

Latin American Studies

The major and minor in Latin American studies are administered by the Department of Spanish, Latina/o, and Latin American Studies: Professors Gudmundson, Márquez, Miñana, Romero-Díaz; Associate Professors Crumbaugh, Gundermann (on leave fall 2011), Mosby (on leave 2011-2012); Assistant Professor Díaz-Sánchez; Visiting Assistant Professor Daly; Senior Lecturer Castro.

Contact Person

Sue LaBarre, *senior administrative assistant*
Nieves Romero-Díaz, *chair*

The Department of Spanish, Latina/o, and Latin American Studies engages in the multi-disciplinary study of the past, current state, and emerging realities of societies and cultures of Latin America, Spain, the Caribbean, and the Latino/a heritage populations within the United States and their relations with each other and with the wider world. To that end, our courses adopt a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches, including literary studies, film and media studies, social history, and politics.

The Department of Spanish, Latina/o, and Latin American Studies also collaborates closely with a number of other departments and programs on campus, frequently cross-listing courses with film studies, gender studies, history, and Romance languages and cultures. Regular cocurricular activities organized by the department (film series, lectures, etc.) also engage the larger college community in the interests of our students and faculty. In addition to providing opportunities for learning on campus, the department also strongly recommends that students study off campus in a Spanish-speaking context in order to enhance their language skills and to forge their own connections to place through language.

The interdisciplinary major and minor in Latin American studies emphasizes critical approaches to the culture, history, society, and political economy of the region. As societies long defined by and in opposition to ex-

ternal powers, Latin America and the Caribbean have in modern times developed distinctive national and cultural identities celebrated on a world stage in art, music, and literature. The major and minor study the region in its enormous geographic diversity—from plantation to highland Americas, from Mexico to Argentina; and linguistic variety—four European, several Creole, and numerous indigenous languages. Students pursue course work in several thematic and geographic areas.

Requirements for the Major

Credits

- A minimum of 40 credits
- At least 20 credits at the 300 level

Courses

- Latin American Studies 180, Introduction to Latin American Cultures
- At least one advanced (300-level) course on Spanish American or Brazilian literature taught in the language
- At least one course dealing with subjects outside traditional Latin America—that is, the non-Hispanic areas of the Caribbean or South America; indigenous peoples of the region; the migration of Hispanic or Caribbean communities abroad
- It is also strongly recommended that majors complete an appropriate course in American, African American, or Latin American studies that assesses the role of the United States in Latin America, studies United States Latino communities, or compares related experiences across United States/Latin American boundaries.
- At least two courses outside the primary area of interest

Other

- A command of Spanish or Portuguese. An elementary knowledge of the other language (Spanish or Portuguese) and

study abroad are strongly recommended for all majors.

Spanish language and Spanish American literature instruction are offered at Mount Holyoke College, and Portuguese is available through Five College registration at Smith College or the University of Massachusetts. Programs for study abroad can be arranged throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

Requirements for the Minor

Credits

- A minimum of 20 credits

Courses

- Latin American Studies 180, Latin American Cultures
- At least one course at the 300 level
- One higher-level Latin American studies course

Courses in the student's major field may not be used to fulfill the requirements of the minimum minor.

Course Offerings

170f Readings in Caribbean Literature

Features comparison of selected readings in the literature of the Spanish-, French-, and English-speaking Caribbean. Introduces the literary personality of the area, the transformation of the material of Caribbean social life into formally crafted and effective literary statement, and characteristic thematic and broader cultural preoccupations. Asks primary questions, such as "How does a novel—or poem—work?" and addresses similar issues related to forms of critical thinking and literary analysis. Readings and discussion in English.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-A requirement
R. Marquez
4 credits

*175fs Historical Emergence of the Caribbean

The historical development of the Caribbean from the Conquest to the mid-twentieth cen-

ture. Patterns of conquest, colonization, and settlement by European nations; the rise of plantation-dominated society; the process of insular and interregional differentiation; the emergence of American imperial designs; and the rise of anticolonial, nationalist movements. Comparative reviews of the experience of Haiti, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico highlight broader regional trends and the ways the Caribbean's major language zones have responded to the challenge of their shared history.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-B requirement
R. Márquez
4 credits

