LATIN AMERICAN & CARIBBEAN STUDIES

Why study Latin American and Caribbean studies?

Are you interested in exploring Brazil’s rainforest? How are Latin American nations dealing with the Zika outbreak? Do you want to know more about the people that built the ancient Mayan ruins of Tikal or Palenque? How did soccer become so popular in Latin America, but why do Dominicans and Cubans love baseball more? Why is China so interested in economic opportunities in Latin America? These are the questions that spur students to take classes in Latin American Studies.

Latin American nations account for almost two thirds of the total population of the Western Hemisphere. Today, Latinos represent the largest minority group in the United States, accounting for sixteen percent of the population. Knowledge of Latin American and Caribbean culture, environment, and society is crucial to U.S. hemispheric relations and world understanding. For over fifty years, the Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies (CLACS) has provided KU students the opportunity to study this region and its people and encourage the development of foreign language, research, writing, and critical thinking skills.

What kind of job can I get?

The Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies is committed to helping you enrich your understanding of the world today, which will allow you to distinguish yourself among peers and colleagues. Many U.S. employers have a strong interest in Latin America and value employees who speak its languages and understand its cultures.

Training in Latin American Studies provides graduates with a diverse skill set applicable to many different career paths. The emphasis on critical thinking, analysis, and interdisciplinary approaches make LACS graduates valued voices in businesses, non-governmental organizations, public service, and education.

Through the diverse courses offered within Latin American Studies students gain important cultural competencies that can serve them well on the job market. With the an ever increasing number of Latinos and growing ties between the United States and our Latin American neighbors, Latin American Studies majors will play an important role in bridging the cultural divides that has impeded connections across the Western Hemisphere.

Although students may choose to single major, you may find that double majoring in Latin American Area Studies and another discipline makes you particularly attractive to employers. Students who combine Latin American & Caribbean Studies with journalism can work for newspapers, radio and television stations, and advertising agencies that serve Latin American countries and Latin/o communities in the United States. A double major with business or social welfare prepares students to work with companies or social service agencies that serve Latin American customers or clients.

Other students complement their Latin American & Caribbean Studies major with a second major in fields such as history, political science, Spanish, economics, or anthropology.

Some Latin American & Caribbean Area Studies graduates go on for advanced degrees in business, education, or journalism where they use their knowledge of Spanish and Portuguese languages and cultures to develop a special career niche for themselves. Like many fields in the liberal arts, Latin American and Caribbean Studies helps students build a broad background of knowledge, strengthen writing and critical thinking skills, and develop the flexibility of thought that today’s constantly changing workplace requires.

Undergraduate Programs

There are many different combinations and paths to choose from, providing you the opportunity to sculpt your education to suit your needs and interests.

As an interdisciplinary program, we teach students how to critically examine Latin America and its diverse populations by exposing them to different frameworks of study each offering a unique critical lens. Latin American Studies offers students interested in Latin America the opportunity to take a wide range of classes drawing from different departments and disciplines. A student interested in environmental issues in Latin America might take classes in History, Environmental Studies, and Anthropology. Another student might take classes in Spanish and Portuguese, Music, and Film and Media Studies to explore contemporary Latin American film and theater. With more than 100 core, affiliate, and research faculty members associated with the Center, you will cultivate a knowledge of Latin America and the Caribbean that will help you develop cultural fluency, intellectual flexibility, problem-solving skills, and a breadth of knowledge about Latin America. Most majors further their education by participating in study abroad, and have the opportunity to study languages of the region, including the indigenous ones.

The program offers a range of opportunities for students from most academic disciplines to study this region. KU has particular depth in Central America, Mexico, Haiti, the Andes, Paraguay, and Brazil and professors and courses concerned with much of the rest of Latin America. KU has an excellent library collection on Latin America and is one of the few U.S. universities teaching Haitian Creole, Andean Kichwa, and the Miskitu language of Nicaragua.

Prospective majors should begin language study in Spanish or Portuguese as early as possible. The intensive language program is recommended for those without high school preparation. Core courses in Latin American and Caribbean Studies have been certified as meeting KU Core learning outcomes, enabling majors to complete significant portions of their general education requirements within the major.

All students must be advised by the program’s advisor (https://latamst.ku.edu/kimberly-moore) as early as possible; call the Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (http://latamst.ku.edu) at 785-864-4213 to make an appointment.

