Latin American studies (LAST) is an interdisciplinary program designed to provide an integrated view of Mesoamerica, South America, and the Caribbean. This interdisciplinary approach is complemented by concentration in a specific department. A student who completes the program will receive a degree in Latin American studies with concentration in a particular department. A double major in the department of concentration is an option for Latin American studies majors.

Faculty

Robert T. Conn
BA, Dartmouth College; PHD, Princeton University
Associate Professor of Spanish; Chair, Latin American Studies; Associate Professor, Latin American Studies

Melanie Khamis
BS, London School of Economics and Political Science; MS, University of Warwick; PHD, London School of Economics and Political Science
Associate Professor of Economics; Associate Professor, Latin American Studies

Valeria López Fadul
BA, Yale University; MA, Princeton University; PHD, Princeton University
Assistant Professor of History; Assistant Professor, Latin American Studies

James W. McGuire
BA, Swarthmore College; MA, University of California, Berkeley; PHD, University of California, Berkeley
Professor of Government; Professor, Latin American Studies

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BA, Brown University; MA, Harvard University; PHD, Harvard University
Assistant Professor of Spanish; Assistant Professor, Latin American Studies

Paula C. Park
BA, Rutgers, the State University; MA, University of Texas Austin; PHD, University of Texas Austin
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Affiliated Faculty

Michael Armstrong Roche
BA, Harvard University; MA, Harvard University; PHD, Harvard University
Associate Professor of Spanish; Associate Professor, Medieval Studies; Associate Professor, Latin American Studies

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BMU, New England Conservatory of Mu; MFA, Princeton University; MMU, New England Conservatory of Mu; PHD, Princeton University
Professor of Music; Professor, Latin American Studies; Co-Coordinator, African Studies

Elizabeth McAlister
BA, Vassar College; MA, Yale University; MA, Yale University; MPHIL, Yale University; PHD, Yale University

Departmental Advising Expert

Robert Conn

- Undergraduate Latin American Studies Major (catalog.wesleyan.edu/departments/last/ugrd-last)

LAST127 Catholicism and Ideology in the Hispanic World
Catholicism has played a number of roles in the cultural politics of the Hispanic world, appearing as a place of national being, resistance, and conservatism. In this course, we will read a number of texts from different periods and national contexts with a view to understanding how writers and intellectuals from Spain, Latin America, and the U.S. engage with Catholicism and the historical conditions under which they do so.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-LAST
Identical With: RELI127, FIST127
Prereq: None

LAST200 Colonialism and Its Consequences in the Americas
Why does colonialism matter to the fields of American studies, Latin American studies, and Caribbean studies? What have been the consequences of colonialism for the nations that make up the Western Hemisphere? This course offers a transnational, hemispheric approach to the study of the Americas through a comparative analysis of colonial ventures and their consequences. With a focus on the interactions of Indigenous, European, and African peoples, the course introduces diverse theoretical and methodological approaches to a range of issues and topics. We examine the distinctions between franchise colonialism and settler colonialism; the organization of production, including state labor systems, chattel slavery, and indenture; governance and colonial bureaucracies; the formation of colonial cultures, the emergence of race as a social category, and the ascendancy of white supremacy; independence movements and the emergence of nation-states; and contemporary indigenous politics and decolonization struggles.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-AMST
Identical With: AMST200
Prereq: None

LAST211 Living the Latin American City: Urban History, Politics, and Culture
This course offers an introduction to modern Latin American cities, exploring how the region’s urban spaces—including sprawling megalopolises like Mexico City and Rio de Janeiro—have been made and re-envisioned by elite and poor inhabitants alike. Approaching urban space and everyday life as a terrain of political and social negotiation as well as cultural ferment, the course traces the growth of Latin American cities through case studies that examine themes...
including colonialism, citizenship, migration, inequality, and social movements, and the tensions between state planning and informality. We also consider how the urban experience shaped intellectuals’ and artists’ efforts to chronicle, represent, and reimagine the Latin American city in essays, photography, and film.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST112
Prereq: None

LAST217 Resisting Racism, Extraction, and Dispossession in the Americas
This course looks at land-based social movements as responses to the legacies of empire and colonialism. We will begin with an overview of the ideologies of economic and political “progress” that justified the dispossession of indigenous and racialized groups in the Americas. Then we will turn away from the logic of imperial domination to consider alternative forms of knowledge and practice that posit new relationships between nature and society. Of special focus will be a range of ethnographies of land-based movements including the Zapatistas, Garfuna, and MST (Movimiento Sem Terra) as well as feminist, indigenous, and antiracist theories informed by the forms of resistance and decolonization that we have studied.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-ANTH
Identical With: ANTH217
Prereq: None

LAST219 Latin American Economic Development
In this course, we try to understand the puzzle of differential economic development of Latin America as a region and its countries in particular. Our lens of analysis is employing economic tools but also draws on other disciplines such as history and sociology. The course covers a broad range of economics and introduces you to aspects of macroeconomics, microeconomics, international economics, labor and development economics. Initially, we will study different ways to measure development in Latin America. We will then begin our journey to identify reasons and causes for various development outcomes of the Latin American region and differential economic success and failure of specific countries. In the first half of the semester we will examine the historical background and endowments, policies of export-led growth and import-substitution, the debt crisis and the subsequent stabilization. We will cover the financial crisis of the late 1990s and the early 2000s. Then we will turn our focus to the recent years and challenges to economics growth in Latin America and Latin American countries. Here, we will assess trade, investment climate, poverty, and inequality in the region. The situation and policies addressing the informal economy, education and health in Latin America will be discussed in detail. Thereafter, we will analyze gender and ethnicity in the context of Latin American development.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-ECON
Identical With: ECON261
Prereq: ECON101 OR ECON110

