

Proposal for a New Undergraduate Major in Latin American Studies

Introduction

The School of Humanities, the School of Social Sciences, and the Department of Spanish and Portuguese propose a new major titled Latin American Studies. An undergraduate major in Latin American Studies is common fare in most of our peer institutions, including Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Columbia, Washington University, Emory, Vanderbilt, UCLA, UC-Berkeley and UT-Austin.

Description of the Major

- **Course Requirements and the Distribution Requirement:** LAS Majors will take courses with appropriate Latin American content at Rice or at an approved program abroad for **a total of 10 courses (30 semester hours)**. **No fewer than 6 courses (18 semester hours) should be taken at Rice.** At least two of the courses must be in the humanities and two in the social sciences.
- This major is designed to reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the field of Latin American Studies and the interdisciplinary research interests of participating faculty at Rice University. Their interests are captured in the masterlist of courses that is appended to this document.
- **The Required Introductory Course:** Majors will be required to take an introductory course that will both introduce and structure the major. For example, what do the terms Latin America, Hemispheric, Global South, international and global actually mean? Are there universally applicable criteria to justify such terms? The course will also expose students to the problems of getting to know other cultures and becoming familiar with the attitudes and skill sets needed to approach cultures other than one's own. A humanities professor from Art History, History, or Hispanic and Brazilian Studies will usually teach the introductory course, although under some circumstances someone from the School of Social Sciences could also be the professor of record. This course will be taught in English, with discussion sections available in Spanish or Portuguese pending student interest. The course could also be team-taught by professors from different

departments or even different schools. A sample syllabus for this course is included in Appendix A.

- **A Required Semester Abroad:** Unlike majors of this sort at most other institutions, Rice LAS Majors will be required to spend at least one semester studying at a Rice-approved, semester-abroad program in which the primary language of instruction is Spanish, Portuguese, or under special circumstances French. Assisted by the International Studies Office, the Latin Americanist faculty will select a relatively small number of programs for this purpose. Courses taken abroad may count toward completing the LAS major and toward meeting the distribution requirements in the major. **Only Rice pre-approved study abroad courses that automatically carry Rice credit will count toward the major. Study abroad courses cannot count for more than 4 courses (12 semester hours) toward the major.** While the semester abroad is ideal, under very special circumstances, the advisor of the major can approve a 12-week summer program as the equivalent of a semester, provided the program allows students to complete at least 3 three-credit courses. Rice will take whatever measures possible to make these programs “cost-neutral” for students. The goal is to cover costs that exceed the Rice financial package for a student in the semester she or he is planning to study abroad.
- **A Required Capstone Research Colloquium:** After completing the semester abroad, students will enroll in a research colloquium directed by a faculty member from either Humanities or Social Sciences, in which students will write a research paper on a Latin American topic of their choice. During the course, students will be exposed to different research methodologies, theories appropriate to their field of study, and instruction on how best to incorporate research and sources that emerged from their study abroad. Interdisciplinary modes of research and writing will be a major feature of this colloquium. Students will be expected to highlight the interdisciplinary nature of their research in their completed paper. In addition, students in the colloquium will be expected to workshop their writing at different times during the semester. The completed research paper will be evaluated by the Colloquium Director and one other professor appropriate to the topic. With the approval of the Colloquium Director, this research paper may be written in English. A sample syllabus for this course is included in Appendix B.

- **Required Language Competence:** Rice LAS majors will be expected to demonstrate language competence at three different stages of the major:
 1. Prior to going abroad, students will be examined by Center for Study of Languages (CSL) faculty trained in proficiency testing to ensure that the students have adequate language competence for studying abroad – adequate at this stage meaning at least Intermediate-High according to proficiency standards set by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). How competence is acquired is up to the student. It may be acquired through coursework, but we also hope that heritage speakers as well as students with strong language backgrounds from high school will participate in the program.
 2. After returning from the semester abroad, students will be tested again and required to perform at the Advanced-Low Level, according to ACTFL Guidelines. This test is an internal monitoring strategy. Students who fail to perform at the Advanced-Low may still complete the major. Experience tells us, however, that an Advanced-Low after a semester abroad is a realistic expectation in English-cognate languages like Spanish and Portuguese.
 3. In writing the research paper mentioned above, students must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Colloquium Director their ability to do research in a foreign language.

