



CIEE Buenos Aires, Argentina

Course title:	Tango. From The City Margins to The World.
Course code:	LAST 3103 BAAR
Programs offering course:	Buenos Aires Summer
Open Campus Track:	Language, Literature, and Culture
Language of instruction:	English
U.S. semester credits:	3
Contact hours:	45
Term:	Summer Session I 2020

Course Description

Tango is a cultural artifact and, as such, it condenses key debates on the relationships between music, identity and society. Through an interdisciplinary approach, which incorporates an anthropological, historical and urban studies perspective, this course seeks to present through tango a critical analysis of different theoretical problems in the areas of national identity, gender and body studies, political and urban sciences, literature and poetry, and the consumption of culture in a global era.

“Tango. From the city margins to the world” is a course that proposes a genealogical reconstruction of tango that goes through its origins, in the second half of the 19th century, to its contemporary expressions. Although it is not a linear route, the history of tango can be divided into five periods: its origins, the written-song tango, the golden age, a latency period and revitalization and the conversion of tango as a national patrimony. Each of these periods has identity marks that define it: the complexity of its music, the content of its lyrics, the dance styles, the question of who dance it and holding which role, and the socio-cultural circuits and scenes where tango was/is danced and listened to. The objective of this course is for students to evaluate the conflicts and debates that stem from the culture of tango throughout its history and urban areas of circulation, and to help them assess similar phenomenon from their own cultures of origin.

Learning Objectives

By completing this course, students will:

- Identify key moments, actors and spaces in the history of tango in Argentina and abroad, through close-listening of songs, readings of lyrics and poetry, musical tours around the city of Buenos Aires, and critical analysis of representative works within their respective socio-historical contexts.
- Discuss and elaborate written pieces about topics related to tango and its culture, from an artistic, informed and critical perspective.
- Analyze theoretical problems that arise from the culture and circulation of tango, both in the city of Buenos Aires and in the global sphere.
- Relate the knowledge acquired about tango and the construction of cultural artifacts to the student's own bodies of knowledge.

Course Prerequisites

None.

Methods of Instruction

This course will be taught using a combination of methods including: lectures in presentation format with images to provide background and context information as well as to summarize and synthesize the vast bibliography on tango; close listening and screening of recordings and audiovisual productions regarding the history and the masters of tango; numerous site visits (one during evening hours) to significant urban sites, tango landmarks and cultural centers throughout the city of Buenos Aires that forged the development of tango; participant presentations that further develop the listening and reading comprehension skills and that allow to reflect upon and share their personal experience, critical comprehension and ability to relate with the culture of origin; classroom discussion that elaborate upon some of the more complex questions on the history and legacy of tango and encourage participants to explore issues such as migration, ethnicity, cultural nationalism, gender and urban construction; fundamental dance classes to better comprehend the dynamics, poetry and composition of tango and to expand the cultural and musical comprehension of the genre.

Assessment and Final Grade

1. Dance Reflection Journal	15%
2. Oral Presentation	15%
3. Collective Mapping Project	10%



4. Photo Essays (4)	20%
5. Final essay and Presentation	20%
6. Participation	20%
TOTAL	100%

Course Requirements

Dance Reflection Journal

As part of the course requirements, introductory dancing classes will be delivered to help students better comprehend the tango musical genre. Student's commitment and engagement in embodying tango knowledge will be assessed on a continuous basis through the elaboration of a written reflection journal. Students will post two weekly entries (350-400 words per entry) based on guided prompts that will serve to identify key aspects of the dance practice, reflect on the way music is experienced in the body and understand the theoretical and historical aspects that underly the tango culture.

Oral Presentation

Each student will give a ten-minute oral presentation about one of the mandatory readings set for each class. The presentation must be concise, emphasize the main aspects of the paper provided, include some historical and present data if necessary, and only as a final comment consider personal reflections that serve as a prompt for the course. (Bear in mind oral presentations on readings are not based on subjective impressions or opinions but are rather an exposition of critical concepts and key ideas that will furthermore enrich the class discussion.)

Collective Mapping Project

Students will participate in the creation of a collective map based on the knowledge obtained in the different urban routes through the city of Buenos Aires. At the end of the class, they will hand-in a personal written reflection (600-750 words) on their experience as actors and creators of this digital tool considering theoretical concepts seen in class.