LAST220 20th-Century Franco-Caribbean Literature and the Search for Identity
This course investigates how 20th-century Francophone literature from the Caribbean defines Caribbean identity. Through a study of literary texts, films, and paintings from Guadeloupe, Martinique, Haiti, Guyana, and Louisiana, we will explore the evolution of Caribbean self-definition, focusing on the major concepts of Negritude, Antillanite, Creolite, and Louisianitude.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: COL225, FREN225, AFAM223, AMST226
Prereq: None

LAST226 Spanish American Literature and Civilization
A close study of texts from the colonial period to the present will serve as the basis for a discussion of some of the major writers and intellectuals in Latin America, including Las Casas, Sor Juana, Bolívar, Sarmiento, Martí, Mariátegui, Neruda, Borges, García Márquez, and Bolaño. Special emphasis will be placed on issues related to culture and politics. For purposes of understanding context, students will also read selected chapters from works by historians and cultural critics and will watch several films.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: SPAN270
Prereq: None

LAST232 Dialogue of Poets: Classical and 20th-Century Poetry in Spain and Latin America
This course samples the rich tradition of Spanish-language verse from its beginnings to the present. It is organized around four primary dialogues: (1) the creative reception by leading 20th-century poets from Spain and Latin America (e.g., Neruda, Lorca, Machado, Borges, Paz, Rossetti) of classical poets (Saint John of the Cross, Góngora, Quevedo, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz); (2) the interplay of poetry and essays by those same poets; (3) the round-trip fertilization of popular and elite, oral and written forms of poetry; and (4) the crossing of linguistic, ethnic, religious, and gender boundaries that has shaped Spanish-language verse from its beginnings as love lyrics embedded in Hebrew and Arabic poems (jarchas) to the creative stimulus of other Romance languages (especially Galician and Catalan) in Spain, through Latin American poets open to Amerindian and African influences, and Hispanic-American poets exploring bilingualism in the U.S. We will read lyric, epic, and burlesque verse on a wide variety of themes (mysticism, sex, history, reason, travel, love, politics, sensory perception, death, and poetry itself); reflect on how poetry can best be enjoyed and understood; and consider how poetry has been produced, heard, read, and used (ritual and spontaneous song; minstrel performance of epic and ballads; courtly patronage, literary academies, and manuscript circulation; private reading of printed texts and commodification; and 20th-century singer-songwriter musical settings and politics). Although no prior expertise in poetry is expected, a willingness to engage it closely (textually and historically) is essential.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: SPAN232, COL226
Prereq: None

LAST240 Development, the Environment, and Society in Latin America
Few issues have defined Latin America’s modern history so much as the region’s quest for economic development. But the impetus to "develop" has a much longer history of natural resource extraction and directed social change. Policies and practices regarding land use and labor, then, have shaped economic development, the environment, and social and political life in the region to the present.
In this seminar we will ask what the historical relationships are between development, natural resources, and society in Latin America from the onset of European colonialism in the 15th century through state- and private-led improvement policies in the 20th century. Specific themes we will consider include: How have policies affected the sustainability of land use in the last five centuries? Has the impetus for development, beginning in the 19th century and reaching its current intensity in the mid-20th, shifted ideas and practices of sustainability in both environmental and social terms? And, more broadly, what has been the historical relationship between humans and their environment in Latin America? We will consider primary and secondary sources covering periods from pre-Columbian times to the late-20th century, and regions from Mexico to South America to the Caribbean.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-LAST
Prereq: None

LAST241 Asian Latino Encounters: Imagining Asia in Hispanic America
This course will explore the distinctive, and overlooked, Asian connection in Hispanic-American cultures: the fascinating literatures, songs, paintings, and films about "Asian Latinos" in Spanish America, the U.S., and the Philippines, a Spanish colony for more than three centuries that developed its own Spanish-language literature after 1898--in part as a response to the subsequent Americanization of the Philippines. We will begin examining "Orientalist," or exoticizing, views of Asian culture and Asian women of early 20th-century Spanish American and Filipino writers (such as Dario, Tablada, and Jesus Balmori). Then, we will assess travel writings produced across the Pacific--from Mexico to India (Paz), from Chile to Southeast Asia (Heruda), and from the Philippines to Chile (Elizabeth Medina). Finally, we will examine diverse works by writers/artists of Asian descent in Hispanic America. Some of the questions we will address are, How has the view of Asia or Asians changed throughout the past century in Hispanic America? How does Philippine literature in Spanish change our conception of Latinidad? By looking at the trans-Pacific reach of the Hispanic, we will be in a better position to appreciate the complexity of the cultural, social, and political legacies of Spanish and U.S. colonialism.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: SPAN285
Prereq: None

LAST245 Modern Latin America Since 1810
This lecture course explores some of the main themes of Latin America’s modern history from the beginning of the independence movements in the 19th century until the present day. In particular, it traces the contentious processes of state-formation and the creation of national and regional identities. Governments, elites, and popular movements fought over questions of race, economic development, and inequality in their attempts to formulate a particular vision of the nation. We will contextualize these struggles in global economic transformations and pay particular attention to the rise of the United States as force in the region.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST245
Prereq: None

