

**(PEAL 321) LATIN AMERICAN LITERATURE**  
PROGRAM OF ARGENTINE AND LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES  
UNIVERSIDAD DE BELGRANO

**Course Syllabus**

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**Course Information**

Contact Hours: 60  
Semester

**Course Description**

The aim of this course is to trace a route between the classics of from the construction of national identities to the present. The course begins, first of all, with a philosophical question: What is literature? What makes a text considered literary? We will focus on the main characteristics of 19th century art, in the aesthetic value of works of art, their relationship with beauty, harmony and musicality. Secondly, we will read works linked to the construction of national identity, the figure of the "Gaucho" and his scenario still in dispute: *civilization vs barbarism*. Thirdly, we will analyze the break with Modernism and the appearance of the literary avant-garde, based on the changes of paradigm that affect the world of culture and the way in which poetry, stories and novels are written. As these texts establish relationships of affinity among themselves through appropriations, rewritings and intertextual dialogues. Thirdly, we will address the main works of the Latin America Boom of the '60s that placed writers like Borges, Neruda and Cortazar in the center of literary debates. Fourthly, within the context of the last military dictatorship in Argentina, we will think the characteristics a text should have to be considered literature of testimony. What happens to the silenced, relegated or excluded voices, of those productions of hybrid character emerging from a fractured field that exceeds what it is conventionally call "literacy." Finally, based on a corpus that still circulates as literary novelty, we will analyze the monstrous and otherness in relation to the non-hegemonic sexual orientations.

**Course objectives**

The course aims to achieve a permanent dialogue between the professor and the students based on the readings assigned for each class and the analysis of written and audiovisual sources that will allow the debate to open. Some of the chosen materials that stand out are poems, stories, novels, paintings, photomontages, films and songs.

Although the first part of the class is based on a theoretical presentation by the professor to contextualize the period, in a second part, students are expected to be up to date with the "required readings" to actively participate in relation to the "material of debate". The use of the RAE digital dictionary is suggested for a better understanding of the vocabulary in literary works.

## Course Evaluation

The evaluation will be done based on:

- Participation in class (25%): the class is expected to be interactive and that students make a permanent contribution based on the assigned readings or videos and the debate material or activity worked on in each class.
- Oral presentations (20%): There will be two group presentations of stories or poems assigned by the professor, which will last a maximum of 15 minutes each.
- Mid - Term exam (25%): the exam will consist of the analysis of a poem not worked on in class.
- Final project (30%): Students are expected to be able to analyze a literary work chosen by them, with cohesion and coherence, including all the topics learned during the course. It is a 10-page written paper. More information will be provided in class.

## Academic Calendar

**Week 1** Social representations.  
Presentation of the course material. What is literature?  
The definition of literature. The relationship of the author with the reader. The limits of the text. What do we read? How do we read?  
Does the evaluation of a work change in different times and places?  
What an important thing happens in literature that there have been banned books.

Required readings:

- El cuentista, Saki (Story, British)
- El lector y sus Ifmites, Beatriz Sarlo (Article, Argentina)

**Week 2** Modernism: American reality and literary renewal (1880-1920).  
Modernism: a movement with roots in Latin America. The French influence. Parnassianism and symbolism. A new physiognomy: the big cities. The signs of progress.

Required readings:

- Sonatina, A Roosevelt y Lo fatal, Ruben Dario (poemas, Nicaragua)
- Nuestra America (fragmento), Jose Marti (essay, Cuba)

Material for class debate:

- Painting "Los poetas contemporaneos," Antonio Maria Esquivel (Spain)
- Painting "Noche de misterios", Rufino Tamayo (Mexico)

**Week 3** Women in Modernism.  
Rhetorical figures: repetition, hyperbole, metaphor, syntactic parallelism, personification, fragmentation of the self. Writing as a place of opening towards the public space. Nobel Prize winner Gabriela Mistral. The political militancy of Alfonsina Storni.

Required readings:

- Los sonetos de la muerte, Sueño grande, Pan, La desvelada, Gabriela Mistral (poemas, Chile).
- Tu me quieres blanca, Cuadrados y Angulos, Peso Ancestral, Hombre pequeñito, El hijo, Alfonsina Storni (poemas, Argentina)

Material for class debate:

- Audiovisual material: Pioneras de las luchas feministas, en la TV Publica: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Bwcemo-cjY>
- "Alfonsina y el mar" by Mercedes Sosa (Argentine song)
- "Sueños" (Dreams), by Grete Stern (photomontages, Germany, Argentina)

**Week 4** The breakup. The literary avant-garde (1920-1950).  
The isms: Dadaism, Ultraism, Martinfierrism, Creationism.

