Latin American Studies

The major in 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 credits. At least 24 units must be at the 300 level or higher, and at least 9 units must be at the 400 level. All credits must be exclusive to the major and may not be double counted, unless the College of Arts & Sciences regulations state otherwise. Credits 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 class at the 100, 200 or 300 level. Classes that fulfill this requirement must meet the approval of the director of undergraduate studies (DUS). This requirement may also be fulfilled with an approved course abroad or with a 300-level elective approved by the DUS.
- 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. Existing examples of courses include but are not limited to the following:
  - **Political Science**: LatAm 326B Latin American Politics (offered annually); LatAm 4231 Contemporary Issues in Latin America (every two years)
  - **History**: LatAm 321C Introduction to Colonial Latin America until 1825 (annually); LatAm 322C Modern Latin America (annually); LatAm 3220 Modern Mexico (every two to three years)
  - **Global Studies**: LatAm 356 Andean History: Culture and Politics (annually); LatAm 4201 International Relations of Latin America (annually); LatAm 4661 Populism and Neopopulism in Latin America (annually); LatAm 4660 Geographies of Development in Latin America: Critical Perspectives and Contemporary Challenges (annually)
- 3 units in literary or cultural studies at the 300 level or higher. These may include courses offered by the departments of Romance Languages and Literatures, Art History, and Archaeology; LAS home-based courses; and study abroad. Courses include but are not limited to LatAm 343 Latin American Literatures and Cultures (every semester);
LatAm 331 Hispanic Art/Arte Hispano (annually); LatAm 3800 Survey of Hispanic Cultures; LatAm 4500 Seminar on Hispanic Cultures; LatAm 381 Mexican Visual Culture; and LatAm 3824 Film and Revolution in Latin America.

- 3 units in anthropology or pre-Columbian cultures at the 300 level or higher. These courses may come from offerings in the anthropology department or study abroad. These include LatAm 3351 The Ancient Maya: Archaeology and History (annually); LatAm 3092 Indigenous Peoples and Movements in Latin America (annually); LatAm 3093 Anthropology of Modern Latin America; and Anthro 3093 Anthropology of Modern Latin America.

- 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 classes designed as such that are taught by core LAS faculty on theoretical issues related to the region. These 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 Spanish DUS. The Portuguese requirement may be fulfilled as follows:

- Successful completion of Reading and Conversation II: Intermediate Portuguese (Portug 220) with a grade of B- or higher
- Native or heritage speaker status, as determined by the DUS in LAS or Spanish
- 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 Latin American Studies must complete at least a 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 credits for one semester (or equivalent) of study abroad or of 12 credits for more than one semester is allowed. LatAm 165D and 400-level credit 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.