180fs Introduction to Latin American Cultures

(Same as History 180) Examines the confrontation, assimilation, and transformation of Amerindian, African, and European cultures in Latin America from the sixteenth century to the present. Focuses on the processes in which distinctive self-images emerged in the region and how these images have been challenged and changed over time. Uses films, literature, and folk traditions to complement scholarly analysis of the emergence of a New World mentality.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-B requirement
L. Gudmundson
4 credits

275f Paradigms of New World Thought

This course is devoted to the work of commanding figures of Latin American and Caribbean thought at various times and different places. Thinkers whose work may form its basis in various offerings include among others: Columbus, Bartolomé de Las Casas, José Martí, J. C. Mariátegui, C.L.R. James, etc. Their lives and work exemplify the diversities, varying regional settings, social contexts, and shifting historical coordinates of major epochs of transition. Their assessment of a myriad of key issues has made each a touchstone of continuing authority and influence extending beyond their particular locale, time, or region. Why this should be so is among the many questions we will address.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-B requirement

R. Marquez
4 credits

***278f The Fiction of History: Historical Truth and Imaginative Invention in the Latin American Novel**

Examination of the scope, reach, and limits of the Latin American variant of the historical novel as a narrative form. The variety of ways in which it fictionally strives to re-create “certain crisis in the personal destinies of a number of human beings [which] coincide and interweave with the determining context of an historical crisis,” the historical vision each writer brings to the work, will be given particular attention.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-B requirement

R. Márquez
4 credits

287fs Topics in Latin American Studies

This course studies significant problems relating to Latin America in greater depth from the perspectives of appropriate disciplines. Some topics may be cross-listed with other departments.

Fall 2011

287f(1) Introduction to Latina/o Studies (Speaking- and writing-intensive course; Same as Spanish 250f(01)) This course offers an introduction to the study of Latina/o communities in the United States. We will explore major concepts and debates in the growing field of Latina/o Studies, through the study of texts across disciplines including history, sociology, performance theory, personal narrative and ethnography. This interdisciplinary approach will provide us with rich frameworks to interrogate how Latinas/os negotiate complex identities across communities and specific geographic and political contexts.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-A requirement

M. Díaz-Sánchez
4 credits

287f(2) Afro-Latina/o Diasporic Performance (Same as Spanish 230f(01)) This course focuses on performance practices rooted in the African diaspora of the Americas, with par-

ticular attention to how race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, and gender are articulated in multiple aesthetic approaches. We will interrogate how these performances have functioned and continue to inspire political transformation as well as the recovery of shared histories of the Afro-Latina/o diaspora.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-A requirement

M. Díaz-Sánchez
4 credits

Spring 2012

287s(1) Performance in the Americas (Same as Spanish 240s(01), Theatre Arts 234s(01)) This course offers Latina/o and Latin American transnational approaches to the theory and political practice of performance in the Americas with a focus on issues of race, sexuality, class, gender, indigenous and diasporic identities. Employing multiple modes of performance from theater, dance, performance art, ritual, visual art, and folkloric music, we will explore how these practices have functioned and continue to allow for politically subversive or resistant transformation.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-A requirement

M. Díaz-Sánchez
4 credits

288f Modern Mexico

(Same as History 288) An analysis of the modern Mexican nation-state organized around three major themes: the conflictive yet symbiotic relationship with the United States, from the war of the 1840s through NAFTA most recently; the succession of reformist and revolutionary upheavals in 1810-1821, 1856-1867, 1910-1917, the 1930s, and again today, seeking to resolve both problems of the colonial past and new conflicts traceable to the very reforms generated by earlier political and social struggles; and the meaning of Mexican nationality from different ethnic, gender, and class perspectives. Readings include autobiographical and literary works, historical studies, and films.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-B requirement

L. Gudmundson
4 credits

***289s Slavery in the Americas**

(Same as History 289) A course, organized topically rather than geographically or nationally, that offers a comparative analysis of African American slavery as a dominant social system in Brazil, the Caribbean, and the U.S. South. Topics include: why slavery?; sugar and slavery; historical demography; culture and the law; kinship and family; long-run economic development; patterns of race relations; master class and racist ideologies; resistance to slavery; and abolition and its aftermath. Readings include historical and anthropological studies, as well as a major documentary collection on slavery in Brazil.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-B requirement

