

Argentina: The Making of a Country through its Literature

Professor Marcela Solá
Program in Argentine and Latin American Studies
Universidad de Belgrano
Course Syllabus 2010

Course Information

TH 11AM-1PM

Instruction in: English

Contact Information

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Course Description

This course considers fiction as a resourceful tool to access the study of cultural history. Drawing mainly on the close reading of four novels –Sarmiento’s *Facundo*, Arlt’s *The Seven Madmen*, Martínez’s *Santa Evita* and Osorio’s *My Name Is Light*– the course will discuss how the notion of civilization, as opposed to barbarism, has guided Nation-Building narratives in the Nineteenth Century and continues to be central in the fictions of the Twentieth century. The impact of immigration policies, the rise and fall of *Peronismo*, Eva Peron’s role and legacy, the Dirty War and how these texts work to shape social memory are some of the topics we will discuss in class. By the end of the course, the student will get a general picture of the historical and cultural contexts in which these books were written and an understanding of the close links between history, politics and literature in Argentina.

Course Requirements

Following the UB policy, students need a minimum of 75% of attendance to be in good standing for the final exam. Sliding the ID card is the only way to track record of attendance. Classes missed for national holidays will be recovered on Fridays. No excuse will be granted to students for traveling. Students are expected to do close readings, participate in class, and do one oral presentations in groups. During the semester, students will write a short position paper. The requirements also include a midterm and a final exam. In addition to this, each student will be expected to make a significant contribution to the classroom dialogue.

Grading Policy

In-class Participation and Attendance	10 %
Oral Presentation	10 %
Position Paper (2 page long)	10 %
Midterm Exam	20 %
Final Exam	50 %

For a better understanding of the comparable table for grading: check the international student handbook (see orientation kit packet).

Required Textbooks (available at UB Bookstore)

Santa Evita by Tomás Eloy Martínez

ISBN 0-679-76814-9

The Seven Madmen by Roberto Arlt

ISBN 185242592X

Facundo by Domingo F. Sarmiento

ISBN-13: 9788498167771

Academic Calendar

Week 1: Unit 1

Introduction to course. History and Fiction. The 1810 Revolution and its aftermaths. Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. Barbarism and Civilization.

Bibliography: Felix Luna, "A Short History of the Argentinians" (Chapters 3-7).

Week 2: Unit 1

Domingo F. Sarmiento's *Facundo*: Text, context and pre-text.

The "Dictator Novel" in Latin America. Literature and History

Facundo Discussion (Chapters 1-8)

Week 3: Unit 1

Different readings of *Facundo* by contemporaries.

Required reading: *Facundo* (Chapters 9-13)

Week 4: Unit 1

Facundo read from abroad. Changes in the titles of the four different editions.

Required reading: *Facundo* (Chapters 14-15)

Week 5: Unit 1

Oral presentation on *Facundo*

Week 6: Unit 2

Roberto Arlt's *The Seven Madmen*: Historical context. The impact of Immigration. A Refoundation of Argentina. Literary Context. Boedo and Florida.

Required reading: *The Seven Madmen* (Chapters 1-2)

Recommended reading: Romero's *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century* (1-58).

Week 7: Unit 2

The Seven Madmen. Topics. Discussion on the topics.

Required reading: *The Seven Madmen* (Chapter 3).

Week 8: Unit 2

Oral presentation on *The Seven Madmen*.

Week 9: Unit 3

The Seven Madmen and its Correspondence with the Political Movements in the 1940s.

Introduction to Tomás Eloy Martínez's *Santa Evita*.

Week 10: Unit 3

Santa Evita. Historical context.

Evita: vida pasión y muerte (screening in class w/ English Subtitles).

Week 11: Unit 3

Santa Evita: Topics. Reality versus Fiction. Story and Discourse. The writer's craft.

Required reading: *Santa Evita* (Chapters 9-16).

Assignment: Visit Museo Evita.

Week 12: Unit 4

Assign Position Paper (In-class written outline).

Paper Topic: compare Evita's representation as watched in the video, read in the novel and presented in the museum, analyze differences and similarities.

Introduction to Elsa Osorio's *My Name is Light*

Week 13: Unit 4

Due date Position Paper

My Name is Light

Week 14: Unit 4

My Name is Light

Week 15

Final exam

Bibliography

Luna, Felix. *A Short History of the Argentinians*. Buenos Aires: Planeta, 2000.

Nietzsche, Friedrich, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*, Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. Indianapolis, Cambridge

Luis Alberto Romero, "A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century". Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica. 2006.

Foster, David William. "Buenos Aires: Feminine Space". *Buenos Aires: Perspectives on the City and Cultural Production*. Gainesville: Florida UP, 1998. 101-31.

Taylor, J.M. *Eva Perón. The Myths of a Woman*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1979.

Halperin Donghi, Tulio Ivan Jaksic, Gwen Kirkpatrick, and Francine Masiello Ed.

Facundo Author of a Nation. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.

Shumway, Nicholas. *The Invention of Argentina*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Sorensen, Diana. *Facundo and the Construction of Argentine Culture*. Texas: U of Texas P, 1996.

National Holidays

Class missed on April 1 will be made up on April 9.