

# LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

Kelly Roehl, Tomson Hall 331  
507-786-3230  
roehl1@stolaf.edu  
wp.stolaf.edu/latin-american-studies/

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
<b>Core course</b>		
Select at least one of the following:		1.00
HIST 126	Peoples of Colonial Latin America	
HIST 193	Modern Latin America	
LAMST 120	Latin America: Introduction to a Continent	
PSCI 257	Foreign Relations in the Americas	
PSCI 264	Latin American Politics	
SOAN 237	Forging a Latin American Culture	
<b>Required courses in Spanish</b>		
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: <sup>1</sup>		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	
<b>Electives</b>		
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
<b>Interdisciplinary seminar</b>		
LAMST 333	Contemporary Latin American Issues	1.00
<b>Total Credits</b>		<b>9</b>

1

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	
LAMST 120	Latin America: Introduction to a Continent	
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.

Interdisciplinary seminar

LAMST 333	Contemporary Latin American Issues	1.00
-----------	------------------------------------	------

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 120: Latin America: Introduction to a Continent

This course is an interdisciplinary introduction to Latin America. A central theme is the complex and recurring dynamics of traditions and change that have characterized Latin America since its inception more than five centuries ago. This includes examining how traditions are constructed and change, how they are maintained and/or revitalized by mixing new with old, local with regional and global, ideology with practice, as well as how new traditions are formed. Offered periodically during fall semester.

### 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.

ARTH 275 Topics in Art History(or ARTH 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 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 Chicana Studies)

REL 218 Political and Liberation Theology

SOAN 237 Forging a Latin American Culture

SOAN 264 Race and Class in American Culture

## Plan of Study

## Latin American Studies Major - Plan of Study

This is a sample plan that meets the prescribed requirements for the Latin American Studies major at St. Olaf. This tool is meant as a guide and does not replace working closely with the student's academic advisor.

Course	Title	Credits
<b>First Year</b>		
<b>Fall Semester</b>		
FYS 120 or WRIT 120	First-Year Seminar (or Conversation Program) or Writing and Rhetoric	1.00
LAMST 120	Latin America: Introduction to a Continent	1.00
SPAN 111-SPAN 232 (depending on placement)		1.00
<b>Credits</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Spring Semester</b>		
WRIT 120 or FYS 120	Writing and Rhetoric (or Conversation Program) or First-Year Seminar	1.00
SPAN 111-SPAN 232 (depending on placement)		1.00
<b>Credits</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>Sophomore Year</b>		
<b>Fall Semester</b>		
SPAN 250 or SPAN 251	Family and Gender Roles in Spain: 1900 to Present or Gender and Race in Modern Latin America	1.00
Core Course from LAMST Requirements Tab list		1.00
<b>Credits</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>January Term</b>		
SPAN 240 or SPAN 270	Politics and Environment in Puerto Rico (study abroad) or Spain's Cultural and Linguistic Legacy (study abroad)	1.00
<b>Credits</b>		<b>1</b>

**Spring Semester**

Elective Course from approved courses list (Latin America, Spain, or U.S. Latinos)	1.00
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------

<b>Credits</b>	<b>1</b>
----------------	----------

**Junior Year****Fall Semester**

LAMST 333	Contemporary Latin American Issues (if offered)	1.00
-----------	-------------------------------------------------	------

SPAN 27X Course		1.00
-----------------	--	------

<b>Credits</b>	<b>2</b>
----------------	----------

**Spring Semester**

SPAN 27X Course (if SPAN 240 or SPAN 270 were not previously taken)	1.00
---------------------------------------------------------------------	------

<b>Credits</b>	<b>1</b>
----------------	----------

**Senior Year****Fall Semester**

LAMST 333	Contemporary Latin American Issues (if not previously taken in junior year)	1.00
-----------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------	------

Elective Course from approved courses list (Latin America, Spain, or U.S. Latinos)	1.00
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------

<b>Credits</b>	<b>2</b>
----------------	----------

**Spring Semester**

Elective Course from approved courses list (Latin America, Spain, or U.S. Latinos)	1.00
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------

<b>Credits</b>	<b>1</b>
----------------	----------

<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>15</b>
----------------------	-----------

Students must successfully complete the equivalent of 35 St. Olaf credits through a combination of full-credit and fractional-credit courses to earn the Bachelor of Arts.

Visit the Latin American Studies webpage for more information.

## Faculty

**Program Director, 2025-2026****León Narváez**

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

**Program Director, 2025-2026****Kris E. Thalhammer**

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

**Catalina Ahumada Escobar**

Visiting Assistant Professor of Romance Languages - Spanish

**Maggie A. Broner** (on sabbatical 2025-26)

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

**Christopher (Chris) 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 Haugslund**

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**

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

**Mariana Reyes Payán**

Assistant Professor of Romance Languages - Spanish  
20th- and 21st-century Mexican literature and cultural production; Mexican borders and migration studies

**Joseph Sepulveda Ortiz**

Assistant Professor of English

**Ariel T. Strichartz**

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

**Brendon Westler**

Assistant Professor of Philosophy