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 (on leave Spring 2016), Mosby (on leave Spring 2016), Romero-Diaz; Associate Professors Crumbaugh (chair) Assistant Professor D. Hernandez (on leave 2015-16); Visiting Lecturers J. Hernandez, Rosa, Soltero Lopez ; Senior Lecturer Castro.

Overview

The Department of Spanish, Latina/o, and Latin American Studies engages in the multidisciplinary study of the past, current state, and emerging currents 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 co-curricular 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 emphasize critical approaches to the culture, history, society, and political economy of the region. As societies long defined by and in opposition to external 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.

Contact Info

Debra Morrissey, senior administrative assistant
Justin Crumbaugh, chair

Requirements for the Major

Credits

- A minimum of 40 credits
- At least 16 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.
- Programs for study abroad can be arranged throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

Requirements for the Minor

Credits

- A minimum of 20 credits

Courses

- One 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 minor.

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

Course Offerings

LATAM-180 Introduction to Latin American Cultures
Fall and Spring
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.
Crosslisted as: History 180
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
L. Gudmundson, The department
Credits: 4

LATAM-217 Portuguese for Spanish Speakers
Fall
This course is specially designed for students who are proficient in Spanish or another Romance language. This previous knowledge will be drawn upon to promote fast and solid acquisition of linguistic skills in Portuguese. Course conducted in Portuguese. Upon successful completion of the course, students should be able to: interact with other students and the instructor in Portuguese; describe and compare people, places, and things in Portuguese; communicate future plans in Portuguese; narrate and understand past events in Portuguese; offer and understand advice and directions in Portuguese; give and understand opinions in Portuguese; and hypothesize in Portuguese.
Crosslisted as: Spanish 217
This course will examine the impulse in Latin American society, thinking, and cosmology from the pre-Columbian era to the present day. It will focus on historical episodes where cataclysmic visions and fears dominated the day. The course will finish by surveying the contemporary fascination with the end of the Mayan long count in 2012.

Crosslisted as: History 287AC
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
The department
Credits: 4

LATAM-287DE Topics in Latin American Studies: 'Rethinking (Under)Development in Latin America'
Spring
When and how did the notion of 'development' emerge and spread? Why does nearly every country now aspire to it? What stigmas and hierarchies does the term 'under-development' imply? Throughout Latin America, such terms provide highly problematic not only with respect to the material reality they purport to describe but also as a framework for understanding place, time, and selfhood. In this course, students rethik conventional wisdom about 'underdevelopment' through the study of writers, filmmakers, and painters from Latin America working at different historical junctures of the twentieth century.
Crosslisted as: Critical Social Thought 256
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities
J. Crumbaugh
Credits: 4

LATAM-285 Central America: Reform, Reaction, Revolution
Not Scheduled for This Year
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.

LATAM-287AC Topics in Latin American Studies: 'Latin America and the Apocalypse'
Not Scheduled for This Year

LATAM-287 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.

LATAM-277 Caribbean Women Writers
Fall
Comparative examination of contemporary women's writing in the Caribbean. Emphasis will be on their engagement with issues of history, cultural articulation, race, class, gender, and nationality, including exploration of their formal procedures, individual moods, regional particularity, and general impact as writers. Rosario Ferré, Ana Lydia Vega, Julia Alvarez, Edna Brodber, Maryse Condé, Simone Schwarz-Bart, Jean Rhys, Beryl Gilroy, and Rosa Guy are among those whose works we will review.

Crosslisted as: History 287AF
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
L. Gudmundson
Credits: 4

LATAM-260 Afro-Latin America: From Slavery to Invisibility
Fall
Exploration of the history of Afro-Latin American populations since independence within and outside the nation-state. We will question why and how to study those whose governments define them not as peoples of African descent but as part of a mixed-race majority of Hispanic cultural heritage, who themselves may often have supported this policy, and who may have had compelling reasons to avoid official scrutiny. Readings include early twenty-first-century Latin American racist theorizing; research using census, economic, criminal, and marriage records; autobiographical works, and analysis of race in textual and musical representations of peoples, regions, and nations.

