

(PALAS 370) Argentina: The Making of a Country through its Literature

Professor Marcela Solá
Program in Argentine and Latin American Studies
Universidad de Belgrano
Course Syllabus 2012

Course Information

MW 4:00-5:30 PM (C1)
Instruction in: English

Contact Information

marsol1@fibertel.com.ar

Course Description

This course considers fiction as a resourceful tool to study cultural history. Drawing mainly on the close reading of Three novels –Sarmiento’s *Facundo*, Arlt’s *The Seven Madmen*, Martínez’s *Santa Evita* and short stories by Jorge Luis Borges, Julio Cortázar, Luisa Valenzuela and Marcela Solá, 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. How Jorge Luis Borges’ *Story* underscore the thin line that separates civilization and barbarism, while Julio Cortázar’s “House Taken over” represents peronism as a nightmare. Elsa Osorio’s novel “My Name is Light” and Luisa Valenzuela’s short stories speak about the violent deeds of the 70s. By the end of the course, the student will get a general picture of the historical and cultural contexts in which these books and short stories were written and an understanding of the close links between history, politics and literature in Argentina. There are no make ups for classes falling on public holidays. UB holds to the view that plagiarism constitutes intellectual theft and is a serious breach of acceptable conduct. Any student caught plagiarizing will immediately be given a “no credit” for all courses taken in the semester.

Course Requirements

Following the UB policies, 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. 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	10 %
Oral Presentation	10 %
Position Paper (2 page long)	10 %
Midterm Exam Paper (5 page)	20 %
Final Exam paper (10 page)	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)

Facundo by Domingo F. Sarmiento (ISBN-13: 9788498167771)

My Name is Light by Elsa Osorio (ISBN: 9780747561613)

Horizontalism: Voices of Popular Power in Argentina (AK Press, 2006), by Marina Sifrin (available at the Photocopier facing the UB Bookstore)

Santa Evita by Tomás Eloy Martínez (ISBN 0-679-76814-9)

The Seven Madmen by Roberto Arlt (ISBN 185242592X)

Course Reader. Marcela Solá, ed.

Short stories: "The South"; "Story of the Warrior and the Captive"; "Death and the Compass" by Jorge Luis Borges; "The Garden of Forking Paths" by Jorge Luis Borges "House taken over" by Julio Cortazar; "Axolotl" by Julio Cortazar; and "The Censors" by Luisa Valenzuela

Academic Calendar

M July 30 / Unit 1

Introduction to course. History and Fiction. The 1810 Revolution and its aftermaths..

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

W August 1 / Unit 1

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

Required reading (Chapters 1-5)

M August 6 / Unit 1

Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. Barbarism and Civilization

Required reading: (Chapter 13)

W August 8 / Unit 1

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

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

M August 13 / Unit 1

Readings of *Facundo* by contemporaries

Facundo read from abroad

Student Presentation: Ricardo Piglia, "Sarmiento the Writer"

W August 15 / Unit 2

Roberto Arlt's *The Seven Madmen*: Historical context. The impact of Immigration. A Refoundation of Argentina
Required reading: Romero's *A History of Argentina in the Twentieth Century* (1-58).
Student Presentation

M August 20 National Holiday**W August 22 / Unit 2**

The Seven Madmen (Chapters 1-2)
Literary Context. Boedo and Florida
Student Presentation

M August 27 / Unit 2

The Seven Madmen. Topics. (1)
Required reading: *The Seven Madmen* (Chapter 3)
Student Presentation

W August 29 / Unit 2

The Seven Madmen. Topics (2)
In-class writing on *The Seven Madmen*

M September 3 / Unit 2

The Seven Madmen and its Correspondence with the Political Movements in the 1940s
Introduction to Tomás Eloy Martínez's *Santa Evita*.
Presentation

W September 5 / Unit 3

Required reading: *Santa Evita* (Chapters 1-9)
Evita: vida pasión y muerte (screening in class w/ English Subtitles)

M September 10 / Unit 3

Santa Evita. Historical context.
Student Presentation

W September 12 / Unit 3

Santa Evita: Topics. Reality versus Fiction. Story and Discourse. The writer's craft.
Required reading: *Santa Evita* (Chapters 9-16)
Assignment: Visit the Museo Evita
Student Presentation

M September 17 / Unit 3

Position Paper (In-class written outline).
Compare Evita's representation as watched in the video, read in the novel and presented in the museum, analyze differences and similarities.

