

LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES, PHD

The Roger Thayer Stone Center for Latin American Studies is one of the largest and most prestigious interdisciplinary units at Tulane University. It functions in many capacities to provide programming and degree plans to a broad range of educational constituencies. Currently, these include a Bachelor of Arts major and minor in Latin American Studies, a Master of Arts degree in Latin American Studies, and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Latin American Studies.

The design of both the M.A. and Ph.D. curriculum in Latin American Studies is dependent upon the student's particular research interests. While we welcome all qualified applicants interested in pursuing interdisciplinary research on Latin America, the STONE CENTER/TU has developed significant faculty strengths in "Economics, Politics, & Society in Latin America" and "Arts, Media, Culture, and Politics in Latin America." The Stone Center also has very strong regional expertise in Brazilian Studies and Cuban & Caribbean Studies.

The Graduate Advisor and the student will discuss these research interests before the start of the student's first semester of coursework and will map out a comprehensive program of study with the goal of developing an interdisciplinary research project. Students accumulate the research skills and tools by undertaking coursework in multiple disciplines or fields. Students should expect to narrow their coursework to one primary and two secondary concentration areas. Of course, there is also the opportunity to extend one's coursework beyond these three concentration areas when the research project will be enhanced by doing so.

The Stone Center also collaborates with other units across the University to offer specialized graduate degree programs. Such programs include joint professional degree programs with the Law School (MA/JD) and the Business School (MA/MBA), and a dual Doctor of Philosophy degree (a Ph.D. in Latin American Studies and Art History). For further information on these specialized degree programs, please consult the relevant sections of our website (<https://stonecenter.tulane.edu/>).

The standard Tulane University graduate program online application system allows applicants to identify whether their application should be considered for admission either as an M.A. student or as a Ph.D. student. The admissions policy of the Stone Center, however, is to consider for admission directly to the Ph.D. program only individuals who have an earned Master's Degree or relevant professional degree (i.e. M.D., J.D., etc.)

Applicants interested in the Ph.D. Program in Latin American Studies, but who do not have an earned Master's Degree or a relevant professional degree, will be considered for admission only to the M.A. program in Latin American Studies. Upon completion of the M.A. Program in Latin American Studies, such students are then able to reapply to the Ph.D. program. Admission to the M.A. program does not guarantee continuation in the Ph.D. program.

Requirements

Doctor of Philosophy in Latin American Studies Curriculum

The degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Latin American Studies is awarded for mastery of a body of literature and for the production of imaginative and original research. A student may enter the program (1) progressing from the M.A. program in Latin American Studies at Tulane, (2) transferring to the program with an M.A. conferred by another Tulane department, (3) or by applying directly to the Latin American Studies Ph.D. program after having completed an M.A. in any discipline or field, or an equivalent Professional Degree (JD, MD, MBA, etc.). In each instance, prospective students must submit a formal application for admission to the Ph.D. program.

Each semester doctoral students normally enroll in three classes and teach one class. By university regulations, students are allowed to enroll in a minimum of two courses while they serve as Teaching Assistants.

Students also begin preparation for general preliminary examinations, which are given during students' last semester of classes and should be taken no later than the first semester after the completion of all coursework requirements. These are normally in October or March.

Upon satisfying the coursework and language requirements and completing the general exams, students begin research for the dissertation, presenting a formal prospectus for faculty approval. Once approved they can apply for admittance to candidacy for the doctoral degree and commence formal work on the dissertation, which must demonstrate their ability to carry out an original investigation in the field of Latin American Studies. Degrees are conferred only after the dissertation is approved in a formal defense before a faculty committee.

Coursework and Distribution Requirements

The minimum coursework requirement for the Ph.D. is 54 credit hours. Portions of this requirement are often satisfied by credit awarded for academic work completed in fulfilling requirements for the M.A. degree with thesis.

Students with an M.A. in Latin American Studies from Tulane may transfer up to 30 credits of relevant work from their M.A. program, while students transferring from other departments at Tulane or other universities may transfer no more than 12 hours of relevant work (see Transfer Credit below).

