Master of Arts in Latin American Studies - Social Sciences

Director

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Please see the entry for Center for Latin American Studies for the list of the Latin American Studies faculty, also available at the CLAS website (http://clas.uchicago.edu).

The Center for Latin American Studies administers a Master of Arts degree program in Latin American Studies. The Master of Arts program is a one year program of graduate studies that provides students with a thorough knowledge of the cultures, history, politics, and languages of the region. Students benefit from various resources that put the University of Chicago at the forefront of research and scholarship on Latin America, including world renowned faculty, top quality library resources, graduate workshops, and field research grant opportunities. Please see the Center for Latin American Studies entry in the Graduate Announcements for full details on Center resources. The Center also administers a Bachelor of Arts (major and minor) in Latin American Studies, and a BA to MA degree program (for details please see the CLAS degree programs webpages (https://clas.uchicago.edu/page/degree-programs)).

The master’s program attracts students who will benefit from interdisciplinary training in a highly individualized and flexible program. Each student works closely with faculty and the program adviser to design a customized curriculum, define an area of scholarly research, and write a master’s paper. Students take advantage of the program’s flexibility to advance their academic and/or career objectives before making a major professional or educational commitment. Some students approach a research interest from a multidisciplinary perspective. Others strengthen their training in a single discipline as it relates to Latin American Studies, or explore new fields.

The master’s program provides students with the opportunity to develop and enhance skills and knowledge appropriate for careers related to Latin America or as preparation for further graduate work or professional training. Graduates of the program enter or return to careers for which the master’s degree is increasingly an entry-level requirement, including secondary and higher education, government, business, and various cultural organizations and non-profit agencies. Others enter doctoral and professional degree programs with support and advice from Latin American Studies staff and faculty.

Admission to the Master’s Program

Prospective students to the Master of Arts program in Latin American Studies may apply to the program through the Division of the Social Sciences or through the Division of the Humanities and will receive the degree from the division through which they have been admitted.

How to Apply

The application process for admission and financial aid for all graduate programs in is administered through the divisional Office of the Dean of Students. The Application for Admission and Financial Aid, with instructions, deadlines and department specific information is available online:

Division of the Humanities (http://humanities.uchicago.edu/students/admissions/apply-now)
Social Sciences Division (https://apply-ssd.uchicago.edu/apply)

Foreign students must provide evidence of English proficiency by submitting scores from either the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Current minimum scores, etc., are provided with the application.

Students who wish to earn a Ph.D. degree should apply to a degree program in one of the graduate departments or committees in the Division of the Humanities or the Division of the Social Sciences. Foreign students should be advised that in the United States completion of a master’s degree program is generally not a prerequisite to entering a Ph.D. program.

Program Requirements

Upon entering the program, students will work under academic direction of the CLAS Student Affairs Coordinator and the CLAS Lecturer to develop a specific program of study, cultivate their research interests, and identify a faculty adviser for their master’s paper. The basic components of the master’s program are described below.
Language

A fundamental requirement of the program is proficiency in one of the spoken languages (other than English) of Latin America and the Caribbean. This requirement normally will be met in Spanish or Portuguese. However, substitution of an Amerindian language (such as Aymara, K'iche’ Maya, or Yucatec Maya) or a language spoken in the Caribbean (such as Haitian Kreyol) is permissible with the approval of the program adviser. Petitions for substitution will be evaluated in light of the student’s prior competency and curricular program and the adequacy of instructional resources in the substitute language. Advanced Proficiency Examinations will be administered to evaluate the entering student’s language skills. Students usually meet the language requirement through the Advanced Proficiency Examination in Spanish or Portuguese.

MA students are eligible to participate in the Chicago Language Center’s Summer Language Institute (https://summerlanguages.uchicago.edu/page/about-sli) in the summer prior to or following matriculation at the University. Students in the 2016–17 and 2017-18 cohort who are interested in the program may apply for the CLC Summer Language Scholarship here. (https://summerlanguages.uchicago.edu/page/summer-language-scholarship)

Unfortunately, due to the course requirements of a one year program, MA students in one year programs at the University are not eligible for FLAS funding.

Course Requirements

The standard course requirement is nine quarter courses, to be met as follows: the M.A. Proseminar in Latin American Studies; five courses in Latin American and Caribbean Studies; and three disciplinary elective courses. Students are expected to fulfill the language requirement through proficiency examination, and complete the master’s program in three quarters of course work.

The MA Proseminar in Latin American Studies

Through the MA Proseminar, the required common core of the master’s program, students gain an introduction to the variety of disciplinary approaches, discourses, and foci that fall under the large rubric of Latin American Studies. The Proseminar introduces students to specialists in the field at the University of Chicago and to the research and investigation in which they are involved. Led by the Post-doctoral Lecturer in Latin American Studies, the Proseminar meets weekly during the Autumn Quarter. Supplemental workshops will take place throughout Winter and Spring Quarters.

5 Latin American Content Courses

Each quarter CLAS compiles a list of University-wide courses with Latin American content. Courses which focus on disciplinary, methodological or comparative topics (such as International Relations Theory or Indigeneity) may also be counted toward this requirement, provided the student completes a paper or other major project treating a Latin American theme. Students choose their content courses in consultation with the Program adviser and the CLAS Postdoctoral Lecturer.

3 Disciplinary Elective Courses

These courses may have Latin American content, but they are often taken in order to gain a specific disciplinary grounding, to explore a particular theoretical framework, or to develop skills in a particular research methodology. Non-degree graduate level courses taken and completed at the University prior to admission to the master's program may be used in fulfillment of elective requirements, upon approval of the Program adviser. Students choose their elective courses in consultation with the Program Adviser and the CLAS Postdoctoral Lecturer.

Credits towards the Master of Arts in Latin American Studies must be taken at the graduate level (courses designated as 30000 or above). However, certain lower level courses may be accepted, at the discretion of the program adviser. All course requirements can be met in three academic quarters.

Courses

Courses pertinent to the Latin America are offered through the individual departments and committees of the Divisions of the Social Sciences and the Humanities, and through the University’s professional schools. Please refer to the listings in these announcements and in the quarterly course schedules for specific offerings. Additionally, special courses are offered by senior visiting Latin Americanist faculty through the Center’s Tinker Visiting Professorship. Each quarter the Center compiles a comprehensive list of Latin American and Caribbean courses to be offered at the University available on the CLAS webpage (http://clas.uchicago.edu/page/courses) or through my.uchicago.edu.

The Master’s Paper

In addition to the course requirements outlined above, every master’s degree candidate is required to submit a master’s paper. This paper is meant to demonstrate the student’s ability to apply formal training in Latin American and Caribbean studies toward a specific research problem developed over the course of the program. The research
and writing of this paper will be conducted under the guidance of a faculty adviser and the CLAS Postdoctoral Lecturer. A student may register for the course LACS 40300 Master’s Paper Preparation, which is arranged on an individual basis with the faculty adviser for the project. This course, while optional, may be counted as one of the five required Latin American Studies core courses.

For additional information about the Master of Arts in Latin American Studies program, please see visit the CLAS website (http://clas.uchicago.edu/page/about) or contact CLAS Student Affairs Coordinator Jamie Gentry at jagentry@uchicago.edu
Font Notice

This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

- Times was used instead of Trajan.
- Times was used instead of Palatino.

The editor may contact Leepfrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.