

“Three by Borges”

“Three by Borges” is intended as a Spanish language class, suited for intermediate to advanced Spanish language learners. The three short stories in question are “El sur”, “Emma Zunz”, and “El etnógrafo”—three literary works by Jorge Borges. The focus of the class is Spanish reading comprehension, to include discussion of the author’s distinctive writing style and literary themes. The stories are short, and, in the 5-week fall session, two classes can be spent on “El sur” and “Emma Zunz” apiece, and one class session on “El etnógrafo”, which, at 630 words, can be read quickly.

An Argentinian, Jorge Borges occupies a place of central importance in 20th century Latin American literature. In the three stories to be studied can be found many of the distinctive themes for which Borges is noted. In “El sur”, the protagonist undertakes a journey, unfolding perhaps only in a dream, and culminating in his death. (Or does it?)

The eponymous protagonist of “Emma Zunz” is an innocent 19-year old girl who works in an unexciting job at a textile factory in Buenos Aires. She devises a plan to wreak vengeance on the perpetrator of an injustice of which her father has been the victim. The plan of this unlikeliest of avengers involves subterfuge, some anonymous sex, and the handling of a revolver.

The protagonist of “El etnógrafo” is a young and earnest graduate student who dutifully embarks on a research project recommended by his academic advisor. The otherwise punctilious student undergoes an unanticipated transformation in the course of carrying out his research. Whatever importance he once attached to academic work is lost, and he pursues a new life course.

The class is designed for those wishing to improve their Spanish language skills as well as for those with an interest in Latin American literature.

I prefer that the class be conducted in person at the Wilmington site during the first 5-week 2024 fall session: 9/3 – 10/7. I do not foresee a need for any audio-visual equipment. I prefer mornings. Tuesday or Wednesday mornings are ideal for me.

I expect that I will be able to provide enrollees with copies of the class materials, i.e., copies of the short stories, via email attachment before the first

class. Forwarded as well will be a syllabus, consisting of questions intended to stimulate discussion.

I am open to Newark being made a site for course offerings.