New York University Buenos Aires
Global Orientations: Perspectives on Argentina and the World
GLBL-UA 9103.001
Fall 2014

SYLLABUS

Instructors: NYUBA Professors
Anna-Kazumi Stahl
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& lecture + film on Argentine 1970s censorship, media & culture by screenwriter, documentary filmmaker and former Gallatin Lecturer Pedro Cristiani
& lecture on Argentine historical background by NYUBA Prof Flavia Fiorucci
& workshop on comparative academic cultures: featured article “All Contents Are Cultural: Foreign Students and Academic Cultures” by NYUBA Prof Vera Cerqueiras
& lecture on Eva Peron & Peronism by Prof Mariano Lopez Seoane

Objectives of the class

The principal purpose of this class is to introduce students to key concepts and issues of Argentina and its relation to the regional (Latin American) and global contexts. This brief intensive introduction seeks to set in motion what will be, for NYUBA students, a semester-long process of engaging this new location and its particular history and the socio-cultural factors that feed into not only its identity and self-definition but also its relation to neighboring South American nations and cultures, to the larger hemispheric complex of the Americas, and of course to the global context as well.

Lectures on historical background and pinpoint illustrative socio-cultural markers will help give students a first-glance at the background that informs what they will experience as they settle in to life in Buenos Aires today – covering a range of aspects from the political legacy of Peronism and Evita to the tactics and effects of propaganda and media control during the Dictatorship of the 1970s.

In addition, there will be a workshop with corresponding assigned readings on comparing academic cultures between the USA and Latin America. The objective of this activity is to promote communication and self-awareness as student arrive in a new context and begin to study with professors who are outstanding academicians at local Argentine universities.
Through the week, excursions and practical exercises provide a dynamic experiential initiation for students in their process of adapting to the cityscape, its circuits and cultural codes. This course also includes a later, longer excursion to nearby La Plata, the capital of the Province of Buenos Aires and a foremost example of urban planning in Latin America as one of two fully pre-designed cities.

Last but not least, living in a new language is key dimension included in the course: students dive right in to the way that Spanish is spoken here (in the “Rio de la Plata” area) with lessons given from a pragmatic and interactive approach. Local expressions and Argentine-style Spanish are introduced and explained in a range of idiomatic phrases that can run from political terms now current in local media and political activism to common slang among porteños (as inhabitants of Buenos Aires are known, given the city’s major port).

Methodology

This course works with both theoretical (lectures/readings) and practical (fieldwork exercises, excursions) approaches to deliver the information about this country and its major issues and characteristics, as necessary to fulfill course objectives.

In theoretical terms:

- History lecture: This presentation provides a panoramic view of Argentina as a country, while also drawing students’ attention to the forces that have influenced Argentina’s political and international profile historically and the debates that manifest in its socio-economic and cultural realities today. With that overview, students will have a general context in which to make their own observations as well as reflect on topics presented in other courses at NYUBA.
- Communications, Media and Politics lecture: This talk and discussion offer a different lens on the social and political upheavals of the late 1970s and early 1980s, a key period in Argentine history as military rule gives ways to a return to democracy. The presentation uses a focus on communications and visual cultures as a way to showcase key recent events that have left their mark on contemporary society here, namely: the Dirty War (the military dictatorship of 1976-1983), the Malvinas War, and the return to democracy and open elections.
- Peronism & Evita lecture: Prof. Lopez-Seoane’s talk puts a spotlight on one of the most galvanizing moment’s in Argentine history, one that will have academic relevance for several NYUBA courses and that has had lasting effects still tangibly felt in this country today, i.e. early Peronism and the emblematic figure of Evita.
- For language learning, two sessions dedicated to Spanish provide basic notions of the language for those at beginner levels and introduce local cultural expression to those at more advanced levels.

Every activity – whether theoretical or practical – has required readings (some also add suggested readings). All required readings are available either online or in the course packet. Suggested readings can be checked out from NYUBA’s Book Collection.
There are 18 hours of class.