General requirements for the Ph.D. degree are:

- Thirty semester hours in the primary concentration, including a minimum of six semester hours in theory, methodology, and pedagogy. Students transferring to the Stone Center from other programs must take the Latin American Studies Core Seminar in their first Fall semester to satisfy three hours of the theory and methodology requirement. And all Ph.D. students must take the required Pedagogy and Professional Development course in the Spring semester before the academic year in which they are scheduled to teach the LAST1010 course cycle for the first time. NOTE: Of the thirty semester hours in the primary concentration, twelve hours or four courses should be at the 7000 level when possible; and no more than nine hours or three courses should be stand-alone independent study.
- Twelve semester hours in a first supporting concentration; six of these hours, when possible, should be at the 7000 level.
- Twelve semester hours in a second supporting concentration; six of these hours, when possible, should be at the 7000 level.
- A demonstrated knowledge of at least two languages, including Spanish or Portuguese.
- The successful completion of three general preliminary examinations in the primary and supporting concentrations.
- The successful defense of a dissertation prospectus.
- The successful completion and defense of the dissertation.

Concentrations

The concentrations are usually departmental/disciplinary and are intended more as a guide to help organize a student's curriculum around a specific research project. Where a student's program suggests that there is an educational and qualitative logic, it is also possible to declare one synthetic concentration that combines courses from more than one department. Such a concentration might be, for example, Cultural Studies or Mexican Studies or Gender & Sexuality Studies, etc. Students are also encouraged, in consultation with the Graduate Advisor, to take courses that may fall outside of their concentration areas if such courses are critical to the development of specific research skills, tools, methods, or content necessary in the pursuit of their research agendas.

Transfer Credits

At the time of admission, the Graduate Advisor can provide an informal assessment about what previous course credit can be transferred to meet Ph.D. requirements, but University policy allows the Graduate Advisor to make a formal evaluation of requests for transfer credit only after students have completed nine hours in residence at Tulane. After that point, and before the student accumulates a total of 42 credit hours, the Graduate Advisor recommends the transfer of appropriate and germane credit to the Graduate Dean for approval. Students seeking transfer credits should be prepared to provide copies of syllabi and/or course term papers as evidence of the relevance of the courses in question to their graduate work in their Latin American Studies program. Only courses that have a theoretical or content-specific logic to a student's Latin American Studies academic program will be approved for transfer credit.

As noted above, students with an M.A. (with thesis) in Latin American Studies from Tulane may transfer up to 30 credits of relevant work from their M.A. program, while students transferring from other departments at Tulane or other universities may transfer up to 6 hours of relevant coursework.

Acceptance of graduate credit for work done in other M.A. programs at Tulane or other universities is recommended by the Graduate Advisor and approved by the Dean of the School of Liberal Arts. To be considered for transfer credit, coursework must have received a grade of 3.0 or better on a 4.0 scale and must have been completed no more than six years before the date of first registration in the Center's doctoral program. Only in very special cases, and with the recommendation of the Stone Center's Graduate Advisor, will the Dean consider transfer of credit for courses taken earlier.

Language Requirements

The language requirement for graduation with the Ph.D. in Latin American Studies is demonstrated competence in two languages. Normally, one is Spanish; the second Portuguese. However, other languages may be presented if essential for the student's research. German, Quechua, Nahuatl, or Kaqchikel are examples. Students are expected to pass a language examination in Spanish or Portuguese during the first year of study. The required level of competence in Spanish and Portuguese corresponds to "intermediate-high" on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) scale or the Avant STAMP 4S scale. This competency is considered a minimum requirement. Students are encouraged to develop additional languages as needed by their research fields. Levels of competency similar to those described for Spanish and Portuguese are required in any language presented to satisfy this requirement.

Currently, language competency is determined by performance on the Avant STAMP 4S examinations, which are administered by the Language Learning Center (<https://liberalarts.tulane.edu/language-learning-center/language-testing/proficiency>). All students, even native speakers, must be either examined for minimal linguistic competency as explained above or certified as to their native fluency by the Spanish and Portuguese Department.

Certification of competency in a second language must be presented by the end of the second year of study. Transfer students are expected to pass one language during the first year of study, and a second language examination by the end of second year of study. Testing in languages that are not available through the Avant STAMP 4S process in the Language Learning Center should be discussed with the Graduate Advisor to determine if such testing is possible and what would be the procedures for such testing.