Latin American Studies Major

Admission to the Major

Admission to the Latin American studies major (LAST) requires (a) competence in either Spanish or Portuguese; (b) an academic record that shows ability both in Latin American studies and in the intended department of concentration; and (c) a judgment by core LAST faculty that you are likely to be able to maintain a grade point average of B- or better in all courses taken at Wesleyan that are cross-listed with LAST. For additional details, please visit wesleyan.edu/last/formajors/..

Major Requirements

Twelve semester courses are required to complete the LAST major, (1) six in LAST and at least six in a department of concentration; or (2) seven in LAST and five in a department concentration. The five or six courses in the concentration need not be cross-listed with LAST. Acceptable departments of concentration are those with an affiliated LAST faculty member, currently anthropology, economics, earth and environmental sciences, government, history, music, religion, sociology, Romance languages and literatures, and theater. With the approval of the chair, students may concentrate in other departments that have faculty members with substantial knowledge of and interest in Latin America and/or the Caribbean. LAST majors may not concentrate in another program (e.g., AMST) or in a college (e.g., CSS).

Mandatory LAST courses at Wesleyan. Of the 12 courses required to complete the LAST major, at least eight must be taken at Wesleyan. On petition to the chair, an exception may be made for (1) students who transferred to Wesleyan and who seek LAST major credit for courses taken at their previous institution(s) or (2) students participating in the Twelve-College Exchange Program who seek LAST major credit for courses taken at one of the other participating colleges.

• Of the 12 courses required to complete the LAST major, two are mandatory: LAST226 and LAST245. Each of these mandatory courses must be taken at Wesleyan.
• One additional LAST-cross-listed social science course is also mandatory. It, too, must be taken at Wesleyan.
• LAST majors must also complete stage II of the General Education Expectations.

To graduate as a LAST major, students must maintain an average of B- or better in all courses taken at Wesleyan that are cross-listed in the LAST major, whether or not the student elects to place these courses on the major certification form.

Non-LAST courses at Wesleyan that may count toward the LAST major.

In exceptional circumstances, Wesleyan courses that have significant Latin American content but are not cross-listed with LAST may count toward the major. Students must petition the LAST chair to obtain LAST major credit for such courses.

Courses at Wesleyan that may NOT count toward the LAST major.

• No Spanish language courses except SPAN221 may count toward the LAST major—only Spanish literature courses.

Studying Abroad

Latin American studies majors are encouraged to spend a semester or a year on a program in Latin America approved by the University’s International Studies Committee. LAST faculty members regard study abroad as a serious part of the major, so students should discuss their plans with their advisors or with the chair as soon as possible. Please note that at least eight of the 12 courses required to complete the LAST major must be taken at Wesleyan. For more information, please visit wesleyan.edu/last/studyabroad.html.

Credit is regularly granted toward the LAST major through the following programs:

- CIEE in Buenos Aires, Argentina
- CIEE in São Paulo or Salvador da Bahia, Brazil
- Brown in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- CV Starr Middlebury School in Latin America, various cities, Chile
- University of Kansas in San José, Costa Rica
- CIEE in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
- Duke in the Andes, Quito, Ecuador
- IFSA Butler at the Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, Mérida, Mexico
- Augsburg College Center for Global Education, Mexico and Guatemala

Language Requirement

Admission to the major requires competence in either Spanish or Portuguese.

Prizes

LAST awards the Levy-Spira Prize for excellence in Latin American studies.

Additional Information

Majors Committee. The Latin American Studies Majors Committee, chosen by the student majors, works with the program’s faculty to plan a variety of events. The committee is primarily responsible for organizing the informal brown-bag
lunch series, where majors and professors meet to discuss student and faculty research projects, to explore possible changes in the curriculum and study-abroad options, and to plan additional program activities. The committee also facilitates student participation in faculty searches involving the Latin American Studies Program or the Center for the Americas.

HONORS

Departmental honors are awarded to majors who complete a senior thesis of exceptional quality and who have a distinguished record of coursework in the program. For additional details concerning the honors program, please visit wesleyan.edu/last/formajors/theses.html.

CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

Majors must also complete the LAST research requirement by writing a paper at least 20 pages in length that is centrally concerned with Latin America, that is on a topic of the major’s own choosing, and that receives a grade of B- or better. For additional details concerning the research requirements, please visit wesleyan.edu/last/formajors/researchrequirements.html.