

LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

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Latin American Studies offers an interdisciplinary structure for the systematic study of Latin America, an area that encompasses countries in North, Central, and South America as well as the Caribbean, whose distinct geography and cultures are connected by elements of a common history of colonization and its consequences. Profound geographic variations, differing economic resources, and the intermingling of multiple racial, ethnic, and cultural groups have yielded complex and diverse societies. Increasing socioeconomic contacts among states and societies in the Americas and the growing presence of Latinos in the United States underscore the need for a deeper, co-constructed understanding of the region.

Overview of the Major and Concentration

The Latin American Studies program offers courses, a Latin American Studies major and a Latin American Studies concentration with an interdisciplinary and cross-cultural approach that contributes to the investigation of political, economic, ethnic, gender, religious, and cultural issues in Latin America. The support of perspectives and methodologies of several disciplines inspires students to seek a deeper understanding of Latin America and its complex relationships with the United States, and, in some cases, with Spain. In addition, students find opportunities for reflecting on their own culture and society.

Intended Learning Outcomes for the Major

Intended Learning Outcomes for the Concentration

Special Programs

Latin American Studies majors and concentrators are encouraged to take advantage of the many study abroad and away programs available to them. Study abroad opportunities in the Spanish-speaking world currently offered to St. Olaf students include two periodic January terms: SPAN 240 in Puerto Rico that counts for the major and the concentration, and SPAN 270 in Spain that counts for the major. There are also semester-length opportunities, such as

- the SIT "Migration, Borders, and Transnational Communities" program in Oaxaca, Mexico
- the CET "Race, Ethnicity, and Identity" program in Cali, Colombia
- the "Social Work in a Latin American Context" program in Mexico
- the Andean Studies Program in Ecuador
- the IES program in Buenos Aires, Argentina
- the CIEE program in Seville, Spain

Students who wish to count courses from study abroad or away for the major or concentration should get prior approval from the Latin American Studies director. Latin American Studies faculty members participate in the Languages Across the Curriculum (LAC) program, which offers students the opportunity to use their world language

skills in selected courses. (See Languages Across the Curriculum under Academic Departments and Programs in this catalog.)

Requirements

Requirements for the Major

The requirements for the completion of the Latin American studies major consist of a minimum of nine approved courses as shown below. Outside of the capstone LAMST 333, courses must be taken in at least three departments or programs.

Code	Title	Credits
Core course		
Select at least one of the following:		1.00
HIST 126	Peoples of Colonial Latin America	
HIST 193	Modern Latin America	
PSCI 257	Foreign Relations in the Americas	
PSCI 264	Latin American Politics	
SOAN 237	Forging a Latin American Culture	
Required courses in Spanish		
SPAN 251	Gender and Race in Modern Latin America	1.00
or SPAN 250	Family and Gender Roles in Spain: 1900 to Present	
Select two of the following: ¹		2.00
SPAN 240	Politics and Environment in Puerto Rico (study abroad)	
SPAN 270	Spain's Cultural and Linguistic Legacy (study abroad)	
SPAN 271	Cultures of Spain	
SPAN 272	Cultures of Latin America	
SPAN 273	Cultures of the Latinx/a/o U.S.	
SPAN 274	Contemporary Issues in the Spanish-Speaking World	
Electives		
Choose four electives from among approved courses dealing with Latin America, Spain, or U.S. Latinos from disciplines including, but not limited to: anthropology, art, economics, education, English, history, political science, religion, and sociology. Outside of the capstone LAMST 333, courses must be taken in at least three departments or programs.		4.00
Interdisciplinary seminar		
LAMST 333	Contemporary Latin American Issues	1.00
Total Credits		9

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Students may use any combination of 270-level culture courses in Spanish, provided that at least one of the courses focuses on Latin America or U.S. Latinos.

- Students may count one independent research course toward the major.

- Students may count up to three study-abroad courses taken in Latin America or Spain.
- With the approval of the Latin American Studies director, students may have courses from any discipline with substantial Latin American or U.S. Latino content counted toward their major.
- A maximum of three courses that focus on Latinos in the United States may count toward the major.
- Additional courses from the core list can be counted as electives.
- Either SOAN 264 or RACE 121 may be included in the major, but not both.
- LAMST 333 is taught in *alternate* years and is ideally taken in the junior or senior year. Students planning to study abroad during the semester in which the course is taught should in their junior year petition the Latin American Studies director to take an alternative course or independent study to fulfill this requirement during their senior year.

Students should contact the Latin American Studies director as early as possible to plan a major.

**By completing this major, the student also satisfies the OLE Core Writing in the Major requirement.*

Requirements for the Concentration

Students majoring in any discipline except Latin American studies can pursue a Latin American studies concentration, which enables them to enhance their understanding of Latin American countries and the interconnectedness of Latin America and the United States. It differs from the Latin American studies major in that it does not require course work in Spanish.

The requirements for the completion of the Latin American studies concentration consist of a minimum of five approved courses. Outside of the capstone LAMST 333, courses must be taken in at least two departments or programs.

