

Comparative Literature 130  
The National Imagination  
Spring, 2009

Instructors:

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**REQUIRED TEXTS**

AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE IN THE FL&L DEPT. OFFICE for \$20:  
*Course Reader: The National Imagination 2009*

AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE IN THE BOOKSTORE:  
*The Argentina Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Nouzeilles and Montaldo  
Enchi Fumiko, *The Waiting Years*  
Tanizaki Jun'ichiro, *Some Prefer Nettles*  
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust I and II*  
Gertrud Kolmar, *A Jewish Mother in Berlin*

FILMS AVAILABLE AT GODDARD LIBRARY RESERVE DESK:

María Luisa Bemberg. *Camila*  
Juan Carlos Desanzo. *The True Story of Eva Peron*  
Luis Puenzo. *The Official Story*  
Marcelo Piñero. *Kamchadka*  
Itami Juzo. *Tampopo*  
Rainer Werner Fassbinder. *The Marriage of Maria Braun*

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Regular attendance at all class sessions. More than one unexcused absence will adversely affect your grade. When you know you will be absent, please have the courtesy of contacting one of us in advance by e-mail.
2. Preparation of all assigned readings and viewing of all assigned films prior to class meetings.
3. For each of the three “National Experiences” students may choose one of three formal analytic exercises: (a) a take-home examination consisting of responses to ‘Think Questions’ distributed for assigned readings and screenings [6-8 pages]; (b) an analytic essay based on readings and class discussions. Essay topics will be distributed in class [6-8 pages]; (c) a visual/aural culture project (see below). Evaluation and grades for analytic exercises will be done collaboratively by all three instructors. **Note: You may choose to do one, two or three take-home exams and/or analytic essays, but no more than one visual/aural culture project.**  
**Due Dates for submitting take-home essays and analytic essays:**  
**Argentine Experience: February 24**  
**Japanese Experience: March 31**  
**German Experience: April 30**

4. VISUAL/AURAL CULTURE PROJECTS: In lieu of one take-home exam or analytic essay, students may wish to develop a visual/aural culture project. The project, which may be developed singly **or as a collaborative assignment among two or three students**, will involve the exploration of visual dimensions of themes and materials previously presented in course readings. There is a department archive of visual culture projects developed in previous years. All visual culture projects must be approved by the appropriate instructor. Visual/aural culture projects are usually presented during Academic Spree Day.

5. Weekly Cicada Forum Postings: By midnight of the Tuesday following each class, students will post at least one comment (minimum 50 words) and a response **to at least one other posting** in their forum group.

### Determination of final grades

Analytic Exercises – 60%

Class participation and Cicada Forum discussion – 40%

## COURSE INTRODUCTION

WEEK ONE, January 15

How does the course work? What is a National Imagination?

Handout: Benedict Anderson on “unisonance,” from *Imagined Communities*

Singing the Nation: Assorted film clips

*Homework: Please update your profile on Cicada*

WEEK TWO, January 22

National and Ethnic Stereotypes and You!

**Reading due:**

1. Sander Gilman. “What Are Stereotypes and Why use Texts to Study Them?” [Course Reader]
2. Malcolm Gladwell. “The Ethnic Theory of Plane Crashes” [Course Reader]

**INVENTING ARGENTINA**

WEEK THREE, January 29: Inventing Argentina: Gender, Violence and Nation

**Reading due:**

1. Domingo F. Sarmiento: “Civilization and Barbarism” (Argentina Reader 80-90)
2. Esteban Echeverría.: “The Slaughterhouse” (Argentina Reader 107-114).
3. José Hernández. “Gauchos in and out of the State.” (Argentina Reader 133-45)
4. María Luisa Bemberg. “Camila” [Film]

[RECOMMENDED]:

1. Nicolas Shumway: Prelude to Nationhood.” [Course Reader]
2. “The Revolution” (Argentina Reader 43-65).
3. Richard Slatta: “Man to Myth: Literary and Symbolic Images” [Course Reader]

WEEK FOUR, February 5:

Popular/ Elite Narratives of the Nation/Sounds of the People

**Reading due:**

1. Jorge Luis Borges “Man from the Slums” [Course Reader]
2. Jorge Luis Borges. “The South” [Course Reader]
3. ”Splendor and Fin de Siècle” (Argentina Reader: 157-160)

