

## GST 206 Syllabus

### Avant-garde, Tango, and Identity in Argentina and Uruguay

Berea College  
2010 Short Term Course

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#### Course Goals and Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students will...

- Better appreciate the significant contribution to the arts that have grown out of the music and dance.
- Understand the development of the Vanguard in the arts.
- Be able to discuss form and content in the plastic arts.
- Understand the distinct development of the urban layout and public art of Buenos Aires and Montevideo.
- Be able to discuss the role folk arts such as dance plays in oppressed subcultures.
- Describe their first-hand knowledge of how the dominant cultures in Argentina and Uruguay view tango, art, and identity politics.
- Be able to discuss what is known about the historical and social roots of the Tango.
- Understand a selection of the basic dance movements, the rules of lead and follow for selected basic dance codes of the Tango.
- Be able to discuss form, style, structure, and pacing in choreographies of Tango
- Engage in thoughtful conversation about the reasons art forms are suppressed and/or adopted by the dominant culture.

#### Course Description:

What did/does it mean to be Argentine? ... to be Uruguayan? What is it like to dance the tango? This international travel course will journey to Argentina and Uruguay to learn the answers to these questions and more...

The tango is a close form of couple's dancing based upon walking which is impressive to watch, fun to dance, and whose basics are easy to learn. The development of the Tango in Argentina and Uruguay parallels a rich development in the arts of the avant-garde. Ideas of identity, social activism, and nationalism that appear during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century have had strong repercussions into the present. The rise of tango can be seen as emblematic of the transformation of Buenos Aires and Montevideo at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Tango blended European, South American, and African rhythms and styles into something unique to the region. As such, it provided new identity for a society in flux. The arts of the avant-garde likewise sought to create a new space – intellectual, socially active, middle class, and urban that was unique to the region.

In this course students will read, research, visit art museums, watch performances, meet local people, and learn to dance the tango. **This course is expected to serve as an Active Learning Experience, an International Perspective Credit, and an Art Perspective Credit. In addition it may be applied to the Dance Minor.**

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## Required Texts:

- Thompson, Robert Farris. Tango: The Art History of Love, Pantheon Books; First Edition (2006) ISBN: 978-1400095797. Provided as part of course fee and required reading over the summer.
- Course Blackboard and website site: <http://blackboard.berea.edu> and <http://faculty.berea.edu/pearcej/GST206/> Read both over the summer.  
*Includes other required readings, descriptions of required papers, a packing list, background materials, travel itinerary, a selection of tango music, and information on Argentina and Uruguay.*
- All non-native Spanish-speaking students are required to carry either a Latin American Spanish phrasebook or a Spanish dictionary while abroad depending upon the amount of Spanish background of the student. For students with little or no Spanish, we strongly recommend Latin American Spanish, Rough Guide Phrasebook; First Edition (2006); ISBN 13: 978-1-84353-6444-4.

## Grading Structure:

20%	Art Research Paper
5%	Presentation on Artist
5%	Participation in museums
15%	Tango Paper
5%	Quiz on Tango text
10%	Dance development in Tango
10%	Group cohesion and discussions
15%	Teamwork and group dynamics
10%	Daily Reflective Journaling
5%	Final reflective digital story

## Possible Course Grades\*:

A, A-: All Aspects Outstanding  
B+, B, B-: Overall Good Work  
C+, C, C-: Acceptable Competence  
D+, D, D-: Minimally Adequate  
F: Unworthy of Credit  
\* Please see the current Berea College Catalog for a more detailed explanation of the College-wide meanings of assigned grades.

Before writing your art research paper, be sure to read ALL of the materials on Blackboard.

The Art Research Paper will be graded on the following criteria:

1. Organization and overall structure including pace and clarity
2. Depth of understanding/insights into the social/historical aspects of art in the Rio de la Plata region.
3. Depth of analysis of chosen artist's relationship to their artistic movement and broader environment.

Before writing your tango paper, be sure to read the entire Tango text.

The Tango Paper will be graded on the following criteria:

1. Organization and overall structure including pace and clarity
2. Depth of understanding and insights into the social the development of tango as a dance.

Note: The quiz on the tango text is designed to be straightforward for those who have read the text.