Photo Essays (4)



Students will produce four short essays (approximately 600-750 words) based on a picture taken during the co-curricular activities (site-visits or guest-speakers), reflecting upon one or more topics and debates seen during the course. These must include readings, lectures, class discussions and/or site visits. These short essays should reflect upon personal impressions and reactions (affective), incorporating background and critical information from the course.

Final essay and Presentation

Students will have to prepare a final essay based on specific guidelines given by the instructor. They will have to submit an outline of the final essay on the third week of class and expect a feedback session with the instructor prior to embarking in the writing of the essay. The expected length of the essay is 2500-3000 words. Students will be graded on the capacity to integrate and link different theoretical concepts with observations made in the previous assignments. They will also be assessed on the ability to create relationships with other phenomenon specific to their culture of origin. In the last day of class, students will present the key findings of their essay to the class.

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-ofclassroom activities. Furthermore, specific participation activities are outlined in the schedule as concrete homework which complement the ongoing participation assessment described.

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 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 Internship, Service Learning, or required field placement. 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 will lead to the following penalties:

Percentage of Total Course Hours Missed	Minimum Penalty
Up to 10%	Participation graded as per class requirements
10 – 20%	Participation graded as per class requirements; grade penalty & written warning
More than 20%	Automatic course failure , and possible expulsion

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.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1

Class 1.1 Introduction: origins of tango

In this class, the syllabus and course dynamic will be presented. Students will reflect on their previous knowledge about tango and Argentine culture, identity and history. Students will describe and research on different cultural materials (photos, advertisement, music lyrics, etc. to introduce Argentinean culture). Presentation of the origins of tango: students will learn on the Argentine popular music between the city and the countryside and the concept of criollismo and the tradition of the gauchos. The African roots of tango and the history of black people around La Plata River will also be addressed. Dance class (1): First basic body elements for addressing the tango dance (walks, body supports, hug, etc.)

Class 1.2 Tango and Immigration

Field visit to La Boca–San Telmo–Museo de la Ciudad; Niebla del Riachuelo: musical tour for the walk through La Boca. The social and cultural conditions among which tango was engendered will be seen in a walk through the city's original neighborhoods. By recognizing the different architectures in this city's areas, students will learn about the foreign influence in tango and the coexistence of migrants of diverse origins and their cultural traditions in conventillos or arrabales. The question of what popular culture and high culture is will be discussed. Students will also compare public policies for immigration. Some issues of Lunfardo's lexicon and its inclusion of elements from immigrant's languages will also be learnt.

Reading:

- Chindemi, Julia and Pablo Vila (2017) Argentine popular music between the city and the countryside: rural music, creole music, native music, folk, federal song and tango
- Merritt, Carolyn (2012) From the Golden Age to the Twenty-First Century.
- Lorenzino, Gerardo Augusto (2014) Immigrants' languages, lunfardo and lexical diffusion in popular porteño Spanish.

Class 1.3 The narratives in Tango lyrics

This class will focus on the cultural and moral repertoires in tango lyrics. Students will analyze song lyrics, examining them about issues such as stereotypes, discrimination and the cultural constructions they rely on: specifically, they will define the construction of masculinities and femininities in the poetry of tango and the dialectic between the milonguita and the mother. The intersectional approach will be useful to address these topics. For this classroom, students will be asked to interview Argentines on lunfardo words, use of gestures and heritage which will serve as discussion prompts.

Reading:

- Archetti, Eduardo (1999) Chapter 5 of Masculinities. Football, Polo and Tango in Argentina.
- Verdenelli, Juliana (2017) Pleasures in Conflict: Maternity, Eroticism and Sexuality in Tango Dancing.
- Additional Resources: selections from classic tango songs.

Class 1.4 The legitimization of Tango

Field visit to Manzana de las Luces—Plaza de May —Confitería Ideal. During this site-visit, by watching the different architecture styles and comparing to the previous visits, students will comprehend and analyze the way the city of Buenos Aires looks to Europe and the shifting of the social signification of tango when it was exported to Paris and then

imported back. The hygiene process of the dance and the stylization of lyrics. The different scenarios where tango was played and danced. Who dances tango? How is tango danced in these years?

