

Latin American Studies

College of Letters and Science (<http://ls.berkeley.edu>)

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Program Website: Latin American Studies (<http://iastp.berkeley.edu>)

Overview

The major in Latin American Studies is designed to provide a balanced curriculum in the history, culture, and society of Latin America for students wishing a broader perspective than is usually available through a department major. From the rich variety of offerings within and across departments, there is a wide range of possibilities to suit the interests of students. The program may be of particular interest to students who:

- Desire a balanced education that focuses on the Latin American cultural regions
- Plan to enter business, government, or international agency service
- Wish to teach social science or language
- Are preparing for graduate and professional schools

Spanish and Portuguese are required for the major. Students must gain an intermediate level of proficiency in one language and an elementary knowledge of the other. In addition, students pursue a multidisciplinary course of study that includes the history and literature of Latin America.

Student Learning Goals

Undergraduates should have the following knowledge and skills when they graduate with a major in Latin American Studies from Berkeley:

- Communicate effectively in a primary foreign language, either Spanish or Portuguese, in written and spoken form
- Communicate at a basic level in a secondary foreign language, either Spanish or Portuguese
- Formulate a well-organized, well-supported argument
- Demonstrate understanding of general research methods
- Analyze and interpret literary texts
- Identify major historical figures, events, and trends in Latin America
- Critically evaluate Latin America's role and position in a global context
- Demonstrate awareness of, and basic knowledge of, the multiplicity of countries and cultures that make up the region
- Apply a minimum of three distinct disciplinary approaches to the study of Latin America
- Demonstrate specialized knowledge about one or more particular sub-areas of Latin American studies, whether regional (e.g. the Caribbean; Central America) or topical (agriculture; gender issues; immigration)
- Understand and critically evaluate the implications of different perspectives on Latin America

Learning Goals Appendix (<http://iastp.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/LASLearningGoalsAppendix.pdf>)

Major Requirements

Lower Division

Two courses

- LAS 10 (Offered in Fall semester only. You must earn a C or better to declare. This course can only be repeated once.)
- History 8A or 8B

Foreign Language

LAS majors must demonstrate an intermediate level of proficiency in a primary language (either Spanish or Portuguese) and an elementary level of proficiency in the secondary language. Intermediate proficiency is equivalent to four college-level semesters of instruction, and elementary proficiency is equivalent to two college-level semesters of instruction. Equivalency can be achieved through coursework, AP credit, examination and/or study abroad. For more information on how to complete the language requirement, see the LAS Handbook.

Upper Division

Nine courses totaling no less than 30 units:

- **Latin American Literature and Culture:** (2 courses) Students must complete one of two course sequences, depending on the choice of primary language. All courses must be taught in Spanish or Portuguese. See the LAS Handbook for approved courses.
- **Latin American History:** (2 courses) See the LAS Handbook for the list of approved courses.
- **Methodology:** (1 course) See Appendix A in the LAS Handbook for the approved list of courses.
- **Upper Division Electives:** (4 courses) Electives are chosen from at least two disciplines other than literature and history. At least 50% of the course content must be devoted to Latin America. Students may focus all four courses around a central theme (e.g., gender and society, religion and society, popular culture, or development) or a geographical region (e.g., Mexico, Central America, or the Caribbean), although this is not required. See Appendix B in the LAS Handbook for course lists.

How To Declare

Applications are accepted during the fall and spring semesters from the third week of instruction until the last day of instruction (not the last day of finals). Applications are accepted during the summer from the last week in May until the beginning of the fall semester (not the beginning of classes).

To declare, you must:

1. Have completed LAS 10 (You must earn a C or better to declare. This course can only be repeated once.)
2. Have a major and cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher
3. Not be in your final semester of undergraduate work

Additionally, students are encouraged—but not required—to complete two semesters of Spanish or Portuguese or the equivalent before applying to the major.

To get declared, students must both:

1. Attend a Major Declaration Workshop (check the Teaching Program Calendar for dates); and

2. Meet with an advisor to submit the LAS Application materials.

Bring a completed LAS Application including all materials and transcripts listed below to the Workshop. Application materials may be submitted after attending the Major Declaration Workshop. However, students will not be officially declared until they have both attended a Workshop and submitted all declaration papers.

Honors Program

To be eligible for honors, students must have senior standing and a grade point average (GPA) of 3.6 in the major and 3.5 in all work completed at UC Berkeley. Doing honors includes a year-long course sequence (IAS H102 in the fall and LAS H195 in the spring) in which students learn how to formulate a hypothesis, conduct supporting research, and complete a thesis paper of approximately 75 pages or longer.

After Graduation

The LAS major is designed to provide a broad-based liberal arts background as well as the intellectual skills appropriate for careers in either the public or private sector. Additionally, the major offers an excellent background for students planning postgraduate careers in social science disciplines and professional schools.

This description is for introductory purposes only. Students interested in completing a major or minor in LAS should consult the LAS Handbook.

Latin American Studies Graduate Program

Brief Overview

The MA program is a two-year program that allows students to pursue a diverse curriculum in Latin American Studies spanning a wide range of departments and professional schools, including the schools of Natural Resources, Public Health, Public Policy, Social Welfare, Journalism, Law, Education, and Environmental Design.