L. Gudmundson
4 credits

295fs Independent Study

Does not meet a distribution requirement
The department
1-4 credits

***373s Studies in Comparative Caribbean Culture: Contemporary Caribbean Writers**

A sustained comparative study of the developing canon of three major contemporary writers—Alejo Carpentier (Cuba), V.S. Naipaul (Trinidad), and Maryse Conde (Guadeloupe)—from the Caribbean, representing the region's Spanish-, English-, and French-speaking cultural zones. Examines the evolving content, contours and scope of each writer's work and unique perception of the New World, as well as its distinctively Antillean "structure of feeling," participation in modern debates about Caribbean culture, and distinctive contributions to the development of the novel in the contemporary Caribbean.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-A requirement

R. Márquez
Prereq. jr, sr, 8 credits in Latin American studies or related field, or permission of instructor; 4 credits

***386 Central America: Reform, Reaction, Revolution**

(Same as History 386) This seminar explores the diverse experiences of Central American nations in the twentieth century. From a common basis in an export-oriented agriculture, social and political alternatives ranging from social democracy to recurrent military rule, neofascist regimes, and revolutionary socialism have emerged in the isthmus. The course uses materials ranging from autobiography and literature to historical and anthropological studies to understand how this came to be. In addition to national cases, we consider the unique experiences of the area's indigenous and Atlantic-coast peoples within and outside the nation-state framework.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-B requirement

L. Gudmundson
Prereq. jr, sr, 8 credits in Latin American studies or related field, or permission of instructor; 4 credits

387s Special Topics in Latin American Studies: Latina Feminisms

This course offers advanced students an opportunity for intensive study of a problem with careful attention to research methods and to presenting their work in oral and written form.

(Same as Spanish 330s(01), Gender Studies 333s(05)) This course offers an interdisciplinary approach to the study of feminist ideologies among Latinas throughout the United States. Employing a range of sources from archival texts to artistic images and ethnographies, we will study the histories and representations of Latina feminist theories across academic and aesthetic approaches. Focusing on the multiplicity of lived experiences among Puertorriqueñas, Chicanas, Mexicanas, Centroamericanas, Dominicanas, Suramericanas and many other communities in the United States, we will interrogate how gender and sexuality have informed the development of Latina feminist movements and political histories.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-A requirement

M. Díaz-Sánchez
4 credits

388s Postmodernism and Latin America

(Same as History 388) For many the “discovery” of America opened the modern era. Its closing may also have been foretold in Latin America’s confounding of diverse theories of modernization and development in recent times. This seminar will introduce the student to a number of both classic and more recent works on Latin America (in English) that advance along postmodernist lines, ranging from cultural contact and conflict, language, meaning, and power in the sixteenth century, to the invention of national identities in the nineteenth century, to discourses of ethnicity, class, gender, and reason in the twentieth century.

Meets multicultural requirement; meets Humanities I-B requirement

L. Gudmundson

Prereq. jr, sr, 8 credits in Latin American studies or related field, or permission of instructor; 4 credits

***389 Agrarian America: Sugar, Cotton, Coffee, Wheat**

(Same as History 389) Explores societies generated in the Americas by several widely distributed export crops. Multinational and cross-cultural comparisons holding constant the crop itself allows a focus on the possible variations by time and place in each commodity’s technologies, labor systems, farm sizes, and social structure; their political and social dynamics; the problematic features of capitalism in agriculture, or if, how, and when do peasants become farmers and farming agribusiness? Particular focus on family and household relations under so-called “peasant to farmer” agricultural transitions and environmental implications of single-crop and export agriculture.

Meets Humanities I-B requirement

L. Gudmundson

Prereq. jr, sr, 8 credits in Latin American studies or related field, or permission of instructor; 4 credits

395fs Independent Study

Does not meet a distribution requirement

The department

1-8 credits

Related Courses in Other Departments

The following Spanish courses count toward the Latin American studies major and minor.

- 230s(04) Studies in Identities and Intersections: Nomadic Imaginaries: The Cosmopolitan Andes
- 240f(01) Visual Cultures: Avant-Garde Image/Text: Locating the New
- 240f(02) Visual Cultures: An Introduction: Introduction to Spanish and Latin American Cinema
- 340s (02) Advanced Studies in Visual Cultures: The Other (in the) Media: New Media and Otherness in the Americas
- 350f(01) Advanced in Concepts and Practices of Power: Community Narratives: Digital Storytelling in Springfield, Massachusetts
- 350s(01) Advanced Studies in Concepts and Practices of Power: Vital Possibilities: Inscribed Bodies and Living Texts in Latin America

For related courses in other departments, please check the major website or consult with your major advisor.