Required readings:

- "Manifiesto Martinfierrista" (Argentina), Manifiesto Euforista (Puerto Rico), Manifiesto Estridentista (Mexico)
- Apunte callejero, Croquis en la arena, Oliverio Girondo (poems, Argentina)
- "La aurora" by Federico Garcia Lorca (poem, Spain)

Material for class debate:

- Cuadro Ciudad Lagui, Xul Solar (Argentina)
- Exhibicion de Fuente, Marcel Duchamp (Francia)

**Week 5** The literary avant-garde (1920-1950): calligrams.  
The 20th century, the century of images (imagination). The visual poems. The games of the avant-garde. Technological and scientific advances. The consequences of the First World War.

Presentation 1

Required readings:

- Triangulo armonico, Helicoptero, Fresco Nipon, Arte poetica, Vicente Huidobro, (caligrams, Chile).
- Dia nublado, Jose Juan Tablada (poem, Mexico)

Material for class debate:

- Juego: cadaver exquisito.

**Week 6** Consolidation and expansion. Latin American literature goes out into the world.  
The 60s. Pop art, hippieism. The Cuban Revolution. Mass culture. Che Guevara. Imagination to power. Hopscotch: the anti-novel. The mechanisms of fantastic literature.

Required readings:

- Continuidad de los parques, Julio Cortazar (Story, Argentina)

Material for class debate:

- Relatividad, M.C Escher (painting, Holanda)

**Week 7** Magical realism.

Required readings:

El ahogado mas hermoso del mundo, (The Handsomest Drowned Man In The World) Gabriel Garcia Marquez (story, Colombia).

Material for class debate:

- Vuel Villa, Xul Solar (draw, Argentina)

**Week 8** Class for review  
Mid – Term exam.

- Week 9** Orphanhood and migration.  
Orality in the narrative of Juan Rulfo, writer and photographer. The consequences of the Mexican Revolution. The social complaint.  
Required readings
- Nos han dado la tierra y Paso del Norte, Juan Rulfo (Stories, Mexico)
- Material for class debate:
- Latinoamerica, Calle 13 (Song, Puerto Rico)
  - Dignificada, Lila Downs (Song, Mexico)
  - Cinco siglos igual, Leon Gieco (Song, Argentina)
- Week 10** Civilization and barbarism in Borges.  
The most influential Argentine writer in universal literature. The mirrors, the labyrinth, the tiger, the "Gaucho". The double origin in their ancestors. Buenos Aires in its stories: the presence of the Palermo neighborhood.  
Required readings
- "El Sur, El Evangelio según Marcos" Jorge Luis Borges (stories, Argentina).
- Material for class debate:
- Interview with Borges, by Joaquin Soler Serrano  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lj4kajdoSfc>
- Week 11** 1976 coup d'état in Argentina: its impact on culture.  
Emergence and expansion of armed forces. Condor Plan. "Madres y Abuelas de Plaza de Mayo" (Mothers and Grand mothers of Plaza de Mayo).  
The proliferation of testimony literature. The voices of the silenced.  
<'..Como narrar el horror? (How to narrate the horror?). Banned books and songs.  
Required readings:
- La casa de los conejos, Laura Alcoba (novel, Argentina-France).
- Material for class debate:
- Desapariciones, Los Fabulosos Cadillacs (Song, Argentina)
  - La historia oficial, Luis Puenzo (Movie, Argentina)
- Presentation 2  
Suggestion: Visit the Parque de la Memoria and read the explanatory signs that line the Río de la Plata. Estimated duration: 1 hour.
- Week 12** The monstrous, the otherness. A privileged figure of abnormality: the construction of the monster (the barbarian, the foreigner, trans people, homosexuals, people with disabilities) in literature. Otherness and social and political power as a sphere of discipline, control and normalization. Authors whose publications are still listed as new.  
Required readings
- "Un hombre sin suerte" and "Pajaros en la boca", Samanta Schweblin (Stories, Argentina).
- Lacasa cerrada, Manuel Mujica Lainez (Story, Argentina)
  - Distancia de rescate, Claudia Llosa (Movie, Chile)
- Material for class debate:
- Abnormal, Michel Foucault (Article, Francia)
  - Disability in Latin America (video)

**Week 13** Required readings

- El marica, Abelardo Castillo (Story, Argentina)
- Las malas (fragments), Camila Sosa Villada (novel, Argentina)

Material for class debate:

- Interview of Camila Sosa Villada:

**Week 14** Final Exam

**Week 15** Feedback on final exams and end of the course.

**Additional bibliography**

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*El sujeto en cuestión*, Levi-Strauss (author and compiler), Seminary La Identidad, Barcelona, Petrel, 1981.

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