Students begin by taking courses that offer a broad overview of the field of Latin American Studies and introduce them to the Latin Americanist research at Berkeley. Students then work closely with individual faculty to define their particular areas of interest and research. Further coursework, research and field work culminate in either a thesis project or comprehensive oral exam.

The MA program provides an opportunity for collective learning and collaboration as students develop research skills and specialized knowledge in the field. Students are encouraged to draw on the considerable resources of the Center for Latin American Studies.

Overview of Requirements

Required Core Courses: 2 courses

1. LAS 200, a 1-unit seminar in which students meet with over a dozen of the Latin American faculty and learn of their research interests and current projects.
2. LAS 250, a 4-unit seminar for new graduate students providing a comprehensive overview of the field of Latin American Studies.

Foreign Language Requirement

- **Primary language (either Spanish or Portuguese):** A high level of proficiency indicated by a strong ability to do research in the language and the ability to speak and write in the language with substantial fluency.

- **Secondary language (either Portuguese or Spanish; other languages can be considered on an exceptional basis):** Completion of advanced level language instruction.

Proficiency in one foreign language (either Spanish or Portuguese) is required for admission; proficiency in two languages is required for graduation.

Methods Requirement

One course appropriate to student's field of study, identified in consultation with faculty adviser.

Electives Requirement

4-6 courses: Courses must be concentrated primarily in two or three disciplines, though a broader range of courses may be taken if appropriate to the student's academic objectives. Courses focus explicitly on Latin America or have a comparative, theoretical, or methodological focus that contributes to the student's work on Latin America.

Capstone Requirement

Thesis or Oral Exam: Either a written thesis or a comprehensive oral exam based on the focus of study is required to complete the LAS MA degree.

- Thesis: an in-depth study of an issue or subject related to Latin America, chosen in consultation with a faculty adviser and two additional faculty members. MA theses generally range in length from 75-150 pages.
- Comprehensive Oral Exam: a 2-3 hour comprehensive exam conducted by three faculty members from at least two different departments. It covers the disciplinary areas in which the student has completed coursework.

How to Apply

The application to the program, along with its instructions, is on the website of the UC Berkeley Graduate Division.

- Application (<https://gradadmit.berkeley.edu/apply/LatAm-MA/start.html>)
- Instructions & Info (<http://grad.berkeley.edu/admissions/index.shtml>)

For questions, please contact our Graduate Student Affairs Officer, Susan Joerling, at joerling@berkeley.edu.

After Graduation

LAS master's graduates move into various careers in non-profits, government, and international firms. Additionally, this program offers excellent preparation for students planning to pursue PhDs and academic careers in social science disciplines and professional schools.

LATAMST 10 Introduction to Latin American Studies 4 Units

Department: Latin American Studies

Course level: Undergraduate

Terms course may be offered: Fall, spring and summer

Grading: Letter grade.

Hours and format: 3 hours of Lecture and 1 hour of Discussion per week for 15 weeks. 7.5 hours of Lecture per week for 8 weeks.

This course is intended as a lower division, interdisciplinary core course for students planning to pursue the Latin American Studies major, as well as other interested students. The aim is to provide an introduction to the field that integrates the offerings from the various disciplines. Particular attention will be given to the analysis of the relationship between cultural expression and the politics, economy, and history of the region.

Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes.

LATAMST 24 Freshman Seminar 1 Unit

Department: Latin American Studies

Course level: Undergraduate

Terms course may be offered: Fall, spring and summer

Grading: The grading option will be decided by the instructor when the class is offered.

Hours and format: 1 hour of Seminar per week for 15 weeks. 2 hours of Seminar per week for 8 weeks.

The Freshman Seminar Program has been designed to provide new students with the opportunity to explore an intellectual topic with a faculty member in a small seminar setting. Freshman seminars are offered in all campus departments, and topics vary from department to department and semester to semester. Enrollment is limited to 15 freshmen.

Course may be repeated for credit as topic varies. Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes.

LATAMST 150 Advanced Studies in Latin American Studies 4 Units

Department: Latin American Studies

Course level: Undergraduate

Terms course may be offered: Fall, spring and summer

Grading: Letter grade.

Hours and format: 3 hours of Lecture per week for 15 weeks. 5.5 hours of Lecture per week for 8 weeks. 7.5 hours of Lecture per week for 6 weeks.

Prerequisites: Consent of instructor.

Advanced research in current issues or regions of Latin American Studies. The course will focus on specific areas or topics with appropriate comparative material included. Topics change each semester.

Course may be repeated for credit. Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes.

LATAMST 160 The Politics of Development in Chile 6 Units

Department: Latin American Studies

Course level: Undergraduate

Term course may be offered: Summer

Grading: Letter grade.

This course examines the politics of development in Chile. We will consider the different social and economic policies implemented during the years of the Popular Unity Coalition, the Pinochet dictatorship, in the transition back to a democratic political system, and the Concertacion governments that followed. We end the course by studying challenges to the neoliberal model, including the recent massive student mobilizations demanding reforms to the educational system, as well as challenges by labor and indigenous groups. We will conclude by considering how globalization shapes the politics of development today.

LATAMST 192 Senior Thesis 3 or 4 Units

Department: Latin American Studies

Course level: Undergraduate

Terms course may be offered: Fall, spring and summer

Grading: Letter grade.

Hours and format: Hours to be arranged. Hours to be arranged.