

**ARGENTINE TANGO**  
**Arts & Sciences 138.0?, Freshman Seminar**  
**Autumn Quarter, 2 credit**  
**W, 2:30-4:25 Pomerene Hall 213**

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### **Course Description**

Argentine Tango is mistakenly viewed as a dance, although it is in fact a language for two people to communicate with each other, so that they can move together, without stepping over each other: four legs and one heart. We shall attempt to learn some of this very precise language, in ten weekly sessions. Rather than just memorize steps, we shall attempt to understand the implications of the contact, movement, communication, information transfer between the lead and follower.

### **Texts**

No official text. Students would search for texts themselves. Sample texts:

**[The tango singer / Tomas Eloy Martinez](#)**

**[The Perón novel / by Tomás Eloy Martínez](#)**

**[The Argentina reader : history, culture, politics / edited by Gabriela Nouzeilles and Graciela Montaldo](#)**

**[The Argentine tango as social history, 1880-1955 : the soul of the people / Donald S. Castro](#)**

**[A brief history of Argentina / Jonathan C. Brown](#)**

**[A history of Argentina in the twentieth century / Luis Alberto Romero](#)**

**[The history of Argentina / Daniel K. Lewis](#)**

**[Mañana es San Perón : a cultural history of Perón's Argentina / Mariano Ben Plotkin](#)**

**[Tango : creation of a cultural icon / Jo Baim](#)**

**[MEANING OF TANGO : THE STORY OF THE ARGENTINIAN DANCE](#)**

**ENNISTON, CHRISTINE**

We expect a guest speaker, we are currently in contact with El Pulpo <http://www.pulpostango.com.ar/> of Buenos Aires, to see a different perspective. His tight schedule may require additional out-of-schedule (evening?) meeting.

## **Course Policies**

Attendance is mandatory. Class will take a workshop format, starting with a short review of the previous class, and learning a new principle by means of a step or a sequence of steps. Students will be expected to write a short description (one page) of each session, summarizing what they have learnt in class. In addition, students will present one final paper based on self-research on topics such as history, different styles, different music, major musicians. Of course, the papers are to be well-written, well-argued essays free of typos, grammatical mistakes, and infelicities. Audio-visual exposition is acceptable and welcome. Joint work is acceptable and encouraged.

## **Grading**

Final grades will be either Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (U), with an S grade earning at least 80% of the possible points:

Participation	30%	
Weekly essays	45%	(5% per essay)
Final essay	25%	

## **Academic Integrity**

For all the assignments for this course, the Code of Student Conduct of The Ohio State University is in effect. Academic misconduct is defined as: Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the university, or subvert the educational process. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to:

1. Violation of course rules as contained in the course syllabus or other information provided to the student; violation of program regulations as established by departmental committees and made available to students;
2. Submitting plagiarized work for an academic requirement. Plagiarism is the representation of another's work or ideas as one's own; it includes the unacknowledged word-for-word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas;
3. Submitting substantially the same work to satisfy requirements for one course that has been submitted in satisfaction of requirements for another course, without permission of the instructor of the course for which the work is being submitted;
4. For an extended version of these examples please refer to [http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource\\_csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp)

To avoid plagiarism, students must make sure that they:

1. Always cite their sources (following the MLA format)
2. Read the guidelines for written assignments more than once
3. If in doubt consult with your professor.

## **Students with Disabilities**

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 in room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Or visit the internet address of this office at <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu> for more information.

## **Weekly Schedule**

### **Week 1 – Caminar**

The first workshop serves as an introduction. It will serve to explain the purpose of the Seminar. We wish to study the dance, in order to be able to verbally analyse what goes into it, what makes it work. So we shall begin with issues such as: How to walk together without stepping on each other. How much force to apply to have contact, to be able to communicate with each other, yet to be attentive and not aggressive. Shifting weights. Stepping in all four directions. Stepping inside and outside. Main thing: communication is via upper body, not legs. Second issue will be: how to express this in words.

### **Week 2 – Musicality**

What are the different beats and structure of Tango and Milonga music? How are the different beats reflected in the dance?

This will be illustrated by leading the basic structure of the box, combining all the principles of the first workshop: backwards, forwards inside and outside, right, left, and shift of weight.

### **Week 3 – Ouchos, Crusadas**

How to lead, and follow, the figure eight, oucho. Ouch forwards, oucho backwards. Wide oucho and oucho in place.

How to alternate between walking and ouchos.

Basic forms of leading and following a cross of the feet, with a continuation backward and forwards. Combining these with ouchos and walking.

### **Week 4 – Gyros, Molinettes**

Simple turns to the left, and their symmetric image to the right. Complete reverse of direction. Molinettes: turning around in a circle, in various directions.

Student presentation: history of Argentina.

### **Week 5 – Sacadas**

Displacements: taking the axis of the follower to create dramatic moves.

Student presentation: history of Argentine Tango.

### **Week 6 – Barridas, hooks**

Sweeping moves, various hooks and releases from them, changing weight and direction.

Student presentation: main Tango composers, different Tango music.

### **Week 7 – Returning to Caminar**

In a major workshop with many participants, recently in NY, the famous teacher from Buenos Aires, who was teaching various complicated steps, stopped the big crowd and told them: “The reason why you are learning all of these complicated steps is just to hide the fact that you do not yet know just to walk harmoniously”.

Having covered many basic elements, some listed above and some others, we can now return to review the very basic walk, communication, exchange of pressure, weight, and do it with musicality.

### **Week 8 – Vals, Milonga**

Faster pace forms of Tango are Vals, in which the movement is circular, and Milonga, which is very fast, and permits only very little movement stepwise, to keep pace with the beat of the music.

### **Week 9 – Volcada**

This type of movement is based on taking the axis of the follower, and requires a confident lead and trusting follower. It will be introduced subject to satisfactory progress of the class average.

### **Week 10 – Unsolved Mysteries**

We can now review all that we have learnt, and answer such questions as why Argentine Tango won high popularity amongst mathematicians and physicists, how it is different from other dances, survey its history, different styles, different music. The schedule is only tentative, depending on schedule of visiting instructors, students' progress, students' expositions. Videos (mainly from Youtube, for links see <http://tango.osu.edu>) will be viewed and analysed