4. James Scobie. "The Paris of South America" (Argentina Reader: 170-81).
5. Leopoldo Lugones. "National Identity in a Cosmopolitan Society," (Argentina Reader 209-13).
6. Jo Baim. "The Origins of the Tango" [*Course Reader*]
7. Enrique Santos Discépolo. "Cambalache." (Argentina Reader: 266-7)

[RECOMMENDED]

1. David Viñas, "The Foundation of the National State" (Argentina Reader 161-9)
2. Oresta Sola. "Making it in America" (Argentina Reader 188-192)
3. Alberto Gerchunoff. "The Jewish Gauchos" (Argentina Reader 193-5)
4. Eduardo P. Archetti, "Locating Masculinities and Moralities." [*Course Reader*]

WEEK FIVE, Feb.12: Juan and Eva Perón: Myth-Making and Popular Culture

**Reading due:**

1. "Populism and New Nationalism" (Argentina Reader 269-303)
2. Julio Cortázar. "House Taken Over" (Argentine Reader 328-32)
3. Julio Cortázar. "The Band" [*Course Reader*]
4. Juan Carlos Desanzo. "The True Story of Eva Perón" [film]

RECOMMENDED:

- Daniel James. "Perón and the People" (Argentine Reader 273-95)  
 Tomás Eloy Martínez. "Saint Evita" (Argentine Reader 296-303)  
 Rodolfo Walsh. "Operation Massacre" (Argentine Reader 333-339)

WEEK SIX, February 19: "The Dirty War:" Gender, Family and Nation

**Reading due:**

1. Hebe de Bonafini and Matilde Sánchez. "The Madwomen at the Plaza de Mayo" (Argentine Reader 395-471)
2. National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons: "Never Again" (Argentine Reader 440-47)
3. Diana Taylor: "Trapped in Bad Scripts: The Madres de la Plaza de Mayo" [*Course Reader*]
4. Luisa Valenzuela: *Course Reader*

"The Best Shod"

"The Censors"

"Addendum"

"Symmetries"

5. Luis Puenzo. "The Official Story" [film] OR  
 Marcelo Piñero. "Kamchadka"

[Border Crossing to the Japanese Experience with Prof. Valentine]

## INVENTING JAPAN

WEEK SEVEN, February 26: Inventing Japan: Sacrifice, Feudal Remnants and the Nation as Family

**Reading due:**

1. Valignano, de Torres, and Carletti. "Reports of the Earliest Western Visitors to Japan" [*Course Reader*]
2. "Black Ship Scrolls," [**Cicada link**]
3. Enchi Fumiko. *The Waiting Years*

WEEK EIGHT, March 12: Memory, Fantasy, Modernity: Defining Japan Against the Other

**Reading due:**

1. Tanizaki Jun'ichiro. *Some Prefer Nettles*
2. Tanizaki Jun'ichiro. "In Praise of Shadows" [*Course Reader*]

WEEK NINE, March 19: Japan and the West, Redux: Subjection, Accommodation, and Re-visioning the Past; Identity and the Other

**Reading due:**

1. Nosaka Akiyuki. "American Hijiki" [*Course Reader*]
2. Itami Juzo, *Tampopo* [film]

WEEK TEN, March 26: Beyond Civilization, Race and Gender. National Margins/Marginally National?

**Reading due:**

1. Tawada Yoko. "The Bridegroom Was a Dog" [*Course Reader*]
2. Tawada Yoko. "Is Europe Western?" [*Course Reader*]
3. Takashi Murakami links on **Cicada**

[Border Crossing to the German Experience with Prof. Tobin]

## INVENTING GERMANY

WEEK ELEVEN, April 2: Building a Nation: Faust and *Faust*  
The National Canon

**Required reading:**

excerpts from Goethe's *Faust I and II*

WEEK TWELVE, April 9: The Nation in the Crisis of Modernity:  
Gender and Race in the 1920s

**Required reading:**

Kolmar's *Jewish Mother in Berlin*

WEEK THIRTEEN, April 16: Coming to Terms with the Past:  
Third Reich, Holocaust, and Economic Miracle

**Required reading and viewing:**

1. Fassbinder, **Marriage of Maria Braun** [film]
2. Celan, "Death Fugue" [*Course reader*]
3. Benjamin, "The Artwork in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" [*Course Reader*]

WEEK FOURTEEN, April 23: Performing the National and the Supranational:  
The Eurovision Song Contest

**Required readings and viewing:**

1. Current Eurovision contestants, available on the Internet at:  
<http://www.eurovision.tv/>
2. Adorno, "The Culture Industry" [*Course Reader*]
3. Possible selections from *A Song for Europe* [handout]

