



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Latin American and Latino studies (LALS) major and minor appeal to students interested in exploring all aspects of Latin America from economic, anthropological, political, artistic, historical and literary perspectives. We study a large section of the Americas, encompassing South America, Central America, Mexico, the Caribbean and the U.S. Latino community. We offer classes on all of these regions to provide a richer, deeper understanding of these culturally diverse areas and populations. Students who graduate with LALS degrees go on to pursue a variety of career paths, including business, health, academia, social activism, law and jobs in governmental and nongovernmental organizations.

What makes the program distinctive?

Students work with an adviser to develop a study plan that combines breadth with a focus in one or more disciplines. We encourage students to pursue their interests through guided, independent research, for which

many students spend a summer, a semester or more studying and working off-campus, immersed in the societies they choose to study. Such travel often is funded through LALS' unique Jane's Travel Grants program.

FAST FACTS

Current number of majors and minors: 26

Number of faculty: 15

Can you minor in this program? Yes

Emphasis within the major: anthropology and archaeology; colonial studies; cultural studies; economic development; race, women and gender; social movements; U.S.-Latin America relations

Popular second majors: anthropology; health: science, society and policy

Website: brandeis.edu/programs/lals

ACADEMICS AND RESEARCH

Campus activities

The LALS program has an active agenda of guest speakers and sponsors other campuswide activities, such as symposia, artistic presentations, performances and film screenings. Students awarded a Jane's Travel Grant (see below) are invited to present their experience in colloquia with fellow students and faculty. Other opportunities to present their work include study abroad presentations and the experiential learning colloquium.

Recent course offerings

Recent course offerings include Charles Golden's "Culture, Resistance and Cultural Transformation in Mexico and Central America," Lucia Reyes' "U.S. Latinos in Film," Faith Smith's "Literature of the Caribbean" and Silvia Arrom's "Latin American Women: Heroines, Icons and History."

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Jane's Travel Grant

Each year the program awards Jane's Travel Grants to Brandeis students to conduct research in Latin America, the Caribbean and the Latin American diaspora in the United States.

Interdisciplinary research

Mariel Gruszko '10 used a Jane's Travel Grant to travel to Guatemala, where she conducted research and participated actively in indigenous radio stations. Her resulting thesis won the 2010 Jane's Essay Prize. Anya Bergman '10 also received a Jane's Travel Grant to do research on urban youth movements, or "tribes," in Chile. Based on this fieldwork, she wrote a senior thesis on these urban tribes and identity in a globalized world.

Study abroad and internships

Students have studied at universities in Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru, and there are opportunities in other countries as well. Students can obtain credit for internships in domestic organizations related to Latin America.

Student-run clubs

Brandeis University is the home of AHORA!, a Hispanic/Latino awareness group dedicated to educating and exploring the political, social and cultural differences of

the Hispanic/Latino community. AHORA! is open to all students who are interested in learning more about Latino, Latin American or Hispanic cultures.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Studying peace in Costa Rica

Jonah Cohen '10, Ned Crowley '10 and Alex Epps '10 were awarded a grant through the Davis Projects for Peace to fund the creation of their documentary "State of Peace." The documentary was filmed in summer 2010 and chronicles the culture of peace that exists in Costa Rica.

Research scholarships

Anna Panchesnikov '10, a premed student who double-majored in Latin American and Latino studies and Hispanic studies, was awarded a prestigious Fulbright Scholarship to spend her first year after graduation examining the availability and use of prenatal HIV/AIDS prevention resources in the Dominican Republic.

Departmental awards

The Jane's Essay Prize is awarded annually to an undergraduate student who writes the best paper in Latin American and Latino studies. It carries a \$500 cash prize.

Faculty publications

Recent faculty publications include Elizabeth Ferry's "The World of Lucha Libre," Javier Urcid's "The Lords of Lambityeco and the Collapse of Monte Albán: Political Evolution in the Valley of Oaxaca," Fernando Rosenberg's "Human Rights, Truth Commissions and New Global Fictions" and Silvia Arrom's "Catholic Philanthropy and Social Change in Latin America."

AFTER BRANDEIS

Diverse career fields

Recent graduates from the LALS program have gone on to positions such as executive director of the nonprofit Instituto de Formación Democrática Inc. in Puerto Rico, a social worker at Farr Academy, a pediatrics resident at Children's Hospital at Montefiore, a political affairs officer at the United Nations, an immigration attorney and a jewelry designer who is inspired by Latin American art.

"In the past two years, I've been struggling intellectually with the implications of Westerners bringing video technology to indigenous communities. A lot of people see academics as separate from activism or advocacy, but I think they share a common interest most of the time. Social scientists are effectively positioned to help the people they study change things about their lives. This is the kind of academic I want to be."

LALS major Jeff Arak '07, before graduating