W September 19 / Unit 3

Victoria Ocampo. Activist and patron of Argentina's literary golden age as Evita's cultural counter myth. "Sur". South America's leading literary magazine.
Presentation

M September 24 / Unit 4

Tres fábulas de Villa Ocampo (screening in class w/ English Subtitles)
Introduction to Jorge Luis Borges

W September 26 / Unit 4

Jorge Luis Borges: "Death and the Compass"
The Detective story narrative
Presentation

M October 1 / Unit 4

Jorge Luis Borges: "The Garden of forking paths"
Student Presentation

W October 3 / Unit 4

Jorge Luis Borges: "The South"
Borges and the Double Lineage
Student Presentation

M October 8 National Holiday

W October 10 / Unit 4

Julio Cortazar: "House taken over"
Student Presentation

M October 14 / Unit 4

Julio Cortazar "Axolotl"
Student Presentation

W October 16 / Unit 4

" *El proceso I* (screening in class w/ English Subtitles).

M October 21 / Unit 4

Literature of the 70s – Elsa Osorio and Luisa Valenzuela
Elsa Osorio "My name is light"
Student Presentation

W October 23 / Unit 4

Luisa Valenzuela: "Papitos's Story" "The Censors"
Student Presentation

M October 28 / Unit 4

Horizontalism

December 2001 (screening in class w/English Subtitles)

Final recapitulation.

Productive relations among the texts read (essay as well as fiction) allowing us to formulate personal interpretation or hypothesis concerning the making of Argentina as seen in those texts.

W November 5 / Unit 4

Final exam

Bibliography

Bilbija, Ksenija, Fair, Jo Ellen, Milton, Cynthia E. *The Art of Truth-Telling About Authoritarian Rule* (Wisconsin University, 2005)

Botana, Natalio R. et al. *Sarmiento: Author of a Nation*. U of California Press.

Civantos, Christina. "Language, Literary legitimacy, and Masculinity in the Writings of Roberto Arlt" (JSTOR)

Diaz, Gwendolyn. "*Making the Myth of Evita Perón: Saint, Martyr, Prostitute.*" *Studies in Latin American Popular Culture*.

Davies, Lloyd Hughes. "Portraits of a Lady: Postmodern Readings of Tomás Eloy Martínez's "Santa Evita". <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3736142>

Dongui Halperin, Tulio et al. *Sarmiento: Author of a Nation*. U of California Press.

Flower, Dean. *The Mystery to a Solution: Poe, Borges, and the Analytic Detective Story* by John T. Irving

Gyurko, Lanin. "Hallucination and Nightmare in Two Stories by Cortázar." *Modern Humanities Research Association* 67.3 Jul 1972 550-562. 16 Oct 2008 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3726124>

"Detective and mystery stories -- History and criticism." Volume 125, Number 2, March 2010 (Hispanic Issue) (JSTOR)

Kerr, Lucille. "Interview: Julio Cortázar." *Diacritics* 4.4 1974 35-40. 16 Oct 2008 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/465122>>.

Jitrik, Noé, et al. *Sarmiento: Author of a Nation*. U of California Press.

Lavery, Jane E. *Postmodern Interpretations of the Iconic Self: Tinísima by Elena Poniatowska and Santa Evita by Tomás Eloy Martínez*. University of Southampton, UK

Luna, Félix. "A Short History of the Argentinians" Buenos Aires: Planeta, 2000.

Mc Cracken, Ellen. "Metaplagiarism and the Critic's Role as Detective: Ricardo Piglia's reinvention of Roberto Arlt". (JSTOR)

Østergård, Sven. *The Unconscious of Representation ("Death and the Compass")* www.borges.pitt.edu/ftp/vb1/svend.pdf

Mayer, Doris. *Victoria Ocampo: Against the Wind and the Tide* University of Texas Press; 1st Univ. of Texas Ed., 1990 edition (November 1, 1989)

Nietzsche, Friedrich, "On the advantage and disadvantage of History for Life", Hackett Publishing Company, Inc. Indianapolis, Cambridge

Ocampo, Victoria. *Victoria Ocampo: Writer, Feminist, Woman of the World*. (PALAS 370) Argentina: The Making of a Country through its Literature

University of New Mexico Press (January 1999).

Piglia, Ricardo, et al. *Sarmiento: Author of a Nation*. U of California Press.

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

Salinas, Alejandro. Culture, politics and literature in Jorge Luis **Borges**. Paper prepared for delivery at the 2008 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, August 28th - August 31st, Boston. Copyright by the American Political Science Association

Sarlo, Beatriz: *Borges, a Writer on the Edge*. *Borges Studies Online*. On line. J. L. Borges Center for Studies & Documentation. Internet: 14/04/01 (<http://www.borges.pitt.edu/bsol/bsi0.php>)

Shumway, Nicolas. "The Invention of Argentina". University of California Press, 1991.

Sorensen, Diana. "The Wiles of Disputation: Alberdi reads Facundo" *Facundo and the Construction of Argentine Culture*. US: Texas Panamerican Series, 1999.

Todorov; Tsvetan. *The Fantastic* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1975).

Viñas, David et al. *Sarmiento: Author of a Nation*. U of California Press.