Distinction from the Hispanic Studies Major

In contrast to the Hispanic Studies major, LAS requirements pose significant differences. For example, Hispanic Studies does not have an introductory course requirement, nor does it require any coursework in the Social Sciences. Hispanic Studies also does not require a study abroad semester in order to complete the major.

Intellectual Contribution of the LAS Major

In his Vision Statement for the Second Century, President Leebron states that Rice must “ become an international university, with more significant orientation toward Asia and Latin America” and “ aggressively foster collaborative relationships with other institutions.” The LAS Major will be a significant step

towards creating a programmatic infrastructure to support the president's goals. Rooted in the history of US global aspirations post-World War II, traditional Area Studies in American universities aimed to develop research on specific non-western regions. Rice University has outstanding potential to develop better approaches to traditional area studies by combining critical approaches to globalization, trans-nationalism, and regional studies along with intensive language training and study abroad. The new major we propose speaks to the urgencies of our times. It will recognize the importance of in-depth knowledge of a specific region as well as the need for a critical and overarching understanding of an increasingly globalized world. To that end, this interdisciplinary program allows students to focus a major course of study in a specific national or regional history and culture and to acquire critical perspectives on legacies and ongoing forces that are global in scope.

Administration of the Major

Departmental Home and Faculty Advisor: While the LAS major will count courses from across the campus, it will be housed in the Américas Research Center (ARC). Given that the majority of courses for the major are currently in the School of Humanities and the ARC is also one of the centers of the School of Humanities, Dean Nicolas Shumway is the dean of record for this major. The Director of the ARC, Dr. José Aranda, will be the director of record of the major, as well as the faculty advisor of the major. Aranda will also chair of a Faculty Advisory Committee that will be responsible for the content and administration of the major, as well as responsible for the assessment of student learning and developing program improvement plans. The Colloquium Director is a standing member of this committee. Either the Director of the Center for the Study of Languages or a representative from the CSL will be a standing member of this committee. Under special circumstances, a Latin Americanist from another department may be asked to be the faculty advisor.

Faculty participating in the major by department or school:

Anthropology: Cymene Howe.

Art History: Fabiola Lopez-Duran.

English: José Aranda, Krista Comer, Rosemary Hennessy, Lisa Slappey.

French Studies: Bernard Aresu.

Hispanic Studies: Beatriz González-Stephan, Luis Duno-Gottberg, Gisela Heffes, Manuel Gutiérrez, José Aranda, Nicolas Shumway

History: Moramay López Alonso, Alex Bird, Ed Cox, Alida Metcalf.

Political Science: Mark Jones.

Architecture: Farés el-Dahdah, Carlos Jimenez.

- **Faculty Advisory Committee:** In consultation with the Director of the ARC, the Dean of Humanities will appoint a small faculty committee to oversee the LAS curriculum and ensure that the introductory course and research colloquium is properly staffed and taught. The advisory committee will also play an important role in helping to identify appropriate study-abroad programs and provide ongoing counsel on the health of the major.
- **The Center for the Study of Languages:** At least one representative of the CSL will serve on the Faculty Advisory Committee to ensure that the testing for the language requirements in the major are adequately administered.
- **The Office of International Programs:** Located in the office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, the OIP staff will play a role in directing students to appropriate semester-abroad programs. Decisions of what programs will carry the designation “LAS Rice Approved Program,” however, will be made in close collaboration with faculty. The OIP staff will also have primary responsibility for handling the logistics of studying abroad – e.g., visas, travel and payment arrangements, and insurance.

Appendix I. Courses offered.

**Latin-American, US Latino, Caribbean, & Borderlands Studies
Courses for Latin American Studies Major at Rice University**

Américas Research Center

ARCR 154 Latin American Confessions

ARCR 478 The Caribbean in French

Bernard Aresu (aresu@rice.edu)

David Vassar (vasar@rice.edu)

Department of Anthropology

ANTH 290 The History and Ethnography of Race in Brazil

ANTH 361 Latin American Topics

Cymene Howe (cymene@rice.edu) *

Department of Art History

**HART 265 A Visual Culture Travelogue: Art and Politics in Modern
Latin America**

**HART 463/563 Practicing Utopia: Art, Architecture, Eugenics and the
Modern Latin City**

HART 467/567 Nature In Vitro: Bodies, Gardens and Built Forms

Fabiola Lopez-Duran (fld@rice.edu)