Class 1.5 Tango and Literature

The social and cultural transformations of the 1920s in Buenos Aires and the birth of two literary movements: Florida and Boedo. The interpretation of tango in classic works of urban literature. Poetry in motion. Dance class (2): Basic Step tango. Outputs, trajectory and resolution. Reading:

- Borges, Jorge Luis (1923) Mythical Foundation of Buenos Aires.
- Borges, Jorge Luis (1936) Man on Pink Corner.
- Borges, Jorge Luis (1999) A History of the tango
- Arlt, Roberto (1933) A selección of “Aguasfuertes Porteñas” (Etchings of Buenos Aires).

Due: Photo Essay (1) and Dance Reflection Journal.

Written photo essay based on content seen and visits done on the first week of course. Two journal entries must be submitted by this day based on the dance classes and guiding prompts given by instructor.

Week 2

Class 2.1 Building the myth: Carlos Gardel

Gardel incarnates both the tango and its world wide success. The case of Gardel is presented as an example of the centrality that real persons of extraordinary value have in the organization of local memory and collective identity. Gardel and the Cinema. In-class screening: Soy del pueblo, Carlos Gardel. Directed by Lorena Muñoz (2014) Dance class(3): this class will focus on partnership, dance connection, musicality and basic fundamentals (cross, forward and backward ochos, ocho cortado).

Reading:

- Collier, Simon (on line resource) Gardel and his encounter with tango.
- Collier, Simon (1986) Carlos Gardel and the Cinema.

Class 2.2 El Abasto: the neighborhood of the zorzal criollo

Walk through the urban landmarks of the traditional neighborhood of the Abasto. Special marks, icons and emblems of the written-song tango period will also be shown and analyzed. Passage and monument "Carlos Gardel", Bar "El Progreso", Tanguería "Esquina Carlos Gardel" "Chanta Cuatro", house of Osvaldo Pugliese, passage Zelaya, ride of the "fileteado" and house of Anibal Troilo. Visit to the Carlos Gardel museum.

Class 2.3 The Maestros of tango

Students will be introduced to the collective mapping project. For this class, students must watch the documentary *Café de los Maestros*, directed by Miguel Kohan (2008) and contribute to the online discussion proposed by the instructor through Canvas. On-site discussion on the role, styles and social impact of the masters of tango will be held through activities of close listening of songs and lyrics. Dance class (4): cross walk on both sides, transitions, change of front and weight. Sequence of steps (sandwich, giros, etc.)

Reading (Screening):

- *Café de los Maestros*, directed by Miguel Kohan (2008).
- Additional Resources: selections from tango songs and themes.

Class 2.4 Tango and Peronism

Field visit to the Evita Museum- Botanical Garden Villa Malcom Club. The objective of this course is for students to know and analyze the complex relationships that extend between tango, social classes and politics in Argentina. Particularly, the lasting influence of Peronism as a

political movement and as a cultural resource and identification for Argentines.

Reading:

- Sylvia Molloy (2007) Memories of tango. Additional Resources: selections from tango songs.

Due: Photo Essay (2)

Written photo essay based on content seen and visits done on the second week of course.

Class 2.5 Collective mapping project

Collective mapping (Iconoclasistas) from the field visits made to the different neighborhoods of Buenos Aires and historical sites: "La boca", "San Telmo", "Plaza de Mayo", "Manzana de las Luces", "Confectionery la Ideal", "Montserrat", "El Abasto", "Palermo", porteño bars and emblematic streets. Identification of cultural and spatial tango brands. Implementation of the acquired analytical tools. Resources: <https://www.iconoclasistas.net/>

Due: Collective mapping project and Dance Reflection Journal.

Students will participate in the creation of a collective map. At the end of the class, they will hand-in a reflection piece on their experience as actors and creators of this project. Two journal entries must be submitted by this day based on the dance classes and guiding prompts given by instructor.

Week 3

Class 3.1 Astor Piazzolla and contemporary tango

Field visit to Callao y Corrientes—Academia Nacional del Tango—Café Tortoni. The objective of this course is for students to identify changes and continuities in the history of tango and to explore contemporary expressions of this phenomenon. For this class, students must watch

the documentary *Los años del tiburón* directed by Daniel Rosenfeld (2017) and contribute to the online discussion proposed by the instructor through Canvas. *Balada para un loco/ Ballad for a crazy: musical tour for the walk through the centre of Buenos Aires.*

Reading (Screening):

- *Los años del tiburón* directed by Daniel Rosenfeld (2017)

Class 3.2 The construction of tango as heritage

This class will analyze the factors underlying the cultural policies that came to surface after the "turn" of tango as heritage in Buenos Aires, that is to say, after the activation and promotion of this popular genre on part of the political power. Guest professor: PhD. Hernán Morel (CONICET-UBA/FFyL).

Reading:

- Morel, Herán (2015) *Buenos Aires, Mecca of Tango: Activation processes, mega cultural events, tourism and dilemmas in the local heritage*

Additional Resources: selected scenes from “*Un tango más*”/ *Our last tango* (2015), selected interviews to María Nieves and Juan Carlos Copes.

Class 3.3 Tango dancing in today’s society

This class will focus on the diversity and heterogeneity of tango at present. ‘Orthodox’ and ‘relaxed’ milongas (social events where people dance tangos, milongas and valsés criollos). Tango dancing styles: ‘milonguero’, ‘nuevo’ and ‘Villa Urquiza’. The relationship with music. The role of women. The self-image of Latin American women. For this class, students will have to research and prepare questions for

guest-speaker. Dance class (5): the fundamentals of the walk, musicality and the embrace in tango milonguero style. The most interesting elements of this technique.

Guest professor: PhD. María Julia Carozzi (CONICET- IDEAS/UNSAM)

Reading:

- Carozzi, María Julia (2012) Light women dancing tango: Gender images as allegories of heterosexual relationships
- Savigliano, Marta E. (2000) Nocturnal Ethnographies: Following Cortázar in the milongas of Buenos Aires.

Due: Final Essay Outline

Hand-in outline for the final essay based on specific guidelines.

Class 3.4 Tango and gender

Tango, of all popular dances, would seem to be the most extreme embodiment of traditional notions of gender difference. But this relationship between sex, gender and role in tango dancing has been increasingly weakened since the first decade of the present century. In this class, we consider the various critiques to the traditional heteronormative roles of the dancers that makes the feminism and the queer tango movement. How does queer tango intervene in the formation of queer subjectivities at 'home' and abroad? And how does it affect local Argentine milonga culture? How does capitalism tap into queerness and tango, and how does globalization enable connecting for marketing and consumption purposes?

Dance class (6): queer strategies for dual role dancers.

Reading:

- Davis, Kathy (2015) Should a feminist dance tango? Some reflections on the experience and politics of passion

- Savigliano, Marta E. (2010) Notes on Tango (as) Queer (Commodity)

Additional Resources: photos and videos

Class 3.5 DNI Tango School

Field visit to this old building located in the heart of Almagro. Students will take a class with tango nuevo teachers and they will participate in a milonga at school with students and teachers from all levels. Students will receive feedback for their final essays.

Reading:

- Merritt, Carolyn (2012) What's So New about Tango Nuevo?

Due: Oral Presentations; Photo Essay (3) and Dance Reflection Journal

All weekly oral presentations must be done by this day.

Written photo essay based on content seen and visits done on the third week of course.

Two journal entries must be submitted by this day based on the dance classes and guiding prompts given by instructor.

Week 4

Class 4.1 The cooking of self-management in tango

Field visit to a Cultural Center.

We are going to prepare our own empanadas to eat. Guest speakers will present the local situation and current challenges for the people who organize milongas in Buenos Aires city. For this class, students have to research on cultural centers and milongas from Buenos Aires and prepare questions for guest speaker through an online thread.

Class 4.2 Visit to a Milonga

As a closure to the course, the last dance class will take place at a Milonga during the evening. Students will actively participate by dancing and interacting with local tango practitioners and embodying the cultural aspects seen during the course.

Class 4.3 Closure and final feedback

After presenting the main findings of the final essay, students will do a final collective work which includes a group reflection about the topics studied during the course.

Due: Final Essay and Presentation; Photo Essay (4) and Dance Reflection Journal.

Hand-in research final paper and individually present the main findings. Written photo essay based on content seen and visits done on the fourth week of course. Two journal entries must be submitted by this day based on the dance classes and guiding prompts given by instructor.