysis of public policies against discrimination the goal of the class is to highlight both well established prejudices and stereotypes and governmental responses that aim at fighting them.

Reading:

- Bialogorski (2012: 1-13)
- Fischman (2012: 1-27)
- Fischman and Pelacoff (2015: 44-58)
- Frigerio and Lamborghini (2011: 101-120)
- Margulis and Levin (1997: 197-222)
Week 13
Class: 13.1 Ethnographic fieldwork experience in Buenos Aires

Fieldtrip #3: Students will explore a city neighborhood (TBD) and take fieldwork notes related to the presence of different immigrant and ethnic groups. Before going to the “field” the professor will give the students a brief introduction to ethnographic fieldwork techniques and will provide them with the guidelines to carry out their fieldwork exercise.

Readings:

- Briones, Claudia (2009)
- Juliano, Dolores (1997)
- Todorov, Tzvetan (1991)

Week 14
Class: 14.1 Class conference on ethnic diversity in Buenos Aires

The class will carry out a mini conference in which students will present their papers based on their fieldwork experience. On the occasion the theoretical concepts seen in the course will be reviewed and the professor and the students will establish links between the theoretical concepts, case studies and the students’ observation.

Due: Written Assignment #2

Week 15
Class: 15.1 Students will have the final exam. Final feedback of the course with students.

Due: Final Exam

Course Materials

Readings