Department of English

ENGL 260 Intro to Lit of the Americas

ENGL 268 Intro to Native American Literature

ENGL 367 Literature and Culture of the US-Mexico Borderlands

ENGL 369 The American West & Its Others

ENGL 371 Chicano/a Literature

ENGL 372 The American West/Americas

ENGL 378/SWGS 378 Literature of the Americas

ENGL 471 Studies in Chicano/a Literature
ENGL 472 Native American Literature
ENGL 486 Studies in Critical Regionalism

José Aranda (aranda@rice.edu)
Krista Comer (kcomer@rice.edu)
Rosemary Hennessy (rh4@rice.edu)
Lisa Slappey (slappey@rice.edu)

Department of French Studies

FREN 478 The Caribbean in French

Bernard Aresu (aresu@rice.edu)

Department of Hispanic Studies

SPAN 156: Latin American Art: Mexico in the Modern Age
SPAN 345 Mapping Latin American Culture
SPAN 346 Contemporary Mexico
SPAN 348 The Mexican Renaissance: Art, Literature and Revolution
SPAN 373 The Mexican Novel in the 20th Century
SPAN 384 Literatures from the Southern Cone: The Gaucho Genre
SPAN 383 Spanish Creative Writing
SPAN 385 Foundations of Spanish American Literature
SPAN 386 Culture and Power in Latin America
SPAN 387 Her Short Story: Culture of Latino-American Women
SPAN 388 Latin American Short Story
SPAN 389 Latin American Testimonio
SPAN 390 Hispanic cinema
SPAN 391 Caribbean Literature
SPAN 392 Mexican Avant-Garde Narrative
SPAN 393 Caribbean Fiction
SPAN 394 Transnational Caribbean Cultures
SPAN 395 Dialogo of the Americas
SPAN 396 Survey of Chicano/a Literature
SPAN 401 Literary Theory/Hispanic Texts
SPAN 402 The City in Latin American
SPAN 403 Literature and the Environment in Latin America
SPAN 405 Latin American Literature in the Movies
SPAN 406 Latin American Cinema
SPAN 424 1898 in Transatlantic Perspective

SPAN 440 Bilingualism
SPAN 450 Civilization and Barbarism
SPAN 452 (Un) Disciplined Bodies
SPAN 453 Border Narratives
SPAN 454 Macho culture in Latin America
SPAN 456 Latin American Women's Culture
SPAN 458 Mexico and the United States: Literary and Cultural Relations
SPAN 460 Europe and Latin America
SPAN 462 Modern Spanish American Novel
SPAN 465 Trends in Latin American Thought
SPAN 466 20th Century Mexican Narrative
SPAN 468 Octavio Paz
SPAN 470 Latin American Cultural theory
SPAN 474 Spanish American Poetry and the experience of the Limit

Beatriz González-Stephan (beatriz@rice.edu)
Luis Duno-Gottberg (ld4@rice.edu)
Gisela Heffes (gisela.heffes@rice.edu)
Manuel Gutiérrez (manuel.gutierrez@rice.edu)
José Aranda (aranda@rice.edu)
Nicolas Shumway (ns12@rice.edu)

Department of History

HIST 188/388 Atlantic World
HIST 214/314 Caribbean Nation Building
HIST 215/315 Blacks in The Americas
HIST 227 Latin American Cultural Traditions
HIST 228 Modern Latin America
HIST 251 Brazil: Continuities and Changes
HIST 279/379 The Caribbean in The Age of Revolution, 1763-1840
HIST 313 Modern Mexico
HIST 328 Poverty and Social Justice in Latin America
HIST 330 Atlantic Slave Trade and the Origins of Afro America
HIST 335 History of The Caribbean to 1838
HIST 336 The Caribbean: 1838 to The Present
HIST 337 Latin American Perspectives
HIST 366 Rio de Janeiro: A Social & Architectural History
HIST 376 Natural Disasters in the History of the Caribbean
HIST 397 Economic History of the Americas
HIST 421 Race, Education and Society in the Urban South
HIST 426 Comparative Slavery & Race Relations in the Americas
HIST 478 Special Topic in Modern Latin America
HIST 482 Dictators, Populists, and Revolutionaries

Alex Bird (axb@rice.edu)
Moramay López Alonso (moramay@rice.edu)
Ed Cox (ecox@rice.edu)
Alida Metcalf (acm5@rice.edu)

Department of Political Science

POLI 328 Latino Politics in the United States
POLI 354 Latin American Politics
POLI 450 Elections in the Americas

Mark Jones (mpjones@rice.edu)

