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 Latin American Studies 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 Latin American Studies. For additional details, please visit wesleyan.edu/last/formajors/.

Major Requirements

Twelve semester courses are required to complete the Latin American Studies major, (1) six in Latin American Studies and at least six in a department of concentration; or (2) seven in Latin American Studies and five in a department concentration. The five or six courses in the concentration need not be cross-listed with Latin American Studies. Acceptable departments of concentration are those with an affiliated Latin American Studies faculty member. In 2019-20 those departments are Economics, History, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Government, Hispanic Literatures and Cultures, or Spanish. 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. Latin American Studies majors may not concentrate in another program (e.g., American Studies) or in a college (e.g., College of Social Studies).

Mandatory Latin American Studies courses at Wesleyan. Of the 12 courses required to complete the Latin American Studies 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 Latin American Studies major credit for courses taken at their previous institution(s) or (2) students participating in the Twelve-College Exchange Program who seek Latin American Studies major credit for courses taken at one of the other participating colleges.

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

To graduate as a Latin American Studies major, students must maintain an average of B- or better in all courses taken at Wesleyan that are cross-listed in the major, regardless of whether the student elects to place each such course on the major certification form.

Non-Latin American Studies 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 Latin American Studies may count toward the major. Students must petition the Latin American Studies chair to obtain Latin American Studies 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 Latin American Studies major—only Spanish literature courses.
- No 100-level Spanish courses will be accepted for credit toward the Latin American Studies major.
- No more than one music course involving primarily or exclusively performance may count toward the Latin American Studies major.
- No student forum courses may count toward the Latin American Studies major. Also, Latin American Studies does not sponsor student forum courses.
- No more than one introductory (100-level) course in a student’s department of concentration may count toward the Latin American Studies major.
- No more than one thesis tutorial credit may count toward the Latin American Studies major.

Courses taken at other institutions in the United States. No course taken at another institution in United States may count toward the Latin American Studies major, whether taken during the summer or during the academic year. On petition to the chair, an exception may be made (1) for students who transferred to Wesleyan and who seek Latin American Studies major credit for courses taken at their previous institution(s) or (2) for students participating in the Twelve-College Exchange Program who seek Latin American Studies major credit for courses taken at one of the other participating colleges.

Research Requirement. To graduate as a Latin American Studies major, a student must satisfy the LAST Research Requirement. The requirement is satisfied by writing a paper that is centrally concerned with Latin America, that is on a topic of the major’s own choosing (i.e., the student must originate the topic), that is at least 20 standard double-spaced pages in length, and that has received a grade of B- or better. The paper must be (1) written in a course or tutorial where the instructor is formally affiliated with the Latin American Studies Program, or (2) read and approved by a faculty member who is affiliated with the Program. The paper may be written in either English or Spanish, and may be completed in the context of a study-abroad program as long as it is read and approved by a faculty member who is formally affiliated with the Latin American Studies Program. A thesis or a senior essay conforming to the conditions just stipulated will satisfy the Latin American Studies Research Requirement.

Study 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. Latin American Studies faculty members regard study abroad as a serious part of the major, so students should discuss their plans with their Latin American Studies advisors or with the program chair as soon as possible. Please note that at least eight of the 12 courses required to complete the Latin American Studies major must be taken at Wesleyan. Credit is regularly granted toward the Latin American Studies major through the University’s pre-approved programs (https://www.wesleyan.edu/cgs/osa/programs/americas_c.html) in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, and the Turks and Caicos islands.

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 events. The Majors 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.

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

To graduate as a Latin American Studies major, a student must satisfy the LAST Research Requirement. The requirement is satisfied by writing a paper that is centrally concerned with Latin America, that is on a topic of the major’s own choosing (i.e., the student must originate the topic), that is at least 20 standard double-spaced pages in length, and that has received a grade of B- or better. The paper must be (1) written in a course or tutorial where the instructor is formally affiliated with the Latin American Studies Program, or (2) read and approved by a faculty member who is affiliated with the Program. The paper may be written in either English or Spanish, and may be completed in the context of a study-abroad program as long as it is read and approved by a faculty member who is formally affiliated with the Latin American Studies Program program. A thesis or a senior essay conforming to the conditions just stipulated will satisfy the Latin American Studies Research Requirement.