

LACS 106 SYLLABUS

LACS 106: INTRODUCTION TO CONTEMPORARY ARGENTINA

Course general objectives: This course is designed to offer the student a basic familiarity with the economic and social structure of Argentina in the last decades, taking into account the changes that have taken place in its economy, society and culture. The analysis of Argentine economy will be conducted within the international context of this particular period and the events that took place during the last 25 years.

Course Structure:

The course will be divided into five main components:

1. Introduction: The legacy of Peronism. The military as political actors.
2. Argentina in the 1980s: Restoration of Democracy: The legacy of Argentina's military dictatorship. Debt crisis, economic stagnation and inflation.
3. Argentina in the 1990s: The decade of the Economic Convertibility Plan, Neoliberal Politics, growth and crisis.
4. Argentina today: The end of the Economic Conversion Plan, devaluation and default. Political, social and economic crisis. The new economy? : Agribusiness boom and asymmetrical growth. What is new in old political parties?
5. Special Research Trips and Interviews.
Topic 1: Immigration, migration, and emigration in Argentina.
Topic 2: Popular art in Buenos Aires

Course Content:

Unit 1: Peronism in Argentina and the last dictatorship.

Objectives:

- Allow the students to understand the relevance of the peronism in Argentina analyzing the popular vote, the women's vote and the importance of the unions in politics. The new alliances in Argentina: national entrepreneurs and peronist unions. Debate on the fall of Peronism: its legacy
- The takeover of the military and the consequences of the dictatorship between 1976 and 1983.

Content:

- Relevance of the Peronist Party
- Military dictatorship in Argentina
- War with Great Britain: The Malvinas/Falklands war.

Readings

Edgard Schumacher. *Argentina and Democracy. Foreign Affairs 1984*

RESEARCH TRIPS & INTERVIEWS

-Museo Eva Peron. The role of Eva Perón and the relevance of the Peronist Party in contemporary Argentina. (*Report*)

Unit 2: Argentina in the 80s: the debt crisis, economic stagnation and inflation. The restoration of Democracy.

Objectives:

- Allow the students to familiarize themselves with the Argentine reality in the 1980s and to interpret the events that developed within the general Latin-American context during this period.
- The students will be able to understand the relevance of the foreign debt during this decade.
- Debate on how the new democracy established

Content:

- Argentina in the 80s:
- The debt crisis in Latin-America
- Restoration of democracy: Raul Alfonsín, the aftermath of military dictatorship.
- Economic stagnation and inflation: Description and consequences of the economic and political measures applied during this decade.
- Resolution of the Latin-American debt crisis; the Brady Plan.

Readings

Boughton James M. *The International Monetary Fund 1979-1989.* Chapter 10, pages 461-475. Chapter 11, pages 491-498; 520-526.

Edgard Schumacher. *Argentina and Democracy. Foreign Affairs 1984*

RESEARCH TRIPS & INTERVIEWS

-Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada (ESMA) detention center. Human Rights (HHRR), and the State of Siege: a reflection of the consequences military dictatorships had over the Argentine society and its citizens. After the visit, you'll have the opportunity to conduct interviews with victims of the last military dictatorship in Argentina (1973-1983), as well as with members of organizations of HHRR organizations in Buenos Aires. (*Report*)

-Visit to the Unión Cívica Radical metropolitan Headquarters. Interview with Mr. Gonzalo Berra, General Secretary of the UCR of the City of Buenos Aires: “ The Role of the Young Generation of the 80’s in the restoration of democracy in Argentina” Evolution of the Argentine political parties: 1983-2008. (*report*)

MOVIES: “The official story” (1985), dir. Luis Puenzo. “Iluminados por el Fuego (2005) dir. Tristán Bauer.

Unit 3: Argentina in the 1990s: The decade of the Economic Convertibility Plan, Neoliberal policies, growth and crisis.

Objectives:

- The students will recognize the main tenets of the Economic Convertibility Plan, the objectives it tried to accomplish and the consequences of implementation of measures of these policies.
- The students should come to an understanding of the relationship of the policies applied in Argentina in relation to the main tenets of the Washington Consensus in place during this period.

