

# Latin American Studies

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## Majors

### The Major in Latin American Studies

The major in Latin American Studies (LAS) allows undergraduate students to pursue an in-depth study of Latin America across diverse disciplines, theoretical approaches and historical periods. Through regular courses, seminars and additional activities such as film series, programs abroad, lectures, and the like, students will explore the processes that resulted in the integration of the so-called New World and Western civilizations, from the discovery of America to the present. An essential aspect of this major is the focus on economic, social and political dynamics corresponding to intercultural relations developed between indigenous cultures, Creole societies, and European and North American nations.

This aspect of the major stresses the study of social change, migration, social movements, multiculturalism, inequality, violence and social justice, and it combines regional analysis with critical interdisciplinary approaches. The program of study combines the analysis of urban environments; issues of education, gender, language and ethnicity; and modernization and border studies. It emphasizes transatlantic approaches as well as the study of topics related to autochthonous cultures in their conflictive interaction with Western traditions, systems of domination, values and economic/political projects.

Focusing on Latin America allows students to engage with a fascinating historical trajectory that promotes a multifaceted reflection on colonialism, diversity issues, economic development and international relations. The major has been designed to provide students with a historical background that will be instrumental both in itself, as an exciting field of specialization, and in combination with their pursuit of other fields of inquiry, such as international relations, business, globalization, and the like. Latin America is a region embedded in the complex networks of global economics, development, social engagement and cultural innovation.

The LAS major offers a sound, updated and competitive approach to the study of the region, both in its specificity and in its connections to the world, through the study of Latin America's processes of internationalization and its changing position in global scenarios. This major has also been designed to further contribute to the university mission of improving engagement with race, ethnicity and diversity.

## Credit Requirements

The major in LAS requires students to complete 30 units. At least 24 units must be at the 300 level or higher, and at least 9 units must be at the 400 level. All units must be exclusive to the major and may not be double-counted, unless the College of Arts & Sciences regulations state otherwise. To count for LAS, courses must have an L45 number or receive authorization from the director of undergraduate studies (DUS) of LAS, who determines which requirements can be fulfilled by each available course. Units must be fulfilled as follows:

- 3 units for the successful completion of LatAm 165D Latin America: Nation, Ethnicity and Social Conflict, offered annually. LatAm 165C can also fulfill this requirement.
- 3 units for the successful completion of an elective introductory course at the 100, 200 or 300 level. Courses that fulfill this requirement must meet the approval of the DUS of LAS. This requirement may also be fulfilled with an approved course abroad or with a 300-level elective approved by the DUS of LAS.
- 3 units in history or politics at the 300 level or higher. Courses may come from relevant offerings in the departments of History or Political Science, the Global Studies program, or study abroad. Courses must be cross-listed with LatAm (L45) or approved by the DUS of LAS.
- 3 units in literary or cultural studies at the 300 level or higher. These units may include courses offered by the departments of Romance Languages and Literatures, Art History, and Archaeology; LAS home-based courses; or study abroad.
- 3 units in anthropology or pre-Columbian cultures at the 300 level or higher. These courses may come from offerings in the departments of Anthropology and Global Studies; LAS home-based courses; or study abroad.
- 9 units of elective credit at the 300 level or higher. At least 3 of these units must be fulfilled at the 400 level; 3 units of elective credit may be fulfilled through an honors thesis (LatAm 486) or a special project (LatAm 425).
- 6 units of a Latin American seminar. Seminar courses are 400-level courses that are taught by core LAS faculty on theoretical issues related to the region. These courses include LatAm 461 Latin American Cultural Studies: Critical and Theoretical Approaches; LatAm 457 Gender and Modernity in Latin America; LatAm 463 Seminar on Urban Cultures in Latin America; LatAm 464 Nation and Desire in Latin America; and LatAm 483 Bodily Injuries: Violence, Gender and Representation in Latin America.

**Capstone.** Prime majors in LAS must fulfill their capstone requirement by writing an honors thesis (if the student meets the College of Arts & Sciences requirements to do so), writing a Latin American research paper (LatAm 425), or completing the two LAS seminar courses with a grade of B+ or better.

**Language requirement.** LAS requires all majors to complete a language requirement in Spanish or Portuguese. The Spanish requirement may be fulfilled by the completion of Span 302, Span 3021 or certification as a native speaker by the DUS of LAS.

The Portuguese requirement may be fulfilled as follows:

- Successful completion of Portug 220 Reading and Conversation II: Intermediate Portuguese with a grade of B- or higher
- Native or heritage speaker status, as determined by the DUS in LAS
- Successful completion of a program abroad, conducted in Portuguese, with a minimum of 3 credit units in the target language

## Study Abroad

All majors in LAS must complete at least one study abroad experience in Latin America. This requirement may be fulfilled by the completion of a summer or semester program in the region approved by the Office of Overseas Programs.

Students who attend study abroad programs may request credit for appropriate courses at the 300 level, with approval from the DUS. A maximum of 9 units for one semester (or equivalent) of study abroad or of 12 units for more than one semester is allowed. LatAm 165D and 400-level credit requirements must be completed in residence at Washington University.

Students unable to attend a study abroad program may complete an additional 3 units of 300-level elective credit instead.