Graduate Programs

The Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS) offers an interdisciplinary MA program to students interested in exploring and advancing knowledge in the histories, cultures, and social, political and economic affairs of the region. Our program is distinguished by its quality and long term national recognition, facilitating graduate research at home and abroad, sponsoring events that promote transcultural competence, and development of outreach resources to regional educators.
Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies

The nationally recognized Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (http://latamst.ku.edu) promotes interdisciplinary study of the Americas and their languages through teaching, scholarship, outreach, study abroad, and international exchanges. It administers bachelor’s and master’s degree programs and a graduate certificate Latin American and Caribbean Studies. Areas of particular strength are Brazil, Central America, the Caribbean, Mexico and Paraguay. Languages include Spanish, Portuguese, Quichua, Haitian Creole, and Miskitu. The Center coordinates Latin American events on campus including lectures, films, exhibits, and theatrical performances. Exchanges and study abroad programs have been developed in Argentina, Costa Rica, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, and Brazil. The Center offers outreach to schools, businesses, and the community and serves as a resource for the state, the region, and the nation.

Courses

KICH 110. Elementary Quichua I. 3 Hours U.
An orientation to Ecuadorian Quichua language and culture for beginning students. Includes elements of grammar, conversation, and composition. Quichua (a.k.a. Kechwa, Quechua, Kechwa, Ketchua, Kichwa, Khetchua, or Runa Ximi) in its various forms is an indigenous language spoken by over six million people in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia combined. LEC.

KICH 114. Elementary Quichua II. 3 Hours U.
Continuation of KICH 110. Prerequisite: KICH 110 or equivalent LEC.

KICH 230. Intermediate Quichua I. 3 Hours U.
Continuation of KICH 114. Prerequisite: KICH 114 or equivalent LEC.

KICH 234. Intermediate Quichua II. 3 Hours U.
Continuation of KICH 230. Prerequisite: KICH 230 or equivalent LEC.

KICH 610. Directed Study in Quichua Language and Culture. 3 Hours H.
This course is intended for students seeking proficiency in Quichua beyond KICH 234. Instructor will direct the student through readings and materials in Quichua that will add to the student’s substantive knowledge of Quichua speakers and their cultures. May be taken multiple semesters for credit with varying content. Prerequisite: KICH 234 or consent of instructor. IND.

Courses

KQKL 110. Elementary Kaqchikel Maya I. 3 Hours U.
An orientation to Kaqchikel Maya language and culture for beginning students. Includes elements of grammar, conversation, and composition. Kaqchikel is the first language of approximately 500,000 people of highland Guatemala and one of roughly 30 Mayan languages. LEC.

KQKL 114. Elementary Kaqchikel Maya II. 3 Hours U.
Continuation of KQKL 110. Prerequisite: Completion of KQKL 110 or equivalent LEC.

KQKL 230. Intermediate Kaqchikel Maya I. 3 Hours U.
Continuation of KQKL 114. Prerequisite: Completion of KQKL 114 or equivalent LEC.

KQKL 234. Intermediate Kaqchikel Maya II. 3 Hours U.
Continuation of KQKL 230. Prerequisite: Completion of KQKL 230 or equivalent LEC.

LAA 100. Latin American Culture and Society. 3 Hours SC AE42 / S.
An introduction to the interdisciplinary study of Latin America, as manifest in the arts and literature, history, and in environmental, political, economic, and social realities. Explores and critiques the principal themes and methodologies of Latin American Studies, with an aim towards synthesizing contributions from several different disciplines. Emphasizes the unique insights and perspectives made possible by interdisciplinary collaboration and provides students with a basic knowledge base for understanding Latin America today. (Same as HIST 124.) LEC.

LAA 102. Orientation Seminar in Latin American and Caribbean Studies. 1 Hour U.
LAA 102 is an online orientation seminar designed to introduce students to the Latin American and Caribbean Studies major at KU and help students place the major in the context of their overall undergraduate experience and career plans. The course provides students with introductory information about Latin America and the Caribbean and the nature of interdisciplinary inquiry, and an interdisciplinary major, and about resources available at KU and beyond for research and study related to the region. During the course, students also learn about typical careers pursued by Latin American and Caribbean Studies majors, reflect on their own educational and career goals, and determine whether the major matches those goals. Finally, the course provides students with information about requirements for the major, along with information about when required courses are offered and when they should be taken. LEC.

LAA 177. First Year Seminar: ______. 3 Hours GE11 / U.
A limited-enrollment, seminar course for first-time freshmen, addressing current issues in Latin Area and Caribbean Studies. Course is designed to meet the critical thinking learning outcome of the KU Core. First-Year Seminar topics are coordinated and approved by the Office of First-Year Experience. Prerequisite: First-time freshman status. LEC.