Assessment

This is a 0-credit course, mandatory for all students enrolled in the program. The grading is pass/fail. The students must attend all lectures, Spanish sessions, participate in all course activities, and pass the quizzes included at the end of lectures and Spanish Sessions. Use of at least two outside sources (which can be the readings distributed for this course) must be shown in the reflection paper. In order to pass the course, students must have been present for and performed well in all activities, and must achieve a PASS grade on all quizzes and on the reflection paper.

Session 1: Wednesday August 20, 2014

MEDIA, POLITICS + LITERATURE LECTURE – Censorship and (versus?) Art – Pedro Cristiani 4:00 - 6:30 PM

As part of this lecture, students will view a 30-minute episode of a four-part documentary for Canal Encuentro on television advertising & propaganda during the Argentine Dictatorship of the 1970s. The documentary’s screenwriter and filmmaker (also a former NYU/Gallatin lecturer), Pedro Cristiani, will engage students in a discussion of this provocative lens on the realities of everyday during a period of strident political repression and social control.

Suggested reading:
Walsh, Rodolfo. “Open Letter from a Writer to the Military Junta”
Piglia, Ricardo. from the 1980 novel Artificial Respiration. (Tr. Daniel Balderston.)

Supplementary reading:

→ 6:00pm–6:30pm QUIZ/Group Discussion and Project Production.

Session 2: Thursday August 21, 2014

Part One (2 hours). LANGUAGE CLASS – Survival Spanish 9:00 AM-11:00AM
The group is divided into five levels (elementary, advanced beginners, intermediate and advanced 1 and 2). This session will be focused primarily on rioplatense Spanish (grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary), and learning how to use expressions for travelling, ordering food and the city know-how vocabulary for beginners. For advanced Spanish speakers it will cover issues relating language and Buenos Aires cultural history through readings of fragments and a short story.
Required readings:
Excerpts from one of the following books, according to Spanish level:


→ 10:40-11:00am QUIZ

Part Two (1hr 50min). LECTURE: Perspectives on Argentine History in a Global Context. Prof. Flavia Fiorucci 11:00am-12:50pm

This lecture will provide a panorama of Argentina – from post-colonial nation-building, through the 20th century’s intense shifts in political institutions, industrial forces, social and ethnic heterogeneity, to current characteristics and positions of insertion into the larger global order.

The lecture will touch on key historical events that resonate with sites visited during the previous day’s City Tour.

A final focus will give special attention to the 1970s/early 1980s (the Dictatorship & the Malvinas War), continuing through the 2001 economic crisis to delineate the current socio-economic and political state of affairs against a historical backdrop.

Students will come away with a diachronic profile of the historical influences at work in Argentine society and its relation to the region and global context.

Issues and key facts from this lecture and the corresponding readings in the course packet should be applied to the students’ 3-page Reflection Papers (due the week after the excursion to La Plata).

Readings:


→ 12:30 – 12:50 QUIZ.

Part Three (2.5 hours). CITY TOUR: Buenos Aires Laberintico, 2:20-5:30 PM

2:00 - 2:20 pm → short preparatory talk on the function/purpose of the city tour in the context of the Global Orientations course: contents, expectations, descriptions of follow-up quiz.
This tour provides in-depth point-by-point treatment of key sites in the city that have been relevant for 20th century Argentina: scenarios of mass mobilization, key shifts in national economy and global insertion, emblematic human rights actions, in addition to several of this capital city’s principal anecdotes and secrets. A three-hour journey with historically informed guides, acknowledging the key role that sometimes hidden actions have in creating a community’s present and also identifying for newcomer students the way that traffic and information flow through this city. The tour is conducted by “Eternautas” a group of historians from the University of Buenos Aires.

Required reading:

→ 5:30 – 6:00 pm QUIZ

**Session 3: 4 hours. Friday August 22, 2014**

**Part One (2 hours). LANGUAGE CLASS – Survival Spanish. 11:00am-1:00pm**

This session will be focused primarily on the learning and use of political expressions used in the media and in everyday life by porteños, as well as sociocultural and linguistic components related to the interaction with locals.

→ 12:40-13:00 QUIZ.

**Part Two (2 hours). WORKSHOP: “Switching Hats – Starting to Speak (and Think?) in a Foreign language” – Silvia Luppino, AK Stahl & Sarah Akhter NYUBA Global Wellness Counselor 6:00-8:00 PM**

Workshop with Spanish Language department and Wellness that engages students in observing and thinking about how learning a foreign language and living in a foreign culture affects their customary (and sometimes subconscious) ways of going about life.

Grammatical structures, vocabulary and idiomatic expressions are used as springboards for discussion, and the Wellness side helps students increase awareness of and prepare for navigating the culture gap.

→ 7:30-8:00pm Writing Assignment: This activity closes with the writing of a letter to one’s future self (to be opened and read around mid-semester) about one’s expectations, one’s hopes and trepidations, and some pinpoint observations or favorite take-aways from the Orientation so far.

**Session 4: 1.5 hours. Tuesday August 26, 2014**

**LECTURE & WORKSHOP: Intercultural Academics – Prof. Vera Cerqueiras with**
Global Orientations course – NYU Buenos Aires – Fall 2014

Prof Luppino and Prof Stahl. – 7:00pm – 8:30pm

On the basis of Prof Cerquieras’ text “All Content Is Cultural: Foreign Students and Academic Cultures” The activity proposes to analyze the cultural differences between US and Argentine approaches in the classroom. Some lecturing will provide background on the historical cultural roots of Argentine academic culture (born of predominantly European structural influence) and the US contrasting structures and presumptions. Thereafter, with a workshop’s dynamic, specific case examples are presented that illuminate both the differences between these two cultural modes as well as the misinterpretations that can easily arise when one crosses cultural frontiers in an academic project. The goal is to enhance NYU students’ sensitivity to the new cross-cultural context and to generate a space of open discussion.

Required reading:

Suggested reading:
Wells, Sarah. “The University of Buenos Aires” literary non-fiction about studying abroad in Buenos Aires (due out with The City Moves Me, an anthology of writing by foreign women in Buenos Aires).

➔ 8:10pm–8:30pm QUIZ.

Session 5: 1.5 hours. Tuesday September 2, 2014

LECTURE: Eva Perón and Peronism – Prof. Mariano López-Seoane, 7:00-8:30 PM

This lecture provides a brief history of Evita as a Political Icon in the history of Argentina and Latin America. Politics will be taken as Spectacle, Mass media and Peronism as a mass culture phenomenon. Socio economic conditions for the emergence of Peronism: industrialization and urban working classes as a fertile terrain for populism. Confrontation, Social Justice, and religious background in Argentine society created an adequate framework.

Required reading:

Suggested reading:


8:10pm–8:30pm QUIZ.

Session 6:
EXCURSION – La Plata, capital city of the province of Buenos Aires, Argentina. October 5, 2014. – 4 hours.

This excursion involves a guided tour of the city of La Plata, one of two planned” cities in the South American region (along with Brasilia, capital of Brazil). The tour will include sites of governmental importance as La Plata is the seat of Provincial leadership for Buenos Aires as well as cultural sites of interest pertinent to the colonial period (the Catedral with examples of syncretism in its artwork) and current times (choices include: the House of Provincial Government, the National University of La Plata, the Islas Malvinas Cultural Center, the Teatro Argentino, and the Museo de Arte y Memoria).

Readings:
Additional readings (a brief compilation) will be distributed before the excursion.

Final Assignment:
Students will be required to write a 500-word reflection paper in relation to a chosen aspect in evidence in the city of La Plata. The paper must include appropriate academic use and citation of at least two outside sources.