LAST247 Caribbean Writers in the U.S. Diaspora
The Caribbean cloaks a complex history in a Club Med exterior. While white sands and palm trees proclaim it the "antidote to civilization," Caribbean writers undertake to represent a fuller picture of the individual in a world shaped by colonialism, slavery, nationalism, and cultural striving. This course will examine selected literary texts as part of an ongoing dialogue among the region’s history, mythology, and aesthetics.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL243, AFAM243, AMST247
Prereq: None

LAST252 Race and Nation in Latin America
How does race operate in Latin America, and in what ways does it intersect with the concept of nation and national belonging? The regions we call Latin America and the Caribbean have, since the first human encounter between "Old" and "New" Worlds of the 15th century, been often understood as places of mixture--both cultural and biological. From at least the early 19th century, when independent nations in the region began to emerge from colonial rule, intellectuals, statesmen, and citizens alike have had to contend with "race" and its inextricable connection to the concept of "nation." This course aims to introduce students to the history of race and national formation in Latin America and the Caribbean, from the wake of the independence movements of the early 19th century to the present. It draws on historical, anthropological, and literary approaches to identifying, analyzing, and interpreting the varied meanings of race and nation throughout the region.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-LAST
Prereq: None

LAST254 Tales of Resistance: Modernity and the Latin American Short Story
Latin American writers from the early 20th century forward have regarded the short story as a vehicle through which to make their mark and engage the great cultural issues of the day. Jorge Luis Borges and Julio Cortazar, two of Latin America’s most well-known literary figures, dedicated their careers almost exclusively to the genre. In this course, as we consider the privileged status of the short story in Latin American letters, we will examine the ways in which writers have used the genre to comment on important aspects of modernization, both within and outside their respective countries. Some of those aspects will concern the Mexican Revolution, bourgeois and mass culture, nationalism, globalization, and immigration to Europe and the U.S.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: SPAN284
Prereq: None
LAST257 Mexican History and Visual Culture from Conquest to the Present
This course offers an introduction to Mexico's history from the conquest of indigenous empires to the present, paying special attention to how images and visual culture—from the Virgin of Guadalupe to patriotic parades to lucha libre—not only reflected, but also shaped, Mexican society and its political development. Through this lens, we explore the construction and unraveling of the colonial system, the emergence of the nation, the upheaval of the first major social revolution of the 20th century and its aftermath, and contemporary events. In addition to providing an introduction to major historical phenomena and debates, this course also familiarizes students with methods for using visual materials to understand and interpret the past.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST297
Prereq: None

LAST258 Simón Bolívar: The Politics of Monument Building
No figure has been seized upon more as a symbol of cultural and political unity in Latin America than the liberator Simón Bolívar. In this course, we will examine not only the case of contemporary Venezuela with its cult-like tradition but also several of the countless appropriations of Bolivar that have occurred across the Americas and in Europe in the 180 years since his death. From the Cuban José Martí to the Colombian García Márquez, from the Spaniard Miguel de Unamuno to the U.S. socialist Waldo Frank, from, to be sure, the powerful tradition of the Latin America essay with its identity politics to the U.S.-led Pan Americanism of the 1920s, '30s, and '40s, Bolivar has been made to serve complex and important functions in discourse about national and continental identity. To consider all this, we will study a number of rewritings of Bolivar's life and works, focusing on the dynamic process in which literary, cultural, and political traditions have been formed around him, while giving special attention to issues bearing on race, gender, and modernization. A wide range of texts will be examined, including letters, essays, poems, novels, screenplays, and films.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: SPAN286
Prereq: [SPAN270 or LAST226] OR SPAN221 OR [SPAN250 or COL219]

LAST259 The Intercultural Stage: Migration and the Performing Arts in the Hispanic World
Hybridity, heterogeneity, transnationalism, and interculturalism are just a few of the terms that have proliferated within the marketplace of ideas over the past several years as reflections, from within the field of critical theory, of one of the contemporary world's dominant social realities: the massive displacement of peoples across borders and the creation of constricted multicultural zones of interaction and conflict within the confines of single nations. The Spanish-speaking world has been affected by this phenomenon in particular ways, in both Spain and North America. In this course, we will study how Spanish, Mexican, and Chicano playwrights and stage artists working in various genres have responded to this reality, how and why they have chosen to craft the collective experience of the border as performance, and how they have addressed the cultural and political tensions that are associated with this experience. The framework for our study will be comparative in both content and format. We will focus on two borders—the Strait of Gibraltar and the Rio Grande (Río Bravo)—and on the two corresponding migratory experiences: from North and sub-Saharan Africa into Spain, and from Latin America into the U.S. This course will be taught simultaneously at Wesleyan and at the Universidad Carlos III in Madrid, Spain. When possible, classes will be linked through videoconferencing. Wesleyan students will collaborate with their counterparts in Spain on various projects and presentations. In general, this course is designed to help students develop skills of critical analysis while increasing their Spanish language proficiency and intercultural awareness.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: THEA238, SPAN258
Prereq: None

