

CASA-Argentina

Universidad de Buenos Aires (UBA)

Spanish for Foreigners Level 6 at Laboratorio de Idiomas: A helpful review and introduction to Spanish grammar and Argentine culture. The classes are small and diverse; you're able to meet interesting students and practice speaking in a comfortable setting while learning about some of the idiosyncrasies of Porteño Spanish and culture. It's an interesting and yet gentle view into what la UBA can be like.

Foundations of Modernist Latin American Literature-Facultad de Filosofía y

Letras: Martí, Darío and del Casal. This is a seminar formatted class, which means that it's relatively small (about 25-30 students) with a higher level of participation and discussion. We studied poetry and newspaper articles from José Martí, Rubén Darío and Julián del Casal. The writing is dense and difficult in terms of vocabulary and context. The professor, Ariela Schnirmajer, seemed to have an encyclopedic knowledge of related theoretical and analytical sources. This consequently meant that the intended reading list was impossibly long and that often these materials were frustratingly never discussed or explained in class. The 4-hour class consisted of lectures by the professor and weekly student presentations followed by discussion. The class was demanding for a number of reasons: the authors to begin with are generally difficult, the reading list was designed to be impossible, the professor uninspiring, and the fact that amid all this you're in a class with all native Spanish speakers more advanced and knowledgeable. That being said the class was an incredible experience. It was amazing to be in la UBA and to be with Argentine students of all ages, vocations.

Human Rights-Facultad de Derecho, (Law School): This law school class, *Derechos Humanos y Garantías*, is also a lecture class, and has about 100 different sections, each with a different professor, and from what I observed each professor teaches the class a completely different way and has different exams, so if you want to take this class I would recommend going to a few versions in the first week and seeing how well you can understand the professors, asking them about the exams, etc. The course was a little more focused on the technical aspects of law than I would have liked (but it was a class at the Law School), but I enjoyed the theoretical parts of the class. The class involves a history of human rights in Argentina (which was really interesting to learn about especially because Argentina did not have democracy until 1983 and had many dictatorships with thousands of disappeared people and huge human rights abuses), the theory behind human rights, and the practical application of human rights in the laws (reading the Constitution and various international treaties). The only foreign students in the class were myself and another Harvard student, so I did feel that everyone else knew more than us about Argentine history, law systems, etc. but it was really cool being in a class full of Argentine students because they were all very vocal and opinionated and did not hesitate to raise their hands and make controversial comments. There were also a few older people in the class who had lived through the dictatorships, so they had really interesting opinions to add. I found the professor a little difficult to understand at times (I would say I understood about 75%) but the coursepack basically repeated everything that was said in class, and we were always invited to ask questions during the break of the professor, the helpers, or the other students. There were a few Argentine students who always offered to help us. Homework for the class included reading the coursepack, finding a current newspaper article about human rights, and studying for two midterms (no final). I would recommend the class because I did learn a lot about human rights, and their interesting history in Argentina, and the workload was also manageable, although I did have to concentrate more in class to understand and sometimes I had to look up the topics in English. Keep in mind that this review is only for Cataldo's class, the other sections were really different, so shop around!

Universidad Torcuato Di Tella

Foundations of Modernist Latin American Literature: Martí, Darío and del Casal at la UBA Filosofía y Letras: The course *Fundamentos del modernismo hispanoamericano: José Martí, Rubén Darío y Julián del Casal. Poesía, crónica y cuento*, gives an overview of some of the canonic figures of Argentine literature: Borges, Cortázar, Arlt, Sabato and Girondo. It's offered exclusively to foreign students. The professor, Martín Kohan, is a Porteño writer, and he teaches the class as though he is doing a stand-up comedy routine. There's very little discussion or participation (as is the case with most classes in Argentina), but sitting and listening to Kohan talk about literature, life, illnesses, unrequited love, travel, history, Parisians, fatherhood is possibly one of the most entertaining introductions to Argentine literature and culture. All the materials are read in class and there's one written assignment and one final exam. In terms of workload and format, the class is undemanding and the setting unintimidating with all foreign students. The material covered is sparse but well presented. Course offered exclusively to foreign students.

The Peronist Movement: From the mid twentieth century until today. The course tries to contextualize and explain the roots and evolution of Peronist politics in Argentina. Professor Ernesto Cussianovich is an economist who works for a political statistics consulting firm that is currently contracted by the Kirchner administration. Despite this association, he gives a well-rounded perspective on current politics with a slight focus on economics (which is imperatively helpful when studying Argentine history). The course material starts with Argentine history since independence and goes up to the present in the literal sense that many classes we simply read the newspaper and discussed the contents, implications, and context of what is going on in current Argentine politics. It was an incredibly helpful, fascinating class taught by a very intelligent, informed professor. The course work includes a take-home midterm exam, a final paper and final exam. Course offered exclusively to foreign students.