**This course is “front-loaded” in order to allow students to better appreciate their travel and to fully immerse themselves in the cultures in South America during January. For this reason, course work and deadlines will be given to students before summer commences.**

The dance development will be graded on the following criteria:

1. Connection with partner
2. Musicality
3. Choreography structure and pacing
4. Choreography execution



## COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY



- Ades, Dawn. *Art in Latin America: The Modern Era 1820-1980*. New Haven, 1989. 709.8 A232a
- Baddeley, Oriana. *Drawing the Line: Art and Cultural Identity in Contemporary Latin America*. London, 1989. 700.103 B132d 1989
- Barnitz, Jacqueline. *Twentieth-Century Art of Latin America*. Austin, 2001. 709.809 B262t
- Castro, Mauricio, and Daniel Truco Daniel (Il.) *Tango: The Structure of the Dance* Cesarini Editores; (March 1, 2000) ISBN: 9505261292
- Castro, Donald S. *The Argentine Tango as Social History, 1880-1955: The Soul of the People* (Latin American Studies, Vol 3) Edwin Mellen Press; (January 1991) ISBN: 0773499237
- *The Afro-Argentine in Argentine Culture: El Negro del Acordeon* (Latin American Studies, Vol 14) Edwin Mellen Press (December 1, 2001) ISBN: 0773473890
- Cooper, Artemis, Maria Susana Azzi, Richard Martin, Simon Collier (Ed.), Ken Haas. *Tango!: The Dance, the Song, the Story* Thames & Hudson (October 1, 1995) ISBN: 0500016712 (Cost: \$16.00)
- Denniston, Christine. *The Meaning of Tango: The Story of the Argentinean Dance*. Portico Books. London, 2007. ISBN 9781906032166
- Fane, Diane, ed. *Converging Cultures: Art and Identity in Spanish America*. New York, 1996. 709.72 C766 1996
- Lucie-Smith, Edward. *Latin American Art of the Twentieth Century*. London, 1993. 709.809 L9371
- Mosquera, Gerardo, ed. *Beyond the Fantastic: Contemporary Art Criticism from Latin America*. London, 1996. 709.809 B573 1995
- Nouzeilles, Gabriela, Graciela R. Montaldo (Eds.) *The Argentina Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (Latin America in Translation/En Traducccion/Em Traducaon) Duke University Press (January 1, 2003) ISBN: 082232914X
- Rasmussen, Waldo, ed. *Latin American Artists of the Twentieth Century*. New York, 1993. 700.98 L356
- Savigliano, Marta E. *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion* (Institutional Structures of Feeling) Westview Press, ISBN: 0813316383
- Sullivan, Edward J. ed. *Latin American Art in the Twentieth Century*. London, 1996. 709.809 L357 2000
- Traba, Marta. *Art in Latin America, 1900-1980*. Baltimore, 1994. 709.809 T758a



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## COURSE POLICIES

**Participation and Attendance Policy:** Participation is crucial to this class. Development of tango necessitates practice and your participation affects the dynamics of the entire class. Furthermore, discussion of the readings will be an integral part of the class. Mandatory course activities include all class discussion times, regular dance classes, required milongas special presentations, cultural visits and events, and excursions of all types related to the program. We will apply the attendance policy strictly. Unexcused absences will affect your grade by lowering the final grade with each absence by a third of a letter grade (i.e. B- will become a C+). In addition, a mandatory curfew may be imposed on a few evenings, and all students are expected to adhere strictly to these announced curfews. The academic program has priority over all other activities the student may be interested in engaging in while abroad. During all un-programmed times while abroad, students are required to stay in a subgroup of three or more members of the course. Subgroups of students three or more who leave the rest of the group during un-programmed times are required to record the time that they leave, their planned destination, and the time that they return. Failure to adhere to any of these policies is grounds for failure of the course and early return to the US.

**Alcohol Policy:** Alcoholic or any other kind of substance abuse or intoxication will be considered a serious violation of the code of conduct. The social drinking of wine is part of the culture in South America, so this alcohol policy is designed to allow students to experience this particular cultural activity in a way that differs from on the Berea College campus. However, consumption alcohol is not required and the consumption of more than one alcoholic drink per day will be considered "alcohol abuse" and offenders will be subject to failure of the course and early return to the US.

**Dress Code:** Some course activities require specific attire, including formal clothing and appropriate footwear. All of these items are included in the packing list. Students who fail to pack these required items or who fail to dress appropriately to course activities are subject to early return to the U.S.

**Sleep Policy:** Sleep patterns in some areas South America can be radically different than in the United States, and the instructors understand that this can take time to adjust to. However, programmed events will take only a portion of each day, so students are expected to plan sufficient rest that they are rested and alert at all programmed activities. Repeated failure to plan in sufficient rest time, as evidenced by repeated tardiness to or drowsiness at planned course activities, may result in the restriction of subgroup privileges and/or a mandatory curfew.

**Early Return to the US:** If a student fails to behave in a responsible manner and/or to uphold the agreed upon Code of Conduct, he or she is subject to failure of the course and early return to the US. Irresponsible behavior that may lead to failure of the course and early return to the US include (but is not limited to) failure to attend any of the course activities, failure to stay with at least 2 other member of the group, failure to log their coming and goings during un-programmed times, drinking more than one alcoholic drink in a day or other substance abuse, sleeping during course activities, offensive or disruptive behavior, etc. Early return to the US will include the immediate return to Berea, Kentucky. If this occurs, the student is responsible for all additional expenses associated with this return. These expenses will be added to the student's account and must be paid along with all other course fees and any other charges on that account.