LAST265 Multilingual Aesthetics in Latin America
This course examines writings by Latin American authors who are multilingual or have an intercultural awareness as a result of colonization, cosmopolitanism, migration, or bicultural upbringing. First, students will learn about a variety of Spanish American movements, such as "modernismo," "creacionismo," "negritud," "indigenismo," "neoindigenismo," and "indianismo," all of which dialogued with diverse cultures and languages other than Spanish. Then, we will examine a series of collaborative projects, such as a quadrilingual poem co-written by Octavio Paz (Mexico), Jacques Roubaud (France), Edoardo Sanguineti (Italy), and Charles Tomlinson (UK); a selection of English-Spanish poems by Marjorie Evasco (Philippines) and Alex Fleites (Cuba); and the "Festival de poesía: lenguas de América," a bi-annual event that gathers poets from diverse multilingual regions in the Americas. Lastly, we will examine literary and scholarly work by/about Latin American writers of indigenous descent, as well as works in Spanish, English, and "Spanglish" by Chicano, U.S. Latino, and Filipino American writers. Throughout the semester students will reflect on how multilingualism can serve as a medium for aesthetic experimentation, intercultural dialogue, and/or political resistance. All discussions will be held in Spanish, and all readings will be in their original Spanish or in Spanish/English translation.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: SPAN275
Prereq: None

LAST266 Latin American Theater and Performance
This course will focus on the history, theory, and practice of theater and performance in Latin America in the 20th century. We will be particularly interested in the intercultural aspects of Latin American theater and performance that have reinvented and reinvigorated European dramatic forms through their constant interaction with non-Western cultural expressions in the Americas. We will examine a wide variety of performance practices, including avant-garde theater, community theater, street performance and agitprop, solo, and collective theater. The syllabus is loosely organized in a chronological fashion, structured more importantly around critical themes in Latin American history, culture, and society in the 20th century. We will take as our primary source material both readings and video recordings, when available, that will be supplemented by a wide variety of historical, critical, and theoretical background readings, including texts written by theater practitioners, theorists, and critics.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: SPAN279, THEA297
Prereq: None

LAST268 Anthropology of Black Religions in the Americas
This course examines Afro-Creole religions and cultural expressions in selected communities throughout the Atlantic world. How were religious communities created under colonial domination? Under what conditions were religions shaped, and what shapes did they take? How are African-based religions produced through aesthetics and the ritual arts of spiritual talk and sermons, song, dance, drumming, and medicine-making? How do these religions continue to survive, thrive, and, in some cases, grow in the current historical period?
This course will pay special attention to the yearly ritual cycle and its attendant festivals: Christmas, carnivals, Lent, Easter, saints’ days, feasts, and pilgrimages, as well as the emergent spiritual and aesthetic traditions such as Capoeira and Rara. We will study Orisha religions such as La Regla de Ocha, or Lukumi, in Cuba and the Latino U.S.; Candomble in Brazil; Vodou in Haiti; and Garifuna traditions and spiritism in Puerto Rico.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: RELI268, AFAM387, ANTH267
Prereq: None

LAST270 Modern Technologies in Latin American Literature
Modern communication technologies and modes of transportation have been a recurrent theme in works of Latin American writers from the 20th and 21st centuries. For example, radio was a significant source of inspiration for avant-garde Mexican poets Manuel Maples Arce and Luis Quintanilla in the 1920s; they both tried to capture the uncanny experience of hearing disembodied human voices through writing. In this class, we will discuss texts that likewise reflect on the effects of various modern means of transport and communication—such as trains, subways, radio, telephone, tape recording, and the internet—with an emphasis on how these technologies have revolutionized human relations. We will examine how these literary works exceed the aesthetic or sociopolitical norms of their time, while keeping in mind that the simple act of writing is also a form of technology, and often a transgressive one.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: SPAN271
Prereq: None

LAST271 Political Economy of Developing Countries
This course explores the political economy of development, with a special focus on poverty reduction. We discuss the meaning of development, compare Latin American to East Asian development strategies (focusing on Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, South Korea, and Taiwan), examine poverty-reduction initiatives in individual countries (including Bangladesh, Chile, and Tanzania), and evaluate approaches to famine prevention and relief. Throughout the course, we pay close attention to the role of procedural democracy, gender relations, market forces, and public action in promoting or inhibiting development.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-GOVT
Identical With: CEAS271, GOVT271
Prereq: None

LAST272 Cubanidad: Diaspora, Exiles, and Cultural Identity in Cuban Literature and Film
This course will examine shifting notions of Cubanness, or “cubanidad,” from the 19th century to the present times from a diasporic framework. We will discuss writings by/about African slaves, Chinese indentured laborers and migrants, and Spanish immigrants in Cuba, as well as Cuban exiles in the U.S. and Spain from the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century. Through a variety of literary texts and films, we will then study select cases of European exiles who visited Cuba in the 1930s and ’40s, the later massive waves of Cuban migration to the U.S. after the Revolution, and the more recent immigrants who have settled in Cuba.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN

Identical With: SPAN272
Prereq: None

LAST273 Beyond Machu Picchu and Macondo: Real and Imaginary Worlds in Latin American Letters
Latin American writers and intellectuals have long conceived of their particular literary and cultural practices in connection to individual spaces and sites, both real and imagined. In this course we will examine why and how they have done so, looking not only at well-known if not legendary ones such as Machu Picchu and Macondo, invented, respectively, by Neruda and García Márquez in certain moments of their careers, but also the América and Gran Colombia of Simón Bolívar, the New York City of the Cuban intellectual José Martí (1880s) and of the Nuyorican writer Tato Laviera (1970s), and César Aira’s Colón (Panamá) and Fernando Vallejo’s Medellín (Colombia). In each case we will be concerned with understanding the relationship between local, national, and hemispheric history and the new imaginarios created by the author/intellectual in question in the context of north-south relations. Topics to be considered within this critical framework will include the Wars of Independence, industrialization in the late 19th-century, the construction of the Panama Canal (1904—1914), the Cold War (1947—1991), Latino identity in the context of Puerto Rico and New York City, the coup d’état in Chile on September 11, 1973, and the drug wars. When possible, films and short videos will be used to help build knowledge of historical context.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: SPAN273
Prereq: None

LAST276 Body, Voice, Text: Theater and the Transmission of Experience
This course is an exploration of the ways in which nature has been plotted in fiction, films, and popular culture, focusing on the tropical jungle, a space that has been central to the way Latin America has been imagined for centuries. We will consider the construction of the Nuyorican writer Tato Laviera (1970s), and César Aira’s Colón (Panamá) and Fernando Vallejo’s Medellín (Colombia). In each case we will be concerned with understanding the relationship between local, national, and hemispheric history and the new imaginarios created by the author/intellectual in question in the context of north-south relations. Topics to be considered within this critical framework will include the Wars of Independence, industrialization in the late 19th-century, the construction of the Panama Canal (1904—1914), the Cold War (1947—1991), Latino identity in the context of Puerto Rico and New York City, the coup d’état in Chile on September 11, 1973, and the drug wars. When possible, films and short videos will be used to help build knowledge of historical context.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: SPAN276
Prereq: None

LAST277 Dangerous Plots: Fictions of the Latin American Jungle
This course is an exploration of the ways in which nature has been plotted in fiction, films, and popular culture, focusing on the tropical jungle, a space that has been central to the way Latin America has been imagined for centuries. We will investigate the construction of jungle as a cultural space where diverse anxieties about sovereignty, nationhood, race, development, gender, and subversion collide. We will evaluate this toposography in relation to diverse projects of modernization and development, to the global angst over the environment and its destruction, to peasant and indigenous agency, and to a number of cultural and economic struggles that have shaped the region over the past century. Attention will be placed on literary, filmic, and visual texts.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
LAST280 Screening Youth in Contemporary Latin American Cinema

This course will examine some of the most important Latin American films to emerge in the past three decades that have cast children and teenagers as protagonists. We will analyze a large body of films that address issues of historical memory, economic inequality, social conflict, political activism, education, sexuality, cultural identity, and citizenship through the lens of the child or adolescent. These films question the roles of minors in relation to the political arena and reflect upon the constructions of childhood that operate at a social level with important political implications. Students will explore the aesthetic and social dynamics at play in the representation of young protagonists and develop interpretative filmic skills through an exploration of the connections between the technical composition of the works and the social, political, and cultural contexts that they address. Besides the varied cultural, theoretical, formal, and historical elements that this course will examine, one of the central components is a creative module in which students will develop an idea for a short film based on their own personal coming-of-age narrative.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: SPAN280
Prereq: None

LAST281 “Islas sonantes”: Music and Sound Technologies in Hispanic Caribbean Literature

Cuban author Alejo Carpentier once stated that the Antilles (the Caribbean islands) could easily be referred to as “Islas sonantes” (sounding islands) because of their strong musical tradition. Music, according to him, is their common denominator. Inspired by this statement and extending it, in this course we will examine the role of music, as well as other sound and vocal productions in Hispanic Caribbean literature from the end of the 19th century to the present. Through close readings, we will reflect on how music and other sound media or communication devices (such as radio, audio recordings, sound magnification, and telephone) have helped reconceptualize social identities, notions of time and space, and human interaction. We will also look at their, at times, ideological, political, or purely aesthetic functions. No knowledge of music or sound technologies is required for this course.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: SPAN281
Prereq: None

LAST283 Literature and Culture of Peru

This course offers a panoramic study of the Andean nation from pre-Colombian times to the present with a focus on seminally polemic issues such as intercultural hybridity, ethnic and political violence, colonialism, postcolonialism, indigenismo, and modernity and beyond. We will study a wide variety of authors’ takes on how to approach and understand Peru’s multietnic and multilingual heritage. Readings include poetry, short stories, novels, essays, theater, and critical theory.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: SPAN283
Prereq: None

LAST285 Narratives of Crisis: Violence and Representation in Contemporary Latin American Culture

How have Latin American literature, film, and performance of the past three decades articulated the many forms of violence in a region facing complex armed conflicts, wars deployed around the drug trade, and diverse forms of political unrest? Focusing on Colombia, Peru, Central America, and Mexico, we will investigate how contemporary cultural artifacts reflect on the linguistic, ethical, and social dimensions of subjectivity in times of crisis and provide productive analytical frameworks to examine violence, history, and memory in the region.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: SPAN282
Prereq: None

