

(PEAL 322) ARGENTINE LITERATURE
PROGRAM OF ARGENTINE AND LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES
UNIVERSIDAD DE BELGRANO

Course Syllabus

Course Information

Contact Hours: 60
Semester

Course Description

The aim of this course is to trace a journey through the classics of Argentine literature from the construction of national identities to the present days. 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, on 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 paradigm changes that affect the world of culture and the way in which poetry, stories and novels are written. How these texts establish relationships of affinity with each other through appropriations, rewritings and intertextual dialogues. Thirdly, we will address the main works of the Latin American Boom of the 1960s that placed writers like Borges and Cortázar at the center of literary debates. Fourthly, within the context of the last Argentine military dictatorship, we will think about what characteristics a text has to be considered literature of testimony. What happens to the silenced, relegated or excluded voices, to the hybrid productions coming from a fractured field that exceed the parameters of what we conventionally call "literary". Finally, based on a corpus that still circulates as a literary novelty, we will analyze the monstrous and otherness in relation to 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 to start a debate. Some of the chosen materials, that stand out are poems, stories, novels, paintings, photomontages, films and. Although the first part of the class is based on a theoretical presentation by the professor to contextualize the period, in a second part it is expected students to be up to date with the "mandatory 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 constant 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 that has not been 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 work. More information will be provided in class.

Academic Calendar

Week 1

Presentation of the subject. 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:

- The storyteller, Saki (story, British)
- El lector y sus limites (the reader and their limits), Beatriz Sarlo (article, Argentina)

Week 2

Modernism: American reality and literary renewal (1880-1920).

Modernism: a movement with Latin American roots. The French influence. Parnassianism and symbolism. A new physiognomy: big cities. The signs of progress.

Required readings:

- Sonatina, A Roosvelt y Lo fatal, Rubén Darío (poems, Nicaragua)
- Muerte en Venecia (Death in Venice), Thomas Mann (fragments, novel, Germany)

Material for debate:

- Painting "Los poetas contemporáneos", Antonio María Esquivel (Spain)
- Painting "Noche de misterios", Rufino Tamayo (México)

Week 3

Women in Modernism.

Rhetorical figures: repetition, hyperbole, metaphor, syntactic parallelism, personification, fragmentation of the self. Writing as a place of opening towards public space. The political militancy of Alfonsina Storni.

Required readings:

- Tú me quieres blanca, Cuadrados y Ángulos, Peso Ancestral, Hombre pequeñito, El hijo, Alfonsina Storni (poems, Argentina)

Material for debate:

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

Week 4 The breakup. The literary avant-garde (1920-1950). The isms: Dadaism, Ultraism, Martinfierrism, Creationism. Renewal in poetry. The visual impact on the city. The Theory of Relativity, by Albert Einstein, and the Discovery of the Unconscious, by Sigmund Freud. The speed, the movement, the energy. The break also in syntax: The case of Ulysses, by Joyce.

Required readings:

Manifiesto Martinfierrista (Argentina)

- Apunte callejero, Croquis en la arena, Oliverio Gironde (poemas, Argentina)

Material for the debate:

- Painting Ciudad Lagui, Xul Solar (Argentina)
- Fountain Exhibition, Marcel Duchamp (France)

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:

- Espantapájaros, Oliverio Gironde (calligram, Argentina)
- Dos gatos, Diana Briones (calligram, Argentina)
- Día nublado, José Juan Tablada (poem, México)

Material for the debate:

- Game: cadáver 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 Cortázar (story, Argentina)

Material for the debate:

- Relatividad, M.C Escher (Painting, Holland)

Week 7 Fantastic literature: the disguises of doom. The acceptance of a new verisimilitude, of the incursion of the unusual element into everyday life as an opening, as a passage towards new realities in which everyday life takes a different direction. The school of the "Patafísica". The language games of the works of Kafka, Cortázar, Vian or Queneau.

Required readings:

- No se culpe a nadie, Julio Cortázar (story, Argentina)
- El vestido de terciopelo, Silvina Ocampo (story, Argentina)

Week 8 Mid – Term exam

- Week 9** The fantastic River Plate native. The threat of the other. The constitution of a genre as a way to overcome realist aesthetics. Configuration of the Anthology of fantastic literature and its multiplier effect. Drives and responses to the problem of Realism. Peronism and anti-Peronism in Argentine literature.
Required readings:
- Casa tomada, Julio Cortázar (story, Argentina)
 - El simulacro, Jorge Luis Borges (story, Argentina)
 - Delicadeza, Liliana Heker (story, Argentina)
 - El niño proletario, Osvaldo Lamborghini (story, Argentina)
- Week 10** Civilization and barbarism in Jorge Luis 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, Juan Muraña, Jorge Luis Borges (stories, Argentina).
- Material for the debate:
- Interview to Borges, by Joaquín 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 organizations. Condor Plan. Mothers and Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo. The proliferation of testimony literature. The voices of the silenced. How to narrate horror? Banned books and songs.
Required readings:
 La casa de los conejos, Laura Alcoba (novel, Argentina-France).
Material for the debate:
- Desapariciones, Los Fabulosos Cadillacs (song, Argentina)
 - La historia oficial, Luis Puenzo (movie, Argentina)
- Presentation 2
Suggestion: Visit the Memory Park 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, transvestites, 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 y Pájaros en la boca, Samanta Schweblin (stories, Argentina)
 - La casa cerrada, Manuel Mujica Láinez (story, Argentina)
 - Fever Dream, Claudia Llosa (movie, Chile)

Material for the debate:

- Los Anormales, Michel Foucault (article, France)
- Discapacidad en Latinoamérica (video)
<https://www.france24.com/es/programas/el-debate/20201206-debate-desigualdad-discapacidad-latinoamerica>

Week 13 Required readings:

- Castillo (story, Argentina)
- Las malas (fragments), Camila Sosa Villada (novel, Argentina)

Material for the debate:

- Interview to Camila Sosa Villada: https://youtu.be/vze_PIWZf5I

Week 14 Final exam.

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

Additional bibliography

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