Crosslisted as: History 287AF
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
L. Gudmundson
Credits: 4

LATAM-227 Portuguese for Spanish Speakers - Intermediate
Spring
The goal of this course is to offer students sophisticated linguistic tools that will allow them to interact and communicate in Portuguese in socio-cultural contexts that go beyond their immediate personal experience and daily life. The course is designed for students who have previous experience with Portuguese and are already familiar with the majority of the grammatical structures of the language. Through the use of authentic written texts, videos, and songs, students will broaden and deepen their reading, writing, listening, and speaking abilities in Portuguese.

Crosslisted as: Spanish 227
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Language
F. Cunha
Prereq: Spanish 217.
Notes: Course taught in Portuguese.
Credits: 4

LATAM-277 Central America: Reform, Reaction, Revolution
Not Scheduled for This Year
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.

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LATAM-287AC Topics in Latin American Studies: 'Latin America and the Apocalypse'
Not Scheduled for This Year

LATAM-287DE Topics in Latin American Studies: 'Rethinking (Under)Development in Latin America'
Spring
When and how did the notion of 'development' emerge and spread? Why does nearly every country now aspire to it? What stigmas and hierarchies does the term 'under-development' imply? Throughout Latin America, such terms provide highly problematic not only with respect to the material reality they purport to describe but also as a framework for understanding place, time, and selfhood. In this course, students rethink conventional wisdom about 'underdevelopment' through the study of writers, filmmakers, and painters from Latin America working at different historical junctures of the twentieth century.
Crosslisted as: Critical Social Thought 256
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities
J. Crumbaugh
Credits: 4

LATAM-295 Independent Study
Fall and Spring
The department
Instructor permission required.
Credits: 1-4
Course can be repeated for credit.

LATAM-386 Central America: Reform, Reaction, Revolution
Not Scheduled for This Year
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.
LATAM-387 Special Topics in Latin American Studies

LATAM-387CL Special Topics in Latina/o Studies: 'Chicana/Latina Feminist Literature and Thought'
Fall
This seminar surveys works by Chicana and Latina authors. Selections from critical/theoretical works will situate our reading of literature produced by Chicana/Latina authors in the United States. Readings of novels, short stories, poems, essays, and plays by Chicana, Cuban American, Puerto Rican, and Dominican American authors provide students with a range of experiences and literary styles. Students will ask how the diversity of these texts bespeaks a shared or distinct experience across differences. Particular attention will be given to the challenges that Chicana/Latina writers pose towards nationalist movements, literary genres, cultural production, and feminisms.
Crosslisted as: Gender Studies 333CL, English 392CL, Latina/o Studies 350CL
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive; Writing-Intensive; Topics Course
J. Hernandez
Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors
Credits: 4

LATAM-387FW Special Topics in Latin American: 'Fighting Words: Imperial Discourses and Resistance in the Americas'
Spring
In 1492, the Spanish conquest forever changed indigenous America and created a new world. European imperial discourses collided with resistance movements and the emerging voices of oppressed peoples, including indigenous peoples, women, and mestizos. This course traces the tensions between imperialist and resistance discourses during both the colonial period and today. We will analyze the literary 'fighting words' that consolidated the Spanish empire and later opened the path to Latin American independence. Tracing the impact of these struggles on the Americas today, we will examine how subaltern communities currently fight to make their voices heard in a globalized world.
Crosslisted as: Spanish 350FW
Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives
Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive; Writing-Intensive; Topics Course
The department
Prereq: Two 200-level Spanish courses above Spanish 212.
Notes: Taught in Spanish.
Credits: 4

LATAM-395 Independent Study
Fall and Spring
The department
Instructor permission required.
Credits: 1-8
Course can be repeated for credit.

See Also
- Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino Studies