LAST291 From the Muralists to the Narconovela: The Public Intellectual in Mexico

Mexican writers, intellectuals, and artists, both male and female, have long been recognized for the brilliance with which they have used their work to comment on and shape the direction of the Mexican state and to engage with the multiple traditions (indigenous, European, and mestizo) that define them. In this course, we will examine the writings and artistic and filmic work of several major figures with the goal of understanding how they see and imagine Mexico in particular historical moments. The course will cover the entirety of the 20th-century and the beginning of the 21st, extending from the Mexican Revolution (1910–1917) and the Muralists (1920s–40s), through the post-1945 period including 1968, and to the drug wars and the Zapatista movement (since 1994). Students will analyze novels, essays, art, poetry, and film.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: SPAN290
Prereq: None

LAST292 Spanish American ‘Modernismo’ in a Global Context

The publication of Nicaraguan Rubén Darío’s AZUL... in 1888 is often considered to be the inaugural event of “modernismo,” the first Spanish-language literary movement that originated in Spanish America and spread thereafter throughout the Hispanophone world. In March 1916, about a month after Darío’s death, a magazine in the Philippines claimed that Darío also belonged—at least “spiritually”—to the Philippines. Inspired by this statement, in this course students will read poems, short stories, and crónicas (short journalistic articles) by canonical Spanish American modernista writers, such as Darío, Julián del Casal, José Martí, Amado Nervo, José Enrique Rodó, Leopoldo Lugones, and Delmira Agustini, in conjunction with Filipino modernistas, including Fernando Maria Guerrero, Jesús Balmori, Manuel Bernabé, and Evangelina Guerrero. We will also read a selection of works of Spanish writers, such as Salvador Rueda, who visited Cuba and the Philippines in the 1910s. Some of the salient characteristics of modernismo that we will cover are the rejection of immediate reality and materialism, the search for linguistic renovation and cosmic harmony, and the celebration of Hispanism. When focusing on this last aspect, we will assess how modernismo helped to keep Spanish America connected not only to Spain but also to the Philippines, which became a U.S. territory in 1898, alongside Cuba and Puerto Rico. Thus, we will explore to what extent modernista writers responded to the spread of U.S. imperialism.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RLAN
Identical With: SPAN291
Prereq: None
LAST296 Colonial Latin America
This course studies the history of Latin America and the Caribbean from pre-conquest times to the emergence of independence movements in the early 19th century. Lectures will explore the key environmental, cultural, economic, political, and religious transformations that shaped colonial societies throughout the region. Beginning with the formation of indigenous and Iberian polities before 1492, we will consider how early modern colonial governance functioned and evolved throughout the period of Spanish and Portuguese rule in the Americas. Through an array of primary and secondary sources we will reconstruct the lived experiences of a diversity of actors across the colonial world. We will pay particular attention to the methods and approaches that scholars have used to understand the history of the region.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST296
Prereq: None

LAST302 Latin American Politics
This course explores democracy, development, and revolution in Latin America, with special attention to Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, and Nicaragua. Questions to be addressed include, Why has Argentina lurched periodically from free-wheeling democracy to murderous military rule? Why is authoritarianism usually less harsh, but democracy more often shallow, in Brazil than in Argentina? How democratic are Latin America’s contemporary democracies? What accounts for the success or failure of attempted social revolutions in Latin America? Why did post-revolutionary Cuba wind up with a more centrally planned economy and a more authoritarian political system than post-revolutionary Nicaragua? How much progress has each of these countries made toward creating a more affluent, educated, healthy, and equitable society?
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-GOV
Identical With: GOVT302
Prereq: None

LAST306 Liberation Theology and Pentecostalism in the Americas and Africa
This course tackles the question: If liberation theology advocates a preferential option for the poor, why do the poor in Africa and the Americas often choose evangelical Protestantism? For evangelical Christianity, the common good is a by-product of the righteous lives of believers as they enact the outward signs of personal salvation. This course examines both religious thought and analysis of various Christianities of the Americas and Africa, with particular attention to the ways religious thinkers and communities grapple with and resolve questions of human rights, evangelizing race, and structural inequalities that arise in the recent era of globalization and neoliberal capitalism. Other topics will include the prosperity gospel, the growth of Christian NGOs, gender and machismo, and spiritual warfare. Case studies will include readings on the U.S., Colombia, Brazil, Haiti, and Zimbabwe.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: RELI279
Prereq: None

LAST308 Greater Latin America: Ideas, Politics, and Culture in the Americas
What is “Latin America,” who are “Latin Americans” and what is the relationship among and between places and people of the region we call Latin America, on the one hand, and the greater Latin diaspora in the US on the other? This course will explore the history of Latin America as an idea, and the cultural, social, political, and economic connections among peoples on both sides of the southern and eastern borders of the United States. The course will draw from a variety of sources, including literature, visual arts, music, and oral history. Topics we will consider include the origin of the concept of “Latin” America, Inter-Americanism and Pan-Americanism, transnational social movements and intellectual exchanges, migration, and identity politics.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-LAST
Prereq: None

LAST309 Territory, Community, and Identity in the Americas
How does a place shape community social relations? And in what ways do peoples’ relationships to natural resources and the built environment shape their political identities? This course will explore these questions by focusing on particular case studies in the Western Hemisphere. We will consider the ways in which communities are tethered to a particular idea of territory, whether they be “fugitives,” “runaways,” “natives,” or “immigrants.” The cases we will explore include quilombos and palenques comprised of people who escaped enslavement in Portuguese and Spanish America, indigenous communities forged before, during, and after colonization by Europeans, and newfound communities or colonies comprised of relatively recent (im)migrants.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-LAST
Prereq: None