LAA 300. Interdisciplinary Themes in Latin American Studies. 3 Hours AES1 / U.
This course offers an in-depth examination of several key themes in Latin American Studies. Emphasis is placed on exploring the utility of interdisciplinary methods and on becoming familiar with the theoretical framework that underpins the field. Prior completion of LAA 100 recommended. LEC.

Graduate students may pursue the degree of Master of Arts (MA) through either the thesis or comparative research paper track. Both programs require 30 credit hours of graduate-level coursework. Students on either track have substantial flexibility in choosing their courses and will work with the graduate advisor to create a coherent and focused program of study. The Center for Latin American & Caribbean Studies administers an interdisciplinary program of substantive and language courses leading to the Master of Arts degree. Students may pursue the M.A. as a terminal degree for careers in the public or private sector or as preparation for additional graduate study. The center also offers a graduate certificate in Latin American and Caribbean Studies.

Our graduate students produce impactful contributions that are representative of the vitality of Latin American scholarship. At KU they will have access to our robust tradition of research and professional development, providing a thesis option for those interested in a future academic career and a non-thesis option for those seeking professional employment.
LAA 333. Language and Society in Latin America, Honors. 3 Hours NW AE42 / S.
This course will examine the cultural and social significance of Amerindian languages in Latin America. Spanish and Portuguese will be related in language situations to Amerindian languages, such as Quechua, Aymara, the Mayan languages, Nahuatl, and Guarani. Some African-substratum Creole languages will be used to illustrate the multifaceted relations between language and ethnic group, sex, nation, geography, social class, context, and social interaction. Prerequisite: Membership in the University Honors Program. LEC.

LAA 334. Indigenous Traditions of Latin America. 3 Hours NW AE42 / S/W.
A survey of the major indigenous traditions of Mesoamerica, the Andes, and lowland tropical Latin America. Coverage emphasizes how indigenous cultural traditions and societies have both continued and changed since the European Invasion and addresses such current issues as language rights, territorial rights, sovereignty, and state violence. Students enrolled in the 600-level section will be required to complete additional research and class leadership tasks. Not open to students who have taken LAA 634. (Same as ANTH 379.) LEC.

LAA 335. The Politics of Language in Latin America. 3 Hours NW / S.
Although approximately 600 indigenous languages are spoken by 30 million people in Latin America, public life is conducted in Spanish. The class provides a comprehensive survey of language issues in Latin America by analyzing the situation of minority language groups, language rights, language policies, and language planning, as well as by considering the questions that arise regarding bilingual education, literacy, and the role of minority languages in educational systems. LEC.

LAA 336. Language and Society in Latin America, Honors. 3 Hours NW AE42 / S.
This course will examine the cultural and social significance of Amerindian languages in Latin America. Spanish and Portuguese will be related in language situations to Amerindian languages, such as Quechua, Aymara, the Mayan languages, Nahuatl, and Guarani. Some African-substratum Creole languages will be used to illustrate the multifaceted relations between language and ethnic group, sex, nation, geography, social class, context, and social interaction. LEC.

LAA 339. Topics in Cranbrook Studies. 1-3 Hours AE61 / H.
Intensive study and research under faculty direction. Open to students wishing to graduate with honors in Latin American Studies and having a grade point average of at least 3.5 in Latin American Studies and at least 3.25 overall. Requires an interdisciplinary project concerning a specific topic involving at least two disciplines. Must be directed by a faculty member in Latin American Studies, approved by the Center Associate Director, and defended before a committee of at least three faculty members. To earn departmental honors, a student must take the course for two semesters (with a minimum grade of B the first semester, and an A the second). LEC.

LAA 340. Directed Study in Latin American Area Studies. 1-3 Hours AE61 / U.
Independent study and directed reading on special topics. IND.
LAA 501. Multilingualism and Multiculturalism in Latin America. 3 Hours H.
Exames the sociolinguistic issues of multilingual countries in Latin America from an interdisciplinary perspective. Topics include but are not limited to linguistic inequality, the language of politics, language and education, urban and rural linguistic interaction, and indigenous and creole languages. Prerequisite: A liberal arts course with Latin American content. LEC.

LAA 503. Race, Gender, Ethnicity, and Nationalism in Latin America. 3 Hours NW AE42 / H.
The development of cultural identity in Latin America is traced through the study of major narrative trends including Amerindian languages and the analysis of "indigenista" literature. The African substratum of Latin American culture and its relation to concepts such as "marvellous realism" is explored. The importance of "race," "gender," and "ethnicity" are investigated as tools to define national identity in Latin America. The influence of modernization, industrialization, and nationalistic and populist thought on their emergence of distinctive writing and themes is also assessed. LEC.

