

(PEAL 332) Tango: Cultural Identity and Argentine Society

PROGRAM OF ARGENTINE AND LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

UNIVERSIDAD DE BELGRANO

Course Syllabus

Course Information

Contact Hours: 60

Semester

Course Description

Product of the fusion of *African-Río de la Plata, gaucho and European* dances and rhythms, Tango was born in the mid-19th century on the margins of Buenos Aires and Montevideo, undergoing a transformation that turned it into a recognized global and transnational musical genre in the last decade of the 19th century. This course focuses on Tango as a tradition and rupture of Argentine culture. From the margins of the suburbs and the periphery to the centrality of an international dance, Tango is the best cultural artifact to think about Argentine society. During the classes, sociocultural aspects of Tango, the beginnings and evolution of the genre, the relationship between Tango culture and the development of the city of Buenos Aires will be analyzed, as well as the outstanding discography of the different eras of the genre will be reviewed.

During the practical classes, students will acquire the tools to improvise this social dance and will progressively incorporate the movements, turns and steps characteristic of Tango. All students, based on role changes, will work on the double experience of the "follower" and the "leader".

Starting from the concept of "experiential learning", throughout the course the emphasis will be on experience, the involvement of the body and reflection as a learning method. For this reason, throughout the course various experiences will be carried out outside the scope of the university campus.

Course Requirements

According to the policy of this university, the student must attend 75% of the classes to be a regular student. It is expected an active participation, in the form of debate, questions and exchanges. Students must submit three written assignments (two group and one individual). It is the policy of the university to suspend for a period of two years any student who commits plagiarism. This decision will affect not only the course in which the plagiarism occurred but all courses taken that semester.

Students will go on various outings (Milongas, Metropolitan Tango Championship, concerts). Outings are mandatory and take place outside of class hours.

Grading Policy

Class participation	20 %
Individual and group oral presentation	20 %
Participation in outings	20 %
Written assignments (2)	20 %
Final exam (take home) research essay	20 %

Thematic Blocks:

Block 1: Tango & Urbanity

There are few cities with a cultural identity as defined and recognized worldwide as Buenos Aires. You cannot think about Tango without thinking about Buenos Aires and vice versa. But this relationship is not static, but rather changes over time, therefore, in this block we propose to carry out a review of history and its evolution, where the central axis is "territoriality".

Class 1: Presentation of the course. Survey of students' interests. "Brain storming" in relation to the concepts: "Argentina" "Buenos Aires" "Tango".

Class 2 Practice: Tango walk: the importance of walking. Three possible directions. The hug.

Class 3: "Orilla Tango". Presentation of the context of the emergence of tango, placing special emphasis on migrations (internal and foreign), acculturation, impact on the geography of the city. Discussion of the documentary video "Tango y Baile" directed by Horacio Ferrer (produced by Canal Encuentro)

Class 4 Practice: The importance of the hug. Walking in different lanes, crossing.

Class 5: Tango comes to the neighborhood. Tango enters the city, into homes, and migrates to different social groups. Discussion about possible factors that could have driven the popularity and massiveness of tango.

Class 6 Practice: rebounds, change of directions and sequences.

Class 7: "Deterritorialization" of tango. Transnational gentrification. Starting in the 60's, tango goes through a process of reinvention. Avant-garde and universalization of the genre: the figure of Astor Piazzolla.

Class 8 Practice: Pivots, front and back eights.

Block 2: Tango, Gender & identity

Tango is a phenomenon that undoubtedly crosses Argentine culture: towards the outside, it is (re)produced as representative of a national identity while, towards the interior, disputes and tensions of a social, racial and cultural nature coexist. gender.

Class 9: Crisis of 2001: constitutive milestone of current Argentine cultural identity. Tango as resistance. Cecconi: Crisis of 2001 and youth tango. YouTube: December 2001: why did the country's history change forever? Filo Explains

Class 10 Practice: How to start a figure eight?

Class 11: Construction of Tango as a national identity. From sinful and immoral to an emblem of national identity. Tango "for export". The heritage of tango. Cultural Heritage of Humanity (UNESCO) Why is tango defined this way? What are its implications?

Class 12 Practice: pivots, front and back eights, different accompaniments.

Class 13: Afro-descendant: the discussion of Afro-descendant identity in Argentina. His founding contribution to tango: music and dance. Documentary fragments. Group presentation: "Tango and identity: problematizing the place of Afro-descendants in Argentina" Omer Nahum Freixa (2018)

Class 14 Practice: turns. Center and circumference. Turn right and left.

Class 15: Gender roles. Debate on gender stereotypes in tango. Machismo, the role of women in traditional tangos. Letter analysis. Have these concepts evolved over time? Machismo, femininity. Sensuality, eroticism. debate on stereotypes: fragment of the film Moulin Rouge (2001) Debate on a stage tango choreography.

Class 16 Practice: Practical class and visit to the milonga "Federal, open, atypical and plural milonga"

Class 17: "Queer Tango": Development of the Queer movement in the world. The adoption of the concept in Argentina and in the tango field. Bibliography Cecconi and Savigliano. Queer Tango Mariana Docampo: buenosairestangoqueer.blogspot.com Debate: videos of tango couples dancing: queerness and role change.

Class 18 Practice: Turns in different directions, pencil

Block 3: Tango & artistic expressions

Tango is a cultural practice that goes through different artistic expressions. A brief review of some of them will be made to finally experience tango in a personal experience.

Class 19: Tango and dance. Brief review of the evolution in the dance of the genre. The breakup towards the end of the 90's. The tango today. Tango stage

Class 20 Practice: spirals and planes: who rotates around who.

Class 21: Tango and cinema. The early introduction of the genre in the national film industry. The case of Carlos Gardel and the impact of the genre in the Spanish-speaking world. Construction of imaginaries: Tango and cinema. Film fragment.

Class 22 Practice: practical class and visit to the "Maldita Milonga"

Class 23: The "lunfardo" (local slang). Discussion on tango lyrics. "Lunfardo is a unique linguistic phenomenon" Oscar Conde.

Class 24 Practice: different sequences with saccades.

Class 25: Tango and music. Brief review of the musical evolution of the genre accompanied by sound examples.

Class 26: Milonga!

Block 4: Tango and body

Tango is an experiential physical experience and as such it has been the focus of debates about how it affects our concept of corporality, the relationship with others and with oneself.

Class 27: Tango as therapy, for recreational, therapeutic and preventive purposes, for example in people with disabilities, psychiatric patients, people with Parkinson, cognitive disorders, hypertension, etc. Delivery of final assignment.

Class 28 Practice: Tango waltz.

Class 29: Corporality: the anthropology of the body. What happens to the individual body when it is let through music. Body in motion. "It takes two to tango" to dance with another: tango as an intimate and trusting relationship. Debate on testimonies of tango dancers around the world.

Class 30: End-of-course exchanges. Personal experiences of the course and about living in Buenos Aires.

Bibliography

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