Department of Sociology

TBA

School of Architecture

ARCH 366 Rio de Janeiro: A Social and Architectural History
ARCH 452 Practicing Utopia: Architecture, Eugenics and The Modern Latin City
ARCH 459 Modern Brazil
ARCH 462 Nature In-Vitro: Bodies, Gardens and Built Forms
ARCH 469 Case Study in Urban Design: Brasila

Farés el-Dahdah (fdahdah@rice.edu)
Carlos Jimenez (carlos@carlosjimenezstudio.com)

Appendix II. Text for General Announcements

The Américas Research Center of Rice University

The School of Humanities and The School of Social Sciences

Director

José F. Aranda Jr.

Associate Director

David Vassar

Professors

Bernard Aresu

Beatriz González-Stephan

Rosemary Hennessy

Carlos Jimenez

Mark Jones

Alida Metcalf

Nicolas Shumway

Associate Professors

José F. Aranda Jr.

Alexander X. Byrd

Krista Comer

Edward L. CoxLuis

Duno-Gottberg

Farés el-Dahdah

Assistant Professors

Manuel Gutiérrez

Gisela Heffes

Cymene Howe

Moramay Lopez-Alonso

Fabiola Lopez-Duran

Lecturers

Lisa Slappey

DEGREE OFFER: BA

Latin American Studies is an interdisciplinary major designed to further understanding of the cultures, histories, and politics of Latin America as viewed from regional and global perspectives. The major draws from courses and faculty from a wide range of departments, including Anthropology, Architecture, Art History, English, French Studies, History, Hispanic Studies, and Political Science. This major provides a challenging context for students to develop core skills in interdisciplinarity, language, communication (written and oral), theory, research methodologies, and geography.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS FOR BA IN LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

LAS Majors will take courses with appropriate Latin American content at Rice or at an approved program abroad for a total of 10 courses (30 semester hours). **No fewer than 6 courses (18 semester hours) should be taken at Rice. Each major will focus on a specific region, area, or country in Latin America. This area focus will shape each student's proposed course of study. Each course of study and an area focus must be approved by the advisor to the major.** At least two of the courses must be in the humanities and two in the social sciences. Other additional requirements include:

1. One foundation course, **LASR 100** Introduction to Latin American Studies, is required of all majors. This course will both introduce and structure the major. This course will be taught in English, with discussion sections available in Spanish or Portuguese pending student interest. The course could also be team-taught by professors from different departments or even different schools.

2. **A Required Semester Abroad:** Rice LAS Majors will be required to spend at least one semester studying at a Rice-approved, semester-abroad program in which the primary language of instruction is Spanish, Portuguese, or under special circumstances

French. **Courses taken abroad may count toward completing the LAS major and toward meeting the distribution requirements in the major. Credit from these preapproved programs will automatically transfer. Study abroad courses cannot count for more than 4 courses (12 semester hours) toward the major.** While the semester abroad is ideal, under very special circumstances, the advisor to the major can approve a 12-week summer program as the equivalent of a semester, provided the program allows students to complete at least 3 three-credit courses.

3. A Required Capstone Research Colloquium: After completing the semester abroad, students will enroll in a research colloquium directed by a faculty member from either Humanities or Social Sciences. As directed by this faculty member, the Colloquium Director, students will write a research paper on a Latin American topic of their choice. During the course, students will be exposed to different research methodologies, theories appropriate to their field of study, and instruction on how best to incorporate research and sources that emerged from their study abroad. Interdisciplinary modes of research and writing will be a major feature of this colloquium. Students will be expected to highlight the interdisciplinary nature of their research in their completed paper. In addition, students in the colloquium will be expected to workshop their writing at different times during the semester. The completed research paper will be evaluated by the Colloquium Director and one other professor appropriate to the topic. With the approval of the Colloquium Director, this research paper may be written in English.

4. Required Language Competence: Rice LAS majors will be expected to demonstrate language competence at three different stages of the major:

- Prior to going abroad, students will be examined by Center for Study of Languages (CSL) faculty trained in proficiency testing to ensure that the students have adequate language competence for studying abroad—adequate at this stage meaning at least Intermediate-High according to proficiency standards set by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).
- After returning from the semester abroad, students will be tested for proficiency at the Advanced-Low level, according to ACTFL Guidelines. Proficiency at the Advanced-Low level is desirable, but not required.
- In writing the research paper mentioned above, students must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Colloquium Director their ability to do research in a foreign language.

