

# LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES, MA

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 the M.A. and 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 & 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 the student's 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/graduate-degree-programs/>).

## Requirements

### *Distribution Requirements*

Degree requirements include 30 credit hours as follows:

Course ID	Title	Credits
Select a primary concentration (History, Anthropology, etc.)		12
Select a second supporting concentration		6
Select a third supporting concentration		6
LAST 7000	Core Seminar	3
Select one of the following options:		3
Option One: The M.A. thesis, written under the direction of a thesis director and approved by a faculty committee.		
Option Two: A three-hour course in theory or methodology in the primary concentration.		
<b>Total Credit Hours</b>		<b>30</b>

- Option One: The M.A. thesis, written under the direction of a thesis director and approved by a faculty committee. Students register for thesis credit in the fourth semester (LAST 8990) and are required to participate in a thesis writing workshop under the direction of the Graduate Advisor. This is a graded course. A passing grade is assigned for the thesis by the Graduate Advisor if the student successfully defends the thesis by the end of the Spring semester. [NOTE: If a student plans to graduate in the Spring Semester of their second year of study, the thesis must be completed, defended, and submitted to the School of Liberal Arts in final form usually by the first week of May.] If the student has not completed and defended the thesis by the end of the Spring semester of the second year of studies, a grade of "I" (Incomplete) will be reported until such time as the student completes the thesis AND applies to graduate. If the student fails to complete the thesis within one year of the end of the second year of study, the "I" grade will convert to a failing grade.
- Option Two: A three-hour course in theory or methodology in the primary concentration. This need not be a Latin American content course. For example, in Sociology, the relevant courses are "Intermediate Social Statistics" and "Intermediate Sociological Methods"; in Anthropology, "Field Methods in Social and Cultural Anthropology"; and in Political Science, "The Conduct of Research" and "Statistics for Political Scientists." Where a department does not have an appropriate offering, the Stone Center Graduate Advisor will help the student arrange an independent study project in the methodology of the primary concentration. This course must be taken by the end of the third semester.

### *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.” 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.

### ***Language Requirement***

The requirement for graduation with the M.A. in Latin American Studies is demonstrated competence in either Spanish or Portuguese. 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.

Currently, the Avant STAMP 4S examinations are administered by the Language Learning Center (<https://liberalarts.tulane.edu/language-learning-center/language-testing/proficiency>). Native Spanish and Portuguese speakers are exempt from this requirement, though they are still encouraged to take the examination.

### ***Transfer of Credit***

Upon entering the program a maximum of six graduate-level course credits (two courses) may be transferred from another department of Tulane or another University toward your Latin American Studies M.A. degree. However, students who do choose to transfer two courses will lose one semester of M.A. funding (limiting thesis writers to three semesters and non-thesis writers to two). To be considered for transfer credit toward an M.A. degree, graduate work done at another institution must carry a grade of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) or better and must have been completed no more than four years from the date of first registration for graduate work at Tulane.

Acceptance of graduate credit for work done at other graduate institutions must be approved by the Stone Center for Latin American Studies and by the Dean of the School of Liberal Arts. Although the official decision concerning the acceptance of transfer credit towards the Latin American Studies M.A. degree will be made only after the student has completed one semester of successful study in the program, the Stone Center Graduate Advisor can evaluate the transferability of previous coursework before the student enters the program. If you are planning to transfer credit, remember to contact your Graduate Advisor after you have completed your first semester in the degree program to discuss the credit transfer process.

### ***Independent Studies***

Independent Studies can be an important part of your program if used properly and sparingly. Typically an independent project is created to fill an academic need or interest that is not being met by regular disciplinary offerings or to expand upon research begun in other courses but not fully completed. Ordinarily, the Graduate Advisor will not authorize students to take more than two stand-alone Independent Study courses during the course of their M.A. degree. Students may register for the independent study directly through the Latin American Studies program; but students should first attempt to register for the independent study through the department of the sponsoring faculty member. Please consult the Graduate Advisor for further information on registering for independent study.

## **Contact**

For more information, contact the School of Liberal Arts (<https://stonecenter.tulane.edu/ma-program/>).