LAA 504. Politics of Culture in Modern Latin America. 3 Hours H.
This course explores the relationship between political development and cultural phenomena of Latin America from 1800 to the present, with special emphasis on gender, popular culture, and ideology. The influences of 20th-century ideologies and technology on cultural development in Latin America will also be examined. LEC.

LAA 505. U.S. Latino and Latin American Film and Literature. 3 Hours H.
This course follows the development of U.S. Latino and Latin American cinema from its origins to the present and its relationship with literary discourse. U.S. Latino/Latin American cinema can be seen as a specific practice that cannot be reduced in all its manifestations to the institutional mode of production of the dominant Hollywood model. The course examines the creation of a national cinema that seems to be more dependent on a literary canon. Knowledge of Spanish is not required. LEC.

LAA 506. Race, Gender, Ethnicity, and Nationalism in Latin America, Honors. 3 Hours NW AE42 / H.
The development of cultural identity in Latin America is traced through the study of major literary works of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The importance of "race," "gender," and "ethnicity" are explored as tools to define national identity in Latin America. The impact of modernization, industrialization, and nationalistic and populist thought on the emergence of distinctive writing and themes is also assessed. Prerequisite: Membership in the University Honors Program. LEC.

LAA 510. Topics in LAA - Anthropology: ______ 3 Hours U.
A Latin American and Caribbean topics course with content related to the Anthropology disciplinary group of the Latin American studies major. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: LAA 100 or HIST 124 or LAA 300 or any LAA course at the 300 level. LEC.

LAA 511. Topics in LAA - History: ______ 3 Hours U.
A Latin American and Caribbean topics course with content related to the History disciplinary group of the Latin American studies major. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: LAA 100 or HIST 124 or LAA 300 or any LAA course at the 300 level. LEC.

LAA 512. Topics in LAA - Spanish American Literature and Culture: ______ 3 Hours U.
A Latin American and Caribbean topics course with content related to the Spanish American Literature and Culture disciplinary group of the Latin American studies major. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: LAA 100 or HIST 124 or LAA 300 or any LAA course at the 300 level. LEC.

LAA 513. Topics in LAA - Brazilian Literature: ______ 3 Hours U.
A Latin American and Caribbean topics course with content related to the Brazilian Literature and Culture disciplinary group of the Latin American studies major. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: LAA 100 or HIST 124 or LAA 300 or any LAA course at the 300 level. LEC.

LAA 514. Topics in LAA - Latino and Caribbean Literature: ______ 3 Hours U.
A Latin American and Caribbean topics course with content related to the Latino/a and Caribbean Literature disciplinary group of the Latin American studies major. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: LAA 100 or HIST 124 or LAA 300 or any LAA course at the 300 level. LEC.

LAA 515. Topics in LAA - Film Music Arts: ______ 3 Hours U.
A Latin American and Caribbean topics course with content related to the Film, Music, Arts disciplinary group of the Latin American studies major. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: LAA 100 or HIST 124 or LAA 300 or any LAA course at the 300 level. LEC.

LAA 516. Topics in LAA - Geography and Environment: ______ 3 Hours U.
A Latin American and Caribbean topics course with content related to the Geography and Environment disciplinary group of the Latin American studies major. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: LAA 100 or HIST 124 or LAA 300 or any LAA course at the 300 level. LEC.

LAA 517. Topics in LAA - Politics, Society, Business and Economy: ______ 3 Hours U.
A Latin American and Caribbean topics course with content related to the Politics, Society, Business and Economy disciplinary group of the Latin American studies major. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: LAA 100 or HIST 124 or LAA 300 or any LAA course at the 300 level. LEC.

LAA 518. Topics in LAA - Transatlantic and Transnational: ______ 3 Hours U.
A Latin American and Caribbean topics course with content related to the Transatlantic and Transnational disciplinary group of the Latin American studies major. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: LAA 100 or HIST 124 or LAA 300 or any LAA course at the 300 level. LEC.

LAA 519. Topics in LAA - Methodology and Theory: ______ 3 Hours U.
A Latin American and Caribbean topics course with content related to the Methodology and Theory disciplinary group of the Latin American studies major. May be repeated for credit. Prerequisite: LAA 100 or HIST 124 or LAA 300 or any LAA course at the 300 level. LEC.

LAA 552. Foodways: Latin America. 3 Hours H.
This course explores traditional foods, ways of eating, and cultural significance of food among peoples of Latin America. The course surveys the vast array of flora in Central and South America and the Caribbean, and focuses on issues of environmental protection, bioethics, food security, and the growth of farming and ranching. The class studies the impact that foods such as maize, potatoes and cacao have had globally, and includes African, Asian, and European influences on Latin cuisine, as well as health problems associated with dietary changes. (Same as HIST 512, WWC 552, and ISP 552.) Prerequisite: Upper division course on Latin America or permission of the instructor. LEC.
LAA 561. Indigenous Development in Latin America. 3 Hours AE42 / S.
Surveys the history of the development enterprise since WWII, examines the marginalization and impoverishment of Latin America's indigenous peoples, and provides training to carry out projects for and with them to enhance their quality of life. Development is understood as not merely technological or economic, but also social, emotional, and educational. Students work in teams to design their own mock development project. A 3-credit non-obligatory companion course, Applied Anthropological Field School among the Ch'ortí Maya, will follow in the intersession after each version of this course. (Same as ANTH 561.) Prerequisite: ANTH 100, ANTH 108, ANTH 160 or LAA 100; or consent of instructor. LEC.

LAA 587. Multidisciplinary Field School in Partnership with the Chorti Maya. 3 Hours S.
Teams of interdisciplinary students partner with the Chorti Maya of Guatemala and Honduras to share information and experiences. One third of the course consists of readings and 4-5 orientation sessions on campus, and two thirds entails two weeks in Central America. Examples of activities might include historical research, water testing and improvement, photography, art, music, tourism consultation, marketing of crafts, human rights advocacy, web design, computer training, and museum work, among others. There are no prerequisites, but students with a working knowledge of Spanish will receive preference for admission. (Same as ANTH 587.) LEC.

LAA 602. Topics in Latin American Studies: _____. 3 Hours U.
Investigation of special topics on Latin America. LEC.

LAA 634. Indigenous Traditions of Latin America. 3 Hours NW AE42 / S/ W.
A survey of the major indigenous traditions of Mesoamerica, the Andes, and lowland tropical Latin America. Coverage emphasizes how indigenous cultural traditions and societies have both continued and changed since the European Invasion and addresses such current issues as language rights, territorial rights, sovereignty, and state violence. Students enrolled in the 600-level section will be required to complete additional research and class leadership tasks. Not open to students who have taken ANTH 379 or LAA 334. LEC.

LAA 665. Women, Health, and Healing in Latin America. 3 Hours S.
This seminar uses a life-cycle approach to examine women's health (physical, mental, and spiritual) and their roles as healers. Special consideration is given to the effects of development programs on well-being, access to health care, and changing roles for women as healers. Cases will be drawn from a variety of Latin American contexts. (Same as ANTH 665 and WGSS 665.) Prerequisite: 6 hours coursework in Anthropology and/or Women's Studies and/or Latin American Studies. LEC.

LAA 700. Introduction to Latin American Library Resources. 3 Hours.
A survey of bibliographic and reference sources for research on Latin America in the humanities and social sciences. Designed to prepare students for library research at the seminar, thesis, or dissertation level. Prerequisite: Junior standing, reading knowledge of Spanish or Portuguese. LEC.

LAA 701. Interdisciplinary Seminar in Latin American Culture and Problems. 3 Hours.
An interdisciplinary seminar incorporating significant and pertinent materials from the fields of anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, sociology, and Spanish and Portuguese literature. Required of all graduate students enrolled in the Master of Arts program in Latin American Area Studies. Prerequisite: LAA 700 (may be taken simultaneously with LAA 701 if both courses offered during same semester). LEC.

LAA 703. Research Colloquium on Brazil. 3 Hours.
An interdisciplinary research seminar on historical and contemporary issues in Brazil, incorporating information and analysis from such fields as anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, sociology, and Spanish and Portuguese literature and culture. Required for the Brazilian Graduate Certificate. Prerequisite: Recommended reading proficiency in Portuguese. LEC.

LAA 704. Research Colloquium on Central America and Mexico. 3 Hours.
An interdisciplinary research seminar on historical and contemporary issues in Central America and Mexico, incorporating information and analysis from such fields as anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, sociology, and Spanish and Portuguese literature and culture. Required for the Central America Mexico Graduate Certificate. Prerequisite: Recommended reading proficiency in Spanish. LEC.

LAA 800. Investigation and Conference. 1-2 Hours.
Investigation and research of interdisciplinary topics in Latin American Studies. RSH.

LAA 899. Thesis/Non-Thesis. 1-6 Hours.
Prerequisite: Consent of instructor. THE.