

M.A. IN LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

Overview

The Master of Arts in Latin American Studies is a 30 credit hour interdisciplinary degree characterized by a high degree of flexibility in allowing students to create a course of study focused on Latin American and the Caribbean that serves their interests. Combining core courses offered by the program with a large variety of courses combined with departments, programs, and units throughout the University of Miami, the program offers tremendous diversity in courses available for credit hour towards this degree. This encourages students to combine course offerings from around the university into a cohesive course of study that enables specialization in an area, topic, country, theme, or issue of their choosing and thus to tap into the many resources available at the University of Miami for students with a passion for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Admission Requirements

- Statement of purpose: This is the most important element of your application packet. This letter needs to reflect who you are, your goals for the program and your career after, and why you would be an asset to the program. It is very important to ensure it is grammatically correct and as detailed as possible. The statement of purpose should be no more than two pages in length. Please review before you submit.
- CV or Resumé.
- Official transcripts: Applicants must provide official transcripts from each post-secondary institution attended. Official transcripts in languages other than English must also be submitted with a certified English translation.
- Three letters of recommendation must be provided. At least one letter should be from an academic reference.
- Undergraduate GPA: A minimum overall undergraduate grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) is required.

International Applicants

In addition to the criteria mentioned in the Admissions Requirements section, international applicants are required to submit:

- A copy of their passport.
- Diplomas and certificates. International students are required to submit a copy of all the diplomas or certificates earned. Each copy must be submitted in their original language with a certified English translation.
- Bank statement. Please provide a copy of your bank statement for the last six months. You may also provide a sponsorship letter indicating your method of funding.
- TOEFL/IELTS: All international students are required to take this exam in order to demonstrate sufficient English competency. The "Test Of English As A Foreign Language (TOEFL)" exam is offered as a paper-based test (PBT) or an internet-based test (IBT). A score of 550 is required for the PBT; a score of 80 is required for the IBT. Students may also take the "International English Language Testing System (IELTS)" exam to demonstrate sufficient competency in English. A score of 6.5 or higher is required.

Curriculum Requirements

M.A. in Latin American Studies Non-Thesis Option

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Core Courses ¹		
LAS 601	Politics, Societies, and Cultures of Latin America and the Caribbean	3
LAS 602	Research Design in Latin American Studies	3
Regional Fundamentals ²		6
Academic Focus Courses ³		9
Electives ⁴		6
Capstone ⁵		3
Language Requirement ⁶		
Total Credit Hours		30

¹ Foundations are courses that offer a thematic and regional perspectives on Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Latine experience. This set of courses provides students with an introduction to different disciplinary approaches and research tools: LAS 601 (Introduction to Latin American Studies) and LAS 602 (Research Seminar).

² Students are required to take a 3-credit course focused on the social sciences and another 3-credit course focused on the arts and humanities of Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Latine experience.

³ With the assistance of the academic director, students will choose courses in their own chosen areas of concentration. These courses might be anchored around a specific country or subregion (e.g. Andean world) or a given topic of interest (development policy, racial justice, hemispheric security, environmental studies, gender and sexuality, cultural industries, etc.).

⁴ Students can select courses or internship credits of their choosing, but in consultation with the academic director and plan of study.

- ⁵ During their final semester, students will enroll in 3 credit hours of LAS 697 (Culminating Experience). Students are required to create a capstone project (such as a research paper, portfolio, short film, etc.) or take a comprehensive exam in three areas of knowledge reflective of their academic focus. For either of these two options, a committee consisting of at least two faculty members is required to oversee the capstone project or examination.
- ⁶ Students must demonstrate advanced language competency in Spanish, French, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, or a major indigenous language of Latin America. Students may establish proficiency by passing one 3-credit course taught in the target language at the 600-level or above, or by passing a language competency exam. Students may also petition for a waiver of examination if they have gained language competency in another manner: native speaker with proof of coursework in target language (a diploma or transcript from a high school at which the primary language of instruction and of school administration was not English would constitute such proof), upper division coursework in target language (equivalent to 300-level or above at UM), Peace Corps service, or Defense Language Proficiency Test. Any courses taken to fulfill the language requirement may not be counted towards the 30 credits required for the degree.

