Latin American and Latino Studies

Why Latin American and Latino Studies at Brandeis?

Economic, political, and cultural relations between the Americas, and the growing importance of the Latino presence in the United States have made Latin American and Latino studies crucial fields of inquiry for numerous disciplines. Brandeis offers students the opportunity to examine South America, Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and the Latin American diaspora in the United States through interdisciplinary study in eight academic departments. The broad spectrum of study will prepare students for careers in various fields relating to Latin America.

Curriculum Overview

Students may choose to either major or minor in Latin American and Latino studies (LALS). The program offers an interdisciplinary approach to understanding South America, Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, Brazil, and the Latin American diaspora in the United States. Eight participating departments in the social sciences, humanities, and fine arts offer courses in LALS.

Ten semester courses are required for the major and five for the minor. A knowledge of Spanish is normally required for the major. Independent study with staff members may be arranged, and students may enroll in courses at four other area universities. Credit may also be obtained through internships in Boston-area institutions related to Latin America. Study abroad for a semester or year is strongly encouraged.

The program offers courses in African and Afro-American studies, anthropology, economics, fine arts, Francophone and English Caribbean literature, history, politics, sociology, and Latin American and Latino literature and culture.

Hands-On Learning Experience

Study abroad: Students are encouraged to spend a semester or year in Latin America. Majors and minors in the past have studied in Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Jamaica, and Mexico, among others.

Internships: Although internships are not a requirement for a major or minor in Latin American and Latino studies, credit for them may be obtained through LALS 92a. It is an option available to those who want an off-campus, hands-on experience working in a nonprofit organization that deals with Latin American or Latino issues. Students arrange their own internships.

The internship normally combines approximately 100 hours of work at the internship site with written analysis under the supervision of a Brandeis faculty sponsor. It may be conducted during the academic year, in conjunction with a study abroad program, or during the summer.
Student Organizations

AHORA! is the Hispanic and Latino Student Association club. It sponsors events relating to Latin American education and culture during Hispanic Heritage Month in October.

The Caribbean Connexion explores the social, political, and cultural customs of the Caribbean region. It sponsors talks, charity drives, and theater productions during its April Caribbean Week.

Career and Education Opportunities

The program in Latin American and Latino studies has produced graduates in fields as diverse as academia, business, government, health care, journalism, law, and travel. By undertaking the broad areas of study available through the program, students prepare themselves for a variety of educational and professional opportunities.

Faculty

Following is a list of faculty members and their areas of specialization:

- **Javier Urcid, chair**  
  Archaeology, bioarchaeology, complex societies, writing systems, comparative aesthetics, Mesoamerica

- **Silvia Arrom**  
  Latin America, women’s history, social history

- **Roxanne Dávila**  
  Nineteenth- and twentieth-century Latin American literature, travel literature, anthropology and literature, pre-Columbian studies

- **Elizabeth Ferry**  
  Economic anthropology, political anthropology, exchange, property, and value, Latin America

- **Ricardo Godoy**  
  Sustainable development

- **Charles Golden**  
  Archaeology of complex societies, modern contexts of archaeological research, Mesoamerica, the Maya

- **Donald Hindley**  
  Comparative politics, Latin American politics

- **James Mandrell**  
  Modern and contemporary Spanish and comparative literature, film, and culture, U.S. popular culture, gender and sexuality

- **Marisol Negrón**  
  Latino studies

- **Wellington Nyangoni**  
  Comparative Third World political economy

- **Angela Pérez-Mejia**  
  Travel writing, colonial Latin American literature, women’s literature, Latin American film

- **Lucia Reyes de Deu**  
  Latin American indigenous novel and the configuration of national and ethnic identities in the Andes

- **Fernando Rosenberg**  
  Latin American literature and culture

- **Laurence Simon**  
  Philosophy of development, political geography, poverty alleviation, agrarian reform, project planning and implementation, evaluation, organizational management

- **Faith Smith**  
  Literature and popular culture of the Caribbean, African-America, African diaspora

- **Ibrahim Sundiata**  
  Slavery, the African diaspora, Afro-Brazil

- **Eva Thorne**  
  International political economy; international institutions and Third World development; Latin American politics