Content:

- Argentina in the 1990s:
- The economic pan: Economic Conversion Plan: consequences, achievements, a retrospective look.
- Creation of MERCOSUR customs union.
- The Washington Consensus: Main tenets and adoption of the same in Argentine economy during the 1990s
- Argentina’s ties with the multilateral and international financial organizations.
- Recession in 1998: Analysis

Bibliography

Marx, Rubén. *Mercosur Agenda 2007*, in “*Fronteras Abiertas para el MERCOSUR*”, Gloria Mendicoa (edit), Espacio Editorial, Buenos Aires, 2007.

Buenos Aires Herald. *Buenos Aires Deposits the Washington Consensus.*

Dominguez Kathryn M.E. and Tesar Linda L. *International Borrowing and Macroeconomic Performance in Argentina.* National Bureau of Economic Research, 2005.

Williamson John. *The Washington Consensus as Policy Prescription for Development.*

Unit 4: Argentina today: The end of the Economic Conversion Plan, devaluation and default. Economic, social and political crisis.

Objectives:

- Students will study the last events having taken place in Argentina with a critical look at the policies previously applied and during the 2001 crisis.

Content:

- The 2001 devaluation, Causes, description of political, social and economic circumstances
- Economic policy for the new millenium: the adoption of a flexible system of monetary exchange, the government's intervention of the Argentina Central Bank, inflationary control and resolution of the long and pending economic debt.
- Reaction to the economic tenets and policies applied during the current period.
- General reflections on the immediate future.
- New political order? Kirchner's presidency. Asymmetrical growth, and the boom of commodities. Social Agenda. A prospective for Argentina.

Bibliography

Corrales Javier. *The Political Toll of the Depression in Argentina.* Amherst College, July 2002.

Feldstein Martin. *Argentina's Fall*

RESEARCH TRIP & INTERVIEWS

-New Social Movements in Argentina: Piqueteros, Cartoneros, Movimiento de Fábricas Recuperadas. Study Cases: Brukman Hermanos and Hotel Bauen. (*report*)

MOVIES: “Memorias del Saqueo” (2004), dir. Pino Solanas.

Unit 5: SPECIAL TOPICS:**Topic 1: Immigration, Migration & Emigration**

- The organization of Argentina as a Federal Country and the role of immigration: The vision of Domingo Faustino Sarmiento. Agricultural colonies and urban immigration: How it changed Buenos Aires Society; Tango & Italian Immigration.

- Internal migrations to the big cities as part of national industrialization: Los cabecitas negras: debate about Peronism and Anti-Peronism.

- Emigration: from political exile to economic crisis. Argentine emigration to Mexico, Venezuela, US, Spain, Italy, France, Israel, in the last 30 years.

RESEARCH TRIP AND INTERVIEWS: Visit to the “Museo de los Inmigrantes” (Report)

Interview with argentines who went into exile during military dictatorship.

Topic 2: Popular Art in Buenos Aires (Optional)

-Murgas and Carnival in Buenos Aires. The African origin. The Carnival Tradition and the prohibition by the military.

-Feria de Mataderos: Folk Music & dance.

-Milongas and the history of Tango in Buenos Aires.

RESEARCH TRIP AND INTERVIEWS (Optional): Visit to the Feria de Mataderos and to the Milonga at the Torcuato Tasso Cultural Center. (Report)

COURSE METHODOLOGY AND EVALUATION

The students will have access to the required bibliography and all articles for each unit.

EVALUATION:

Readings: Students are expected to read the assigned readings prior to class meetings in order to participate in class discussion

Class discussion: In addition to general class discussion, students will be paired and assigned a specific topic for which they will be responsible to conduct a class debate/discussion during the term.

Interviews: Different interviews will be hold during the course in relation with the course interests.

Evaluation: Two partial exams and other written assignments to be determined during the first week of class. Participation in class & interviews will also be part of the evaluation. A final exam will be taken during the last week. It will include all the topics debated during the course.

Format: Class will consist of lectures and class discussion. As part of class discussion, current events will be included as part of debates and discussion in class. Active participation is required of all students.

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory. Students will be only allowed up to two (2) absences.

Grade distribution:

Participation in class	10%
Participation in interviews	20%

Reports	15%
Partial Exams	30%
Final Exam	25%

Grades:

93-100%	= A
90-92	= A-
87-89	= B+
83-86	= B
80-82	= B-
77-79	= C+
73-76	= C
70-72	= C-
68-69	= D+
66-67	= D
65	= D-
0-64	= F