M.A. in Latin American Studies Thesis Option

Code	Title	Credit Hours
Core Courses ¹		
LAS 601	Politics, Societies, and Cultures of Latin America and the Caribbean	3
LAS 602	Research Design in Latin American Studies	3
Regional Fundamentals ²		6
Academic Focus Courses ³		9
Elective ⁴		3
Thesis ⁵		6
Language Requirement ⁶		
Total Credit Hours		30

- ¹ Foundations are courses that offer a thematic and regional perspectives on Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Latine experience. This set of courses provides students with an introduction to different disciplinary approaches and research tools: LAS 601 (Introduction to Latin American Studies) and LAS 602 (Research Seminar).
- ² Students are required to take a 3-credit course focused on the social sciences and another 3-credit course focused on the arts and humanities of Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Latine experience.
- ³ With the assistance of the academic director, students will choose courses in their own chosen areas of concentration. These courses might be anchored around a specific country or subregion (e.g. Andean world) or a given topic of interest (development policy, racial justice, hemispheric security, environmental studies, gender and sexuality, cultural industries, etc.).
- ⁴ Students can select courses or internship credits of their choosing, but in consultation with the academic director and plan of study.
- ⁵ Students should take LAS 810 for three credits at the start of their thesis and LAS 815 as they are preparing to defend. MA in LAS students must follow the ETD deadlines set forth by the Graduate School.
- ⁶ Students must demonstrate advanced language competency in Spanish, French, Portuguese, Haitian Creole, or a major indigenous language of Latin America. Students may establish proficiency by passing one 3-credit course taught in the target language at the 600-level or above, or by passing a language competency exam. Students may also petition for a waiver of examination if they have gained language competency in another manner: native speaker with proof of coursework in target language (a diploma or transcript from a high school at which the primary language of instruction and of school administration was not English would constitute such proof), upper division coursework in target language (equivalent to 300-level or above at UM), Peace Corps service, or Defense Language Proficiency Test. Any courses taken to fulfill the language requirement may not be counted towards the 30 credits required for the degree.

In terms of time to completion, full-time students can expect to complete the MA in approximately three to four semesters. Under very special circumstances, such as students who are pursuing training as Foreign Area Officers, it may be possible to complete the degree in two semesters with a full complement of summer courses.

Sample Plan of Study - Non-Thesis Option

Year One		
Fall		Credit Hours
LAS 601	Politics, Societies, and Cultures of Latin America and the Caribbean	3
Regional Fundamentals Course		3
Academic Focus Course		3
Credit Hours		9
Spring		
LAS 602	Research Design in Latin American Studies	3

Regional Fundamentals Course	3
Academic Focus Course	3
Credit Hours	9
Summer	
Graduate-level elective (LAS, cross-listed, or from partner department)	3
Credit Hours	3
Year Two	
Fall	
Academic Focus Course	3
Graduate-level elective (LAS, cross-listed, or from partner department)	3
Capstone	3
Credit Hours	9
Total Credit Hours	30

Sample Plan of Study - Thesis Option

Year One			
Fall			Credit Hours
LAS 601	Politics, Societies, and Cultures of Latin America and the Caribbean		3
Regional Fundamentals Course			3
Academic Focus Course			3
Credit Hours			9
Spring			
LAS 602	Research Design in Latin American Studies		3
Regional Fundamentals Course			3
Academic Focus Course			3
Credit Hours			9
Year Two			
Fall			
LAS 810	Pre-candidacy thesis credits		3
Academic Focus Course			3
Academic Focus Course			3
Credit Hours			9
Spring			
LAS 815	Post-candidacy thesis credits		3
Credit Hours			3
Total Credit Hours			30

Mission

The mission of the Master of Arts in Latin American and Caribbean Studies is to offer students the tools and resources that enable them to advance and disseminate knowledge of the history, literature, culture, politics, and economics of the region using various theoretical and analytical approaches.

Goals

This graduate program furthers the skills and knowledge gained in undergraduate study and expects graduates to conduct scholarly research, formulate an academically rigorous and unique Master's thesis, and eloquently defend a thesis reflective of the student's enhanced expertise in the region. Graduates are prepared to either pursue further graduate study or find employment as experts with mastery of a particular region or peoples in Latin America or the Caribbean.

Student Learning Outcomes

- Students will demonstrate a deep understanding of the region, its peoples and societies, and its history and cultures.
- Students will demonstrate an ability to conduct independent and original research.
- Students will demonstrate their skills in written communication.
- Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills.