LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES MAJOR

MAJOR DESCRIPTION

Latin American Studies majors take courses related to Latin America (at least six), courses in a department of concentration (at least four), complete a research requirement (a 20+ page paper on a Latin American topic), and complete Stage II of the General Education Expectations. At least seven of the ten courses required to complete the major must be taken at Wesleyan.

ADMISSION TO THE MAJOR

Admission to the Latin American Studies major requires (a) competence in Spanish; (b) an academic record that shows ability both in Latin American Studies and in the intended department of concentration; and (c) a judgment by the core Latin American Studies faculty that a prospective major is 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.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Ten semester courses are required to complete the Latin American Studies major, at least six in Latin American Studies and at least four in a department of concentration. The four concentration courses need not be cross-listed with Latin American Studies. Concentration options include only departments with a Latin American Studies faculty member: in 2020-2021, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Economics, History, Hispanic Literatures and Cultures, and Government.

The purpose of the concentration is to assure that the student majoring in Latin American Studies, which is an interdisciplinary program, has mastered the substance and methods of at least one established academic discipline. Accordingly, Latin American Studies majors may not concentrate in another program (e.g., Science in Society), or in an interdisciplinary department (e.g., American Studies), or in a college (e.g., College of Social Studies). Of course, the Program does not preclude its majors from minoring or double-majoring in any program, department, or college they choose.

Mandatory Latin American Studies courses at Wesleyan. Of the ten courses required to complete the Latin American Studies major, at least seven 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 six Latin American Studies courses counted toward the major, at least four must be taken at Wesleyan. At least two of the six LAST courses must be cross-listed with Wesley Social and Behavioral Science department courses (SBS designation) and at least two must be cross-listed with Wesleyan Humanities and Arts department courses (HA designation). Of the two courses cross-listed with Humanities and Arts department courses, one must be LAST 226 (https://owaprod-pub.wesleyan.edu/reg/lwesmaps_page.html?stuid=&facid=NONE&crse=007142&term=1209), Survey of Latin American Literature, Cultures, and Ideas.

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 Latin American Studies major (regardless of whether a student elects to include each such course on the major certification form), complete a research requirement paper (see below under ‘Capstone Experience’), and complete Stage II of the General Education Expectations.

Non-Latin American Studies courses at Wesleyan that may count toward the Latin American Studies 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 Latin American Studies major.

No Spanish language courses (100-level or SPAN 203 (https://owaprod-pub.wesleyan.edu/reg/lwesmaps_page.html?stuid=&facid=NONE&crse=012580&term=1211), Spanish for Heritage Speakers) may count toward the Latin American Studies major. The only SPAN courses that may count toward the Latin American Studies major are SPAN 221 and SPAN courses numbered higher than SPAN 221 that focus on Latin America. Such courses are normally numbered SPAN 270 to SPAN 299. If the Latin American Studies major’s concentration is HISP, however, courses numbered SPAN 230 to SPAN 269 may be counted toward the four concentration courses required to complete the LAST major, provided that no such course has also been counted toward the six LAST courses required to complete the major.

No student forum courses may count toward the Latin American Studies major. Also, Latin American Studies does not sponsor student forum courses.

Restrictions on counting particular types of courses toward the Latin American Studies major

No more than one introductory (100-level) course in a student’s department of concentration.

No more than one music course involving primarily or exclusively performance.

No more than one thesis tutorial credit.

COURSES FOR NON-MAJORS

Non-majors are welcome in any course with a Latin American Studies crosslisting, unless the course’s host department imposes a limitation or restriction. For example, ECON 101 or ECON 110 is a prerequisite for ECON/LAST 219 (https://owaprod-pub.wesleyan.edu/reg/lwesmaps_page.html?stuid=&facid=NONE&crse=003644&term=1211), Latin American Economic Development.

GENERAL EDUCATION

Latin American Studies majors must complete Stage II of the General Education Expectations.
STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

The Latin American Studies major is designed to give students an integrated view of Mesoamerica, South America, and the Caribbean and to encourage students to develop expertise in the substance and methods of at least one established academic discipline. Students who complete the Latin American Studies major should be able to explore systematically a range of social-scientific and humanistic issues and modes of argumentation, drawing on the knowledge, analytical abilities, and quantitative, qualitative, and linguistic skills they have acquired through their coursework. Latin American Studies majors should also be better prepared to think critically, write clearly, and speak effectively. By acquiring these capabilities, Latin American Studies majors prepare themselves for lives of diverse contribution.

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. 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, Peru, and the Turks and Caicos Islands. Please recall that at least seven of the ten courses required to complete the Latin American Studies major must be taken at Wesleyan, which means that no more than three of the ten courses that count toward the major may come from a study abroad program, including a year-long study abroad program.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

The Latin American Studies Program does not grant credit or waive prerequisites for Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or ad-hoc program (e.g., summer study abroad) courses taken prior to matriculation at Wesleyan. The only pre-matriculation credits that the Program will accept are from Latin American Studies courses that the University has authorized from a transfer student’s previous full-time college-level institution.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

Admission to the major requires competence in Spanish. LAST 226 (https://owaprod-pub.wesleyan.edu/reg/lwesmaps_page.html?stuid=&facid=NONE&crose=007142&term=1209), a required course, is taught in Spanish.

PRIZES

The Latin American Studies Program awards the Levy-Spira Prize for Distinction in Latin American Studies.

TRANSFER CREDIT

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.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

Majors who complete a senior thesis of exceptional quality and who have a distinguished record of coursework in the program receive Honors in Latin American Studies.

To become a candidate for Honors, a major by the end of the sixth semester must have achieved a university grade point average greater than or equal to 90.00 and must have completed Stage I of the General Education Expectations (all Latin American Studies majors, including thesis-writers, must also complete Stage II by the end of the senior year).

The thesis tutor must be affiliated with the Latin American Studies Program. As noted above, although honors theses normally earn two credits toward graduation (one each semester), no more than one thesis tutorial credit may count toward the Latin American Studies major.

For additional details concerning the honors program, please visit wesleyan.edu/last/formajors/theses.html (http://wesleyan.edu/last/formajors/theses.html).

CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

Majors must complete the Latin American Studies research requirement 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.

The deadline for completing the Latin American Studies research requirement is the close of business on the first day of classes of the spring semester of the Latin
American Studies major’s senior year. On or before this date, Latin American Studies majors must submit to their Latin American Studies academic advisor a paper meeting the research requirement stipulations listed above. An exception to this deadline will be made only for Latin American Studies majors taking LAST 402 (Individual Tutorial, Undergraduate) in the spring semester of the senior year or LAST 410 (Senior Thesis Tutorial, Spring). For students enrolled in either of these tutorials, the deadline for submitting the research requirement paper to the major’s Latin American Studies advisor is the date on which senior theses are due.

Completion of the research requirement is certified by the major’s Latin American Studies academic advisor, who communicates this certification to the Latin American Studies program chair. The Latin American Studies program chair is in charge of certifying that seniors have completed all requirements of the major program, including coursework, completion of the research requirement, and completion of Stage II of the General Education Expectations.