

# JEWISH BUENOS AIRES: A CULTURAL CASE STUDY IN ARGENTINE IMMIGRA- An NEH Summer Seminar for College and University Teachers

Arizona State University in Buenos Aires, July 9-27, 2007

The seminar will focus on the close reading of major cultural texts. We will examine how Jewish life in Buenos Aires (and in Argentina on a larger scale) has been interpreted, eulogized, criticized, and deconstructed by its authors, intellectuals, and artists. Rather than reading the texts as transparent “representations,” we will consider them as complex documents that are not easily reducible to facile messages of hope or despair, support or disavowal, romantic sentimentality or harsh disengagement. Such readings will seek to transmit the enormous range of Jewish experience in the city and the ways that experience has overlapped with, or been significantly different, from that of other immigrant groups in Argentina (notably, Italians, Arabs, Spaniards, and Germans). There will be an insistence on seeing such texts as both Jewish and Argentine, always bearing in mind that they are or ought to be viewed as integral to Argentine social and cultural history. Jews in Argentina are not a ghettoized minority, but a strong and vibrant community whose interests and whose writings and art are woven into the very fabric of national culture, which would be impossible to comprehend were they withdrawn from it. Thus the double dynamic of thinking and feeling Jewish, but writing and speaking Argentine will constitute the foundation of the seminar. Each week will be organized in terms of a guiding theme: **1) the character and extent of Jewish communities in Argentina and Buenos Aires; 2) the issues of difference and assimilation between Jewish communities and often antagonistic hegemonic social, political, and religious stances; and 3) Jewish nostalgia, its historical roots, its function as a defining feature of Argentine Jewish life, and the ways in which some Jewish writers are addressing it and deconstructing it.**

**Required Reading:** Ricardo Feierstein, *Mestizo*; Alberto Gerchunoff, *Los gauchos judíos*; José Rabinovich, *Tercera clase*; Germán Rozenmacher, *Réquiem para un viernes a la noche*; Alicia Steimberg, *Músicos y relojeros*; Ana Maria Shua, *El libro de los recuerdos*.

Applications must be postmarked by March 1, 2007. The application consists of completing an online cover sheet which will be available in early 2007 at the NEH’s website <http://www.neh.fed.us/index.html>. A full application consists of 3 copies of the cover sheet (printed out), resume, and application essay, with letters of reference sent separately.



Further information: david.foster@asu.edu  
Prof. David William Foster  
Languages and Literatures  
Arizona State University  
Tempe, AZ 85287-0202