Code	Title	Credits
Core course		
Select at least one of the following:		1.00
HIST 126	Peoples of Colonial Latin America	
HIST 193	Modern Latin America	
PSCI 257	Foreign Relations in the Americas	
PSCI 264	Latin American Politics	
SOAN 237	Forging a Latin American Culture	
Electives		
Choose three electives from among approved courses dealing with Latin America or U.S. Latinos from disciplines including, but not limited to: anthropology, art, economics, education, English, history, political science, religion, sociology, and Spanish. Outside of the capstone LAMST 333, courses must be taken in at least two departments or programs.		3.00
Interdisciplinary seminar		

LAMST 333	Contemporary Latin American Issues	1.00
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Total Credits **5**

- A maximum of two study-abroad courses taken in Latin America or Spain may be counted.
- With the approval of the Latin American studies director, students may have courses from any discipline with substantial Latin American or U.S. Latino content counted toward their concentration.
- A maximum of two courses that focus on Latinos in the United States may count toward the concentration.
- Additional courses from the core list can be counted as electives.
- Either SOAN 264 or RACE 121 may be included in the concentration, but not both.
- Only SPAN 251 and 270-level Spanish courses with a Latin American or U.S. Latino focus can be counted toward the concentration. These include SPAN 272, SPAN 273, and SPAN 274 (when taught with a Latin American focus).
- LAMST 333 is taught in *alternate* years, and is ideally taken in the junior or senior year. Students planning to study abroad during the semester in which the course is taught should in their junior year petition the Latin American studies director to take an alternative course or independent study to fulfill this requirement during their senior year.

Courses

Latin American Studies Courses

LAMST 294: *Academic Internship*

LAMST 298: *Independent Study*

LAMST 333: *Contemporary Latin American Issues*

This seminar focuses on the implications of studying Latin America, or the way in which different conceptualizations of this region have helped to shape Latin America as an object of study. Possible topics for approaching this question include the history of Latin American studies in the United States and the relation between scholarship on Latin America and U.S. policy in the region; Latin American responses to U.S. representations of the region; the production of images of *lo indigena* according to Western expectations; and indigenous cultures and globalization. Languages Across the Curriculum (LAC) course is often available in Spanish. Offered alternate years in the fall semester.

LAMST 394: *Academic Internship*

LAMST 398: *Independent Research*

Core Courses

Select one of the following. Other courses taken in this list will count as electives.

- HIST 126 Peoples of Colonial Latin America
- HIST 193 Modern Latin America
- PSCI 257 Foreign Relations in the Americas
- PSCI 264 Latin American Politics
- SOAN 237 Forging a Latin American Culture

Spanish Courses

Three Spanish courses are required for the Latin American Studies major and may include courses focused on Spain. Only Spanish courses focused on Latin America or the Latinx/a/o U.S. count for the Latin American Studies concentration.

SPAN 251 Gender and Race in Modern Latin America (or, for the major only: SPAN 250 Family and Gender Roles in Spain: 1900 to Present)

SPAN 240 Politics and Environment in Puerto Rico (study abroad)

(count for the major only: SPAN 270 Spain's Cultural and Linguistic Legacy (study abroad) / SPAN 271 Cultures of Spain)

SPAN 272 Cultures of Latin America

SPAN 273 Cultures of the Latinx/a/o U.S.

SPAN 274 Contemporary Issues in the Spanish-Speaking World (when focus is Spain, counts only for the major)

Approved Courses

Any course with significant focus on Latin America may be considered for elective credit. If a course is not listed, please consult with the director of Latin American Studies.

ART 275 Topics in Art History (or ART 276 Topical Seminar when taught as Latin American Modernism or Mesoamerican Art)

ECON 343 Development Economics

ENGL 251 Major Chicano/a Authors

HIST 126 Peoples of Colonial Latin America

HIST 189 Topical Seminar (when topic is Race in Latin America)

HIST 193 Modern Latin America

HIST 240 Methods Seminar: Histories of Africa, Asia, and Latin America

HIST 245 Environmental History of Latin America

HIST 257 Human Rights in Latin America

HIST 397 History Research Workshop (Sem: Cities in Latin American Hist)

PHIL 247 Selected Topics in Philosophy (when topic is Latin American Political Phil)

PSCI 257 Foreign Relations in the Americas

PSCI 264 Latin American Politics

RACE 121 Introduction to Race and Ethnic Studies

RACE 252 Topical Seminar (when topic is Introduction to Chicano Studies)

REL 218 Political and Liberation Theology

REL 231 Religion at the US-Mexico Border

SOAN 237 Forging a Latin American Culture

SOAN 264 Race and Class in American Culture

Faculty

Program Director, 2024-2025

León Narváez

Professor of Romance Languages - Spanish
Hispanic culture, language, and literature; migration and other interdisciplinary studies

Catalina Ahumada Escobar

Visiting Assistant Professor of Romance Languages - Spanish

Seth I. Binder

Associate Professor of Economics and Environmental Studies
environmental and natural resource economics and policy; development economics; sustainable development

Maggie A. Broner

National Endowment for the Humanities Professor of Romance Language
Hispanic linguistics; culture; second language acquisition

Christopher L. Chiappari

Associate Professor of Sociology/Anthropology
Guatemala; religion; immigration

Kris A. Cropsey

Instructor of Romance Languages - Spanish
Hispanic linguistics; sociolinguistics; second language acquisition; teacher education

Jessica Haugland

Visiting Instructor of Romance Languages - Spanish

Kristina Medina-Vilariño

Associate Professor of Romance Languages - Spanish; O.C. and Patricia Boldt Distinguished Teaching Professor of the Humanities
Caribbean Studies; 20th- and 21st-century Latin American studies; contemporary Latino studies; race and ethnic studies

Jonathan P. O'Conner (on sabbatical 2024-25)

Associate Professor of Romance Languages - Spanish
Peninsular early modern/golden age literature and cultures; cultural and intellectual histories; humanism; colonial Latin America

Ariel T. Strichartz

Professor of Romance Languages - Spanish
contemporary Latin American theater and narrative; Argentine theater; literary food studies; memory studies

Kris E. Thalhammer

Professor of Political Science
comparative politics; Latin American politics; political tolerance; human rights