For a complete listing of all courses offered each semester in Latin American Studies, as well as more information about LAS at Rice in general, please visit <http://arc.rice.edu>

Appendix III. Intro Course Syllabus

INTRODUCTION TO CARIBBEAN AND LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

Professors: Luis Duno Gottberg and Nicolas Shumway

I. Course Objectives

This course immerses students into Caribbean and Latin American studies by introducing them to the history, society, politics, and culture of the region, through a cross-disciplinary and multinational approach.

II. Course Description

Specific units will examine different regions –Mexico, Central America, South America and the Caribbean– focusing on salient topics.

Class will combine orientation meetings, lectures and seminary style sessions. Students will participate in one cultural excursion or a short project engaging the Latin American and Caribbean community.

III. Course Materials

(1) Hillman, Richard S. *Understanding Contemporary Latin America*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005.

(2) Skidmore, Thomas E.; Peter H. Smith. *Modern Latin America*. 6th ed., New York : Oxford University Press, 2001.

(3) Course Reader. These required readings are on electronic reserve at the Fondren Library. Students must download the readings and print them for use in class and for exam preparation. The course reader includes:

- Bolívar, Simón. "The Jamaica Letter" (1814-1815).
- Borjas, Edilberto. "The Last Act"
- Columbus, Christopher. "Letter to the Sovereigns of 4 March 1493."
- Galich, Franz. "The Rat Catcher"
- Harley, J. Brian. "Rereading the Maps of the Columbian Encounter", *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 82, No. 3 (Sept., 1992), Pgs. 522-536".
- Huntington, Samuel. "The Hispanic Challenge". Available also at: <http://media-cyber.law.harvard.edu/blogs/gems/culturalagency1/SamuelHuntingtonTheHispanicC.pdf>
- Mir, Pedro. "There is a Country in the World. A poem, sad on more than one occasion,"

Obras Completas.

- Monroe, James. "The Monroe Doctrine."
- Neruda, Pablo. "La United Fruit Co.", "Oda a la sal", "Los dictadores". *Neruda and Vallejo. Selected Poems.*
- Palenzuela, Luisa. "The Censors". *The Censors: A Bilingual Selection of Stories.*
- Roberts, Shari. "'The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat': Carmen Miranda, a Spectacle of

Ethnicity," *Cinema Journal*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Spring, 1993), Pgs. 3-23.

- Roosevelt, Theodore. "The Roosevelt Corollary"
- Rubén Darío, "Ode to Roosevelt," *Obras completas*.
- Vega, Ana Lydia. "Cloud Cover Caribbean"

(4) Required films:

- "The Last Supper" (Dir. Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1976).
- "The Official Story" (Dir. Luis Puenzo, 1985).
- "Salvador" (Dir. Oliver Stone, 1986).
- "Danzón" (Dir. María Novaro, 1991).
- "The Panama Deception" (Dir. Barbara Trent, 1992).
- "Carmen Miranda: Bananas is my Business" (Dir. Helena Solberg, 1995).
- "Life and Debt" (Dir. Stephanie Black, 2001).

IV. Evaluation

Final exam 20% Class
 participation 20% Report
 on field activity 30%
 Reading guides 30%

V. Examinations

Final exam: This exam will require the identification of key issues, historical figures, and cultural concepts. It will include an essay question that demands critical thinking and reflection on class readings, films, and discussions.

Participation: Participation is a fundamental part of this class. Regular attendance is required and implies ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT in class discussions and activities. All readings and film viewings are mandatory. Some quizzes based on the readings will be factored into the participation grade. If missed, reading quizzes cannot be made up except in cases of excused absences.

Absences due to illness or other acceptable reasons will be excused upon immediate presentation of proper verification. NO MAKE-UP EXAMS will be given without a valid excuse for the student's absence. More than two un-excused absences will lower the course grade by one-half letter grade per additional absence.

Report on field activity: In consultation with the professor, students will write a 8 to 10 pages report on their experience with an organization devoted to the Latin American or Caribbean community in Houston. You may choose to spend a day learning about an NGO or a cultural group. The report must describe the group you partnered with, the way it operates, and the value of your personal experience. Expand on your expectations previous to the meeting vs. what really happened. This activity can be conceived as a one-day meeting where you interact with members of the community.

Reading guides:

For some readings, students must complete a brief guide. Responses will be supplemented by class discussion and the guide must be turned in at the end of our meeting.

