

Latin American Studies

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Latin American Studies (LAS) is a gateway to the region and its cultures, politics and history. The major in LAS can be studied on its own, providing knowledge about a region valuable for employers across different fields and industries. Focusing on Latin America allows students to engage with one of the most fascinating historical trajectories in the world; to explore diverse cultures where the traditional and the modern are always negotiating; and to participate in vibrant business, intellectual and political scenes. Latin America is a region at the forefront of policy reform, embedded in the complex networks of global economics, development, social engagement and cultural expression. Because of the region's importance, the LAS major provides key skills for today's jobs.

A major or minor in LAS is also an excellent complement to any other major program. Latin America is the location of major U.S. trade partners, and Latin American immigrants constitute the largest segment of market growth in the United States, including in the major economic markets of Boston, California, New York, Chicago, Texas and Florida, which makes the LAS major a great companion to a business degree. In this world, business majors and MBA graduates with an LAS background have a comparative advantage in the world market as large corporations seek executives with a better understanding of the region's complex social, cultural and economic issues.

Pre-medical students and public health majors will find value in the fact that the growing Latino population and the diverse Latin American peoples are two major topics in the health care field. Majors in global studies, political science, economics and other social sciences can complete their studies by becoming experts in one of the most economically and politically complex regions in the world; Latin America is a true policy laboratory. Scientists of all disciplines work in the region's spectacular biodiversity. LAS students can attend study abroad programs across the region, earn credit, and explore any field of study.

Latin America offers an increasing number of study abroad and fellowship opportunities. At Washington University, we have in-house programs in Chile, Mexico and Ecuador, with other countries forthcoming. Some of our students apply to other programs and fellowships with environmental, political and social organizations in the region. NGOs and institutions such as Fulbright, Comexus, the Ford Foundation, Human Rights Watch, and Greenpeace have a strong presence in Latin America, and students with a Latin American background have a wide array of fellowship and internship opportunities available to them.

Given these reasons and more, Washington University students are more encouraged to look into LAS with each passing day. In the job market, in the academic field, and in the world at large, Latin America is the way to go! LAS alumni have gone on to work in the coffee industry, at the Center for International Policy, and at other nonprofit think tanks. They have also pursued graduate degrees in such fields as international relations and public policy.