LAST314 When Words Collide: Narratives of Conquest
On April 21, 1519, Hernán Cortés, 550 Spanish soldiers and sailors, and 16 horses (the first to tread on the American continent) dropped anchor near the island of San Juan de Ulúa, off the coast of Mexico. The chain of events that this arrival set into motion culminated in the conquest of Mexico and Spanish colonization of Latin America. But there are many sides to any story. Often, one is celebrated, retold, and written down—it becomes history. Intentionally or unintentionally, others are suppressed, obscured, or forgotten. In this course, we will use primary and secondary sources, including written and pictorial documents, to compare multiple sides of this particular story: Spaniards’ accounts of conquests in Mexico and Guatemala and various indigenous narratives of these invasions.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-ANTH
Identical With: ANTH304
Prereq: None

LAST320 Media and Power in Latin America: From Quipus to Twitter
This interdisciplinary seminar explores how media technologies have shaped Latin American societies and politics from the colonial encounter to the dawn of the digital age. Investigating the local histories of indigenous forms such as the Andean knotted quipu and scribal texts, along with newspapers, radio, photography and social media, we examine how Latin Americans made and used these technologies to assert power, claim status, and launch protests. Through brief theoretical readings and historical case studies, we explore such themes as the relationship between colonialism and the written word, the enduring legacy of alternative indigenous literacies, the importance of rumor and oral communication in societies with low literacy rates, and the role of mass media in identity formation and contemporary social movements.
Structured in part as a lab, the class will be organized around producing a physical and digital exhibition of Latin American media materials available in Wesleyan’s collections, to be displayed for the broader university community and beyond. We will produce this exhibition over the course of the semester, integrating individual research projects into our broader collective project.
that will be conducted as a collaborative/team effort. Along the way we will experiment with hands-on activities that might include making quill pens, setting type, and operating a printing press, take field trips to examine rare media materials first hand, and learn from on-campus experts as we develop our public exhibition.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST321
Prereq: None

LAST322 Exploration, Conquest, and Insurrection: The History of the Amazon 1542 to Present
Dark, wild, primitive, Edenic and infinitely wealthy: the Amazon has been many things in many times and places. From the disgruntled Spanish conquistadors who first traversed the jungle’s rivers in search of cinnamon, to the 19th-century scientific expeditions of enlightened explorers, to contemporary environmentalists, the Amazon remains a mysterious object of inquiry. It still incites the imagination of travelers, filmmakers, and politicians alike. This seminar investigates the multiple ways in which the Amazon and its peoples have been portrayed in chronicles, scientific writings, and film. We will confront the historical circumstances, motives and ideologies that prompted each of these depictions and how, in turn, they shaped the colonization of the region. We will pay close attention to genre, and to themes such as cross-cultural encounter, imperialism, and the representation of indigenous societies. We begin in 1542 with the chronicle of Francisco de Orellana. As the first Spaniard to navigate the entire length of the Amazon River, Orellana influenced how Europeans imagined the jungle well into the 19th century. Subsequently, we apply readings in history of science and anthropological theory to Claude Lévi-Strauss account of Amazonian tribes in Tristes Tropiques (1955). Students will then conduct independent research into a representation of their interest. Possible topics include scientific expeditions in the region, the jungle and modernization, global warming, or human rights. Finally, we will reflect on the Amazon as a metaphor for the human condition with Werner Herzog’s film Fitzcarraldo (1982).

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST322
Prereq: None

LAST335 Nature, Science, and Empire in Early Latin America
This seminar will introduce students to a diversity of scientific practices that flourished in the Hispanic World between 1400 and 1800. We will begin by analyzing how a debate known as the “polemic of Spanish Science,” together with the Black Legend conditioned the ways in which colonial Latin American science was traditionally approached. From available studies we will then survey some of the significant contributions to botany, astronomy, medicine, and metallurgy of Mesoamerican and Andean civilizations. From there we will read an array of primary and secondary sources in order to reconstruct the varied, and often eclectic knowledge gathering and knowledge making practices that missionaries, humanists, and crown-officials devised to understand the natural world. We will pay close attention to their particular goals and methods and the manner in which they were influenced by the encounter with foreign peoples, the dynamics of conquest and colonization, the movement of books and commodities, and institutions of censorship and patronage.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST335
Prereq: None

LAST340 Performing Brazil: The Postdictatorship Generation
The course takes as its point of departure a close and critical reading of modernist Oswald de Andrade’s “Cannibalist Manifesto” (1928) and the writings of artists working during and after the dictatorship years. As the semester progresses, the course will examine postdictatorship works in film, music, literature, the fine arts, dance, and theater. Students will have access to examples in the form of texts in translation, images, and performance recordings. Discussions will focus on the relationship between Brazil’s postcolonial condition and political history, including the country’s current artistic production and sense of national identity.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-THEA
Identical With: FIST340, THEA340
Prereq: None

LAST341 Labor and Development Economics in Latin America
This course will look specifically at the literature of labor markets and related human capital accumulation in Latin America, which has emerged as an entirely separate area of research in recent years. A large part of this literature in Latin American economic development focuses on urban labor markets, health, and education. The focus of this literature is often on various subsets of the population such as gender and different ethnic groups or rural/urban population. Economic and social policies and external shocks to the local environment will be of particular interest to understand their impact on local economic outcomes. The focus will be foremost on Latin America and cities in Latin America and drawing at times on evidence from across the world for comparison with the Latin America region.

Students will read recent economic research papers, drawing on journal articles and policy papers in this area, and discuss the theoretical and empirical results from research and its implication for economic policy. Students are expected to actively present and discuss research results and work on individual or group projects. Basic quantitative methods will be taught throughout the course, relating to economic research papers, and the course will also draw on the resources provided by the Quantitative Analysis Center (QAC).

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-ECON
Identical With: ENVVS241, ECON218
Prereq: ECON101 OR ECON110

LAST344 The Haitian Revolution Beyond Borders
In 1791, enslaved people rose up against their masters in the French colony of Saint-Domingue, at the time the most profitable plantation society in the world. Thirteen years later, their efforts would culminate in the declaration of independence of Haiti, a nation founded on the pillars of antislavery, anticolonialism, and racial equality. This course investigates the regional and global significance of this revolution through its interconnections with Haiti’s neighbors in the Caribbean and across Latin America. First, we will look at the immediate implications of Haiti’s founding for the fate of New World slavery during the Age of Revolutions. Next, we will consider Haiti’s long-term impact on national identities, racial formations, and future revolutionary struggles in the Americas over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-LAST
Identical With: AFAM344
Prereq: None
LAST348 Urban Histories of Latin America
Cities have occupied Latin American writers, artists, and scholars since the early decades of the sixteenth century. Mapped on to preexisting settlements of indigenous importance, colonial cities became the center of Iberian administration in the New World. They imparted justice, granted citizenship rights, set the standard of civility and religious orthodoxy, and held the promise of economic improvement. The preeminence of cities in Latin America continued into the modern period. Mexico, Buenos Aires, and Rio de Janeiro became opulent and unequal metropolitan centers in the nineteenth century. Unconstrained growth brought about the megalopolises of our current day.

This seminar will explore Latin America’s major urban centers in significant moments from the pre-Hispanic period until the present day. Through chronicles, travel narratives, photography, legal writings, newspaper archives, maps, and film we will reconstruct the many dimensions of urban culture in the region. The course will be organized thematically and geographically. We will begin by studying the ways in which Latin American writers have understood the role of the city, and its dwellers, in shaping the trajectory of their various nations. We will pay particular attention to themes like the city and modernity, the everyday experiences of urban residents, racial, gender, and social inequality, the city as a site of historical memory and violent contestation, the environmental challenges of urban growth, and the rise and fall of counter-cultural and protest movements.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST348
Prereq: None

LAST373 Language and Power in Latin America
What is a perfect language? Societies across the globe, in different times and places, have sought to answer this question. In the process they have posited a diversity of theories about the relationships among language, individual and group identity, social harmony, religious devotion, and political power. This seminar investigates the ways in which Latin American societies, from the colonial period until the present, grappled with the problem of language and its ability to shape their communities. From indigenous polities, to the imperial monarchies that conquered and colonized the Americas, to the nation-states that emerged in the 19th century, all have had to confront the realities of a diverse and profoundly multilingual region.

The course will be organized around representative case studies. It will draw from a variety of fields (e.g., linguistics, philosophy, history, anthropology, and history of science) to consider how language served as either a resource or an obstacle to be surmounted in the creation of ideal religious, political, and intellectual communities in Latin America. Significant themes include the role of language in conquest and colonization, the development of cultural institutions to regulate and standardize language usage, the prevalence of bilingualism in many regions, the proliferation of literacy campaigns as a hallmark of the revolutionary governments of the mid-20th century, and the emergence of indigenous peoples as social and political actors in contemporary Latin America.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST373
Prereq: None

LAST388 Democracy and Development in Latin America
This seminar examines democracy, economic development, and social welfare policy in Latin America. The topics to be addressed include regime classification, populism and neo-populism, the recent rise of the left, women in politics, the political economy of economic growth and human development, the export of natural resources, the recent decline of income inequality, the history of social welfare policy in the region, and recent social policy innovations including conditional cash transfer programs.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-GOVT
Identical With: GOVT388
Prereq: None

LAST401 Individual Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

LAST402 Individual Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

LAST403 Department/Program Project or Essay
Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

LAST404 Department/Program Project or Essay
Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

LAST407 Senior Tutorial (downgraded thesis)
Downgraded Senior Thesis Tutorial - Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor. Only enrolled in through the Honors Coordinator.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

LAST408 Senior Tutorial (downgraded thesis)
Downgraded Senior Thesis Tutorial - Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor. Only enrolled in through the Honors Coordinator.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

LAST409 Senior Thesis Tutorial
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

LAST410 Senior Thesis Tutorial
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

LAST411 Group Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

LAST412 Group Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

LAST420 Student Forum
Student-run group tutorial, sponsored by a faculty member and approved by the chair of a department or program.
Offering: Host
Grading: Cr/U
LAST466 Education in the Field, Undergraduate
Students must consult with the department and class dean in advance of undertaking education in the field for approval of the nature of the responsibilities and method of evaluation.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

LAST491 Teaching Apprentice Tutorial
The teaching apprentice program offers undergraduate students the opportunity to assist in teaching a faculty member’s course for academic credit.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

LAST492 Teaching Apprentice Tutorial
The teaching apprentice program offers undergraduate students the opportunity to assist in teaching a faculty member’s course for academic credit.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT