Course title: Argentine Fiction
Course code: LITT 3101 BAAR
Programs offering course: Buenos Aires Open Campus Block
Open Campus Track: Language, Literature, and Culture
Language of instruction: English
U.S. semester credits: 3.00
Contact hours: 45.00
Term: Fall Block II 2020

Course Description

This course is designed for students who want to increase their knowledge of Latin American culture and familiarize themselves with major Argentinian writers and filmmakers of the present as well as the artistic movements of which they are a part or that they have spawned. Through reading contemporary Argentinian short stories and viewing recent Argentinian feature films, students will learn about the cultural and historical content represented as well as develop and diversify their skills of interpretation by applying different analytical approaches. The topics addressed range from the situation of immigrants and the poor to stories about religious and political life to the role of nature and animals. Particular attention will be paid to fundamental binary oppositions such as civilization vs. barbarism, European vs. indigenous, religious vs. secular, etc.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Develop interpretative skills through oral debate and by writing pieces of literary and film criticism
- Evaluate detailed understanding and recognition of important social, political, historical, and cultural aspects of the Argentinean and Latin America
- Critique films and literary productions
- Identify and contextualize artistic movements in Argentina and beyond in relation to the literary corpus learned

Course Prerequisites

Students should have completed a level 2000 class in literature, sociology/anthropology, critical theory, or art prior to taking this course.

Methods of Instruction

Classes will typically combine an introductory lecture, the reading/viewing of excerpts from the assigned primary text(s), and an extensive debate in which students advance different interpretations and compare them with regard to their explanatory power.

Students will prepare presentations on a predetermined topic followed by discussion. Excursions consist of meetings with writers/filmmakers and literary and film critics.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Reflection Papers 15%
2. Oral Presentations 25%
3. Midterm 15%
4. Final Exam 25%
5. Participation 20%
TOTAL 100%

Course Requirements

Reflection Papers
Students will complete four 500-word reflection papers on the literary works and films assigned for this course. Each reflection paper should display an understanding and appreciation of the literary or filmic qualities of the work at hand, as well as knowledge about its historical context. Typically the paper would be comprised of a close reading of passages or shorter quotes from the primary text. The paper should integrate and discuss at least one outside academic source and use the Chicago style manual for the documentation of sources.

Oral Presentations

Each student is expected to give two 8-minute oral presentations on a topic approved by the instructor. The oral presentation needs to provide argumentative criteria, some degree of originality and demonstrate students exposure and critical thinking of literature beyond the areas already covered in class.

Midterm

Final Exam

Both midterm and final exams consist of essay questions that relate to the primary as well as secondary texts read and analyzed in class. They can consult the short stories as a source but not the theory during the exam. They should be able to develop versatility to be able to express their ideas in a sophisticated and insightful manner. They should be able to synthesize views garnered from a wide reading of literary texts and criticism.

Different perspectives and ways of thinking will be principally evaluated in this writing.

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:
Weekly Schedule

Week 1

Class: 1.1 Introduction

This first week will consist of an introduction to the history of Argentina from independence in 1816 to the turn of the 19th century from a literary perspective and visual culture. The overview will include major political events, cultural movements, artistic representations as well as relevant aspects of social history.

Class: 1.2 Esteban Echeverría and the Romantic Movement in Buenos Aires

This first lecture will introduce students Argentina’s historical, political and economic situation around the 1830’s. The representation of the “bull/toro” in El matadero, will be discussed. Students will gain awareness and learn key vocabulary for this history period.

Reading:

Class: 1.3 Literature and Film

This class will focus on debating and comparing the film Camila with the novel El Matadero. Students will explore different representations of literature, politics, gender, knowledge, power and will continue debating about different forms of wildness and civilization.

Homework: Argentine film: Camila, from Maria Luisa Bemberg.

Reading:

Week 2

Class: 2.1 Leopoldo Lugones and Modernism

During this week, students will read assigned literature focusing on the social, political and cultural context of Argentina. Some elements such as the dichotomy city vs country, the place of the technology, modern world, and immigration related to the main literary groups Florida and Boedo. In this class session, we will analyze “La lluvia de Fuego” and “Yzur” by Leopoldo Lugones. Students
will choose one of the texts and will discuss the meaning of science and what does it mean to become modern. Debates on how fiction, myths and legends contributes to shape national identities.

Reading:


Class: 2.2 Horacio Quiroga: Who is the Precursor of Modern Story?

The students will analyze “La gallina degollada“, “El almohadón de plumas“and “Anaconda” by Horacio Quiroga exploring his biography and modern context. Students will explore the writing technique called ellipsis represented in his work. We will also analyze the short story “Los caracoles” by Wernicke.

Reading:


Quiroga, Horacio. The Decapitated Chicken, University of Texas, Austin, 1984. p.4-9, 48-56, 108-141.

♦ Reflection Paper 1 (Lugones and Quiroga) due

Class: 2.3 Socio-Political Context of Argentina in the 1930s: Who is Roberto Arlt?

The students will explore the socio political context in Argentina around 1930s. Putting Arlt in context. Students will learn about the main literary groups in Buenos Aires, Florida and Boedo, and their main characteristics.

Reading:

Translations by Juan Tessi.


♦ Oral Presentation 1 due

Week 3

Class: 3.1 The Latin American Boom: Are You Familiar with Cortázar?

During this week, students will explore the artistic and literary (cubism, surrealism) movements associated to this type of literature. Metafiction, hypertext. Reportaje on Cortázar should be brought to class. A group analysis and a comparative activity will be made between Casa tomada and Blow up. Oral presentations will be shared promoting debate. The class will also analyze “Casa tomada”, “Carta a una Señorita en París”, “Axolotl” and “Las babas del diablo” by Julio Cortázar. The lecture will discuss what is real and the role of the camera associated to artistic and literary movements such as surrealism and cubism.

Students will acknowledge terms as metafiction and hypertext..

Reading:


Class: 3.2 Midterm Exam

Class: 3.3 Site Visit

Students will explore different versions of hegemony during the site visit. It is perceived that Museums have a legitimated and consolidated space to show what is supposed to represent the true paths, archives, manifestations of the local, universal history, science, arts. The visit intents to provide tools to deconstruct the main archetypes represented by museums.

Homework: A creative writing work (poem, diary, tale, story) is requested following a prepared activity with examples, citations and expectations on what concepts they should focus.

Week 4

Class: 4.1 Female Writing and Perspectives: Silvina Ocampo and Montserrat Ordóñez

Analyzing “El zorro”, “La metamorfosis”, “El jardín encontrado” by Silvina Ocampo and “Una niña mala” by Montserrat Ordóñez is required. The lecture will focus on reviewing the relationship of humankind and animals therefore students will be able to evaluate the creative impact on the literary read.

Reading:

Ocampo, Silvina. Short stories translated by Juan Tessi.

- Reflection Paper 2 (Ocampo and Ordóñez) due

Class: 4.2 Brazilian Literature: Clarice Lispector

Analyzing “Family Bonds”, “The Beauty and the Beast” and “Revelation of One World” by Clarice Lispector. Lispector sets environments of abstraction and reconfigures myths very close to the animal world. These representations encourages deep analysis and interrogations that belong to a field of the stream of consciousness. Short and individual presentations will be shared.

Reading:

Lispector, Clarice. Short stories translated by Juan Tessi.

- Oral Presentation 2 due

Class: 4.3 Theory Discussion

This session will focus on theoretical concepts regarding, music, text, art, cannibal culture and its representations. Students will explore the development of these concepts through some of the fictions texts read.

Reading:


Week 5

Class: 5.1 Representation of “the Other”: Luisa Valenzuela I

During this week, students compare the 1990s and 2000s from the point of view of Argentine fiction; who becomes the “other” in the last decades of the 20th century and beginning of the 21st? To explore this question, we will analyze “Dónde viven las águias” and “Caperucita Roja” by Luisa Valenzuela. We will also explore interpretations of the “other” via concepts such as metafiction, hypertext, myths, and meaning of death.

Reading:

We will continue our analysis of Luisa Valenzuela’s work by reviewing “Aquí pasan cosas raras”. By analyzing the context and history of this piece, we will consider topics such as state terrorism.

Reading:


Reflection Paper 3 (Valenzuela) due

By analyzing “The Hare” and “I Told You No One Would Come”, from Pía Bouzas, students will become aware of the social and cultural situation in Argentina’s rural areas from 1970-2000.

Reading:

Bouzas, Pía. La liebre y Te dije que no iba a venir nadie, en Un largo río, Gárgola Ediciones, Buenos Aires, 2015. Translations by Juan Tessi.

Reflection Paper 4 (Bouzas) due

The writer will visit the class for a brief interview with the students. The students should come prepared (read the story and search information from the writer) with a brief questionnaire of what they want to know/discuss with the artist.

Homework: watch film.


Course Materials

Readings

- Bouzas, Pía. La liebre y Te dije que no iba a venir nadie, en Un largo río, Gárgola Ediciones, Buenos Aires, 2015.


Some of the translations of the short stories were made by Juan Tessi.

**Media Resources**

*Bombón, El Perro*. TF1 Vidéo, 2006. Film.

*Camila*. Embassy Home Entertainment, 1985. Film.


*La era del ñandú*. Carlos Sorín. 1986. Film