

Course Name: Jorge Luis Borges: Visions of Culture and Knowledge

- ✓ **Hours of Instruction per Week: 4**
- ✓ **Total weeks: 15**
- ✓ **Total Hours of Instruction: 60**
- ✓ **Courses transferable to ECTS**
- ✓ **Courses transferable to U.S. System**
- ✓ **Recommendation: Advanced written and spoken English**

Course Description:

Borges' vision of the world as a Library of Babel and Aleph anticipated the information age and the development of the Internet by several decades. However, although Borges can be regarded as the least representative Latin American writer, not all his fictions address universal problems. This course shows how many of his short stories, essays and poems are embedded in and have contributed to the Latin American and Argentine literary traditions. The course also considers Borges' precursors (Poe, Marcel Schwob and Kafka) and his followers (Donald Barthelme, Leonardo Sciascia, Danilo Kis and Umberto Eco, among others). Finally, it looks at Borges' presence in visual culture: film, architecture and art (PFA).

Attendance policy:

Students need a minimum of 75% of attendance to be in good standing for the final exam. Students are expected to do close readings, participate in class, and do at least one oral presentation. During the semester, students will write two short position papers. 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.

Evaluation Methods:

- In-class Participation 10 %
- Oral Presentation 20 %
- Position Paper (2 page long) 20 %
- Midterm Exam 25 %
- Final Exam 25 %

Academic Calendar

Week 1

Introduction to the course. How and when Borges became known outside Argentina. Available translations. "An Autobiographical Essay" (in collaboration with Norman Thomas di Giovanni). Close reading: Borges's "An Autobiographical Essay" and *The South* by Borges.

Week 2

Close reading: Borges's "An Autobiographical Essay" (in collaboration with Norman Thomas di Giovanni). Borges Interviews by Fernando Sorrentino & interview by A. Manara.

Week 3

"Buenos Aires & Beyond" 3-13 in *Borges and his fiction: a guide to his mind and art* by Gene Bell-Villada. OP Borges' Interviews by Fernando Sorrentino
2- OP. *On the Cult of Books* by Borges & *What is a Classic* by J.M.Coetzee...

Week 4

Borges and Postmodernity. *A Universal History of Infamy*.
OP: *Imaginary Lives* by Marcel Schwob. *A Universal History of Infamy*.
OP on Freud's *The Uncanny* & Ernst Jentsch's *On the Psychology of the Uncanny*

Week 5

"The Aleph". OP on Beatriz Urraca's *Wor(l)ds Through the Looking Glass*
Martin Hadis, Author of *Literary & Excentrics: The English ancestors of Borges*, will visit our class.

Week 6

Borges The Poet: *The Mythical Founding of Buenos Aires...* Two versions.
Contrast: Oliverio Gironde: Borges' review of *Calcomanías*.
Beatriz Sarlo: *The Adventure of Martin Fierro: the Avant-Garde & Criollismo*, 95-114.

Week 7

Beatriz Sarlo: *Utopia & the Avant-Garde*: 115-137
OP: Horacio Coppola: 1936 photos of Buenos Aires, art & architecture.
Impact of Borges on U.S. writing in the 60s: Donald Barthelme's *Sixty Stories: Paraguay* 127-137 & Gene Bell-Villada's *Borges and his Fiction* 278-284. OP on above.

Week 8

Gödel, Escher & Bach by Douglas Hofstadter (introduction)

Allene M. Parker's *Drawing Borges: a Two-Part Invention on the Labyrinths of J.L. Borges and M.C. Escher*.

Borges as pioneer of the Internet: "Tlon, Ukbar & Orbis Tertius"

OP on Aden Hayes' *Orbis Tertius and Orbis Novus: The Discovery of New Worlds*

Week 9

Jason Wilson, author of Borges biography will visit class.

Borges' *The Waiting* & Hemingway's *The Killers*

Week 10

Mid-term paper due.

Regarding Roderer by Guillermo Martinez Borges's influence on Guillermo Martinez's writing.

Class discussion.

Borges and Mathematics by Guillermo Martinez.

Week 11

Borges' *The Secret Miracle*: Literary Vanity...literature is constructed in the head. OP *Post-Lecture Discussion of His Own Writing* by Borges.

OP *Connecting Pungencies: Borges Conjured and Restored* by Eduardo Gonzalez.

Week 12

Poe: The murders of Rue Morgue & the Purloined Letter

OP Svend Østergård: *The Unconscious of Representation ("Death and the Compass")* & Borges' *The Labyrinths of the Detective Story* & Chesterton.

Borges, Poe and the detective story: "Death and the Compass" Irwin 1-12 & 30-36

Week 13

Borges, Poe and the detective story: "The Garden of Forking

Paths" & Daniel Balderston's "Historical Situations in Borges": GFP.

OP: Robert Gillespie: *Detections: Borges & Father Brown*.

Borges and Postmodernity: *Pierre Menard, author of the Quixote* & Daniel Balderston's "Historical Situations in Borges":

Week 14

Borges' precursors and disciples: *Six Memos for the Next Millennium* by Italo Calvino: *Multiplicity* 101-124

J.L. Borges: Collected Fictions by J.M. Coetzee...

Week 15

Final Paper Due

Review Class: Students should choose some aspect of the class they liked and briefly expand on it.

Bibliography

BELL-VILLADA, Gene: *Borges and His Fiction: A Guide to His Mind and Art*: University of Texas Press, Austin, 1999.

BORGES, Jorge Luis: *Collected Fictions* translated by Andrew Hurley, Penguin, New York, 1998.

BORGES, Jorge Luis: *Selected Non-Fictions* translated by Eliot Weinberger, Esther Allen, and Suzanne Jill Levine, Penguin, New York, 1999.

CALVINO, Italo: *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, Vintage International, New York, 1993.

COZARINSKY, Edgardo: *Borges in/and/on Film*

HOFSTADTER, Douglas: *Gödel, Escher & Bach* Vintage Books, New York, 1989.

IRWIN, John T.: *The Mystery to a Solution: Poe, Borges and the Analytic Detective Story* Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1996.

MARTINEZ, Guillermo: *Regarding Roderer* Saint Martin's Press, New York, 1994.

NOUZEILLES, Gabriela & MONTALDO, Graciela. *An Argentina Reader: History, Culture & Politics* Duke University Press, Durham, 2002.

SARLO, Beatriz *Jorge Luis Borges: A Writer on the Edge* Verso, London, 2006.

SCHWOB, Marcel *Imaginary Lives* Solar Books, Washington D.C., 2009.

SORRENTINO, Fernando *Seven Conversations with Jorge Luis Borges* Paul Dry Books, Philadelphia, 2010.

WILSON, Jason *Borges* Reaktion Books, London, 2006.