The Background

The Latin American Studies program has been operational at Villanova since 1988. It promotes an inter-disciplinary understanding of the entire region of Latin America and the Caribbean. To that end, the Program offers a **Major** and a **Minor**. Over the years, the Program has widened its curricular offerings and overseas academic presence in countries, such as Chile and Costa Rica. The recipient of two Title VI grants since 2003 from the US Department of Education, the program is one of the more comprehensive area studies programs in the College of Arts & Sciences.

College of
Liberal Arts and Sciences
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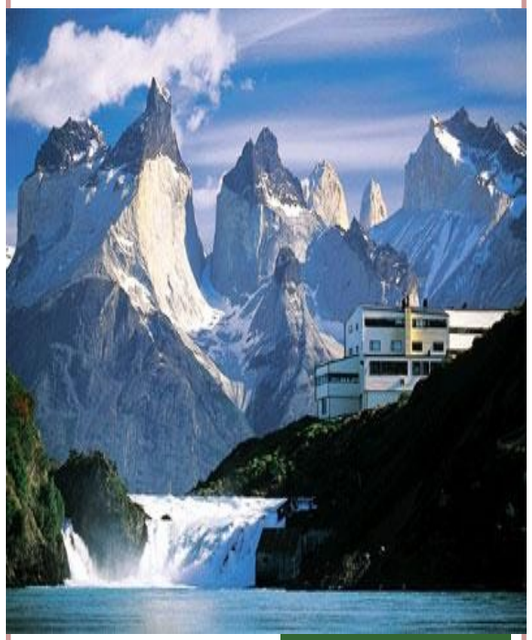
LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM



Chilean Patagonia

Program Director

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Five Key Learning Objectives and outcomes:

Upon completing the LAS Major, students will be able to:

1. Write research papers on Latin America with the sensitivity to the peculiarities of the region.

2. Converse about the major economic, political, and social problems bedeviling the region of Latin America.

3. Speak Spanish or Portuguese language with fluency.

4. Acquire knowledge and linguistic skills appropriate for jobs in international, governmental, multilateral, and non-governmental agencies focused on the region

5. Engage in policy relevant discussions and debates about US-Latin American relations

LAS FACULTY MEMBERS

G. Benavides (Ph.D., Temple), Theology & Religious Studies

J. Betz (Ph.D., Chicago), Philosophy

L. Gustafson (Ph.D., Virginia), Political Science

K. Hollis (Ph.D., Southern California), English

S. Nagy-Zekmi (Ph.D. Budapest) Romance Language & Literature

E. Ogden (Ph.D., Temple), Romance Languages & Literature

S. R. Pattnayak (Ph.D., Vanderbilt), Sociology and Political Science
PROGRAM DIRECTOR

K. Taylor (Ph.D., SUNY, Stony Brook), Economics

C. Trujillo (Ph.D., Pennsylvania) Romance Languages & Literature

Affiliated Faculty:

F. Galgano (Ph.D., U. of Maryland) Geography & the Environment

J. Gastanaga (Ph.D., Princeton) Romance Languages & Literature

M. Keita (Ph.D., Howard) Caribbean History

P. Rosier (Ph.D., Rochester) Indigenous History

C. Wilson (Ph.D. Pennsylvania) Political Science

Rationale for a LAS Major

The region of Latin America has experienced two dramatic economic and political experiments since the mid to late 1980s. The emergence of large economies in Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, and Chile has made the region more important for the US economic health. In fact, Brazil is routinely predicted to be a top six economy in terms of GDP in the next decade by economic analysts, which would mean that there would be a continental shift in the economic balance of power in Latin America. Politically, the region has been amazingly receptive to democratic governance in recent decades. It has seen regular and peaceful transition of power from one contender to another after a particular electoral cycle, a fact unseen in the previous 200 years of political history. These two facts, together with the relative decline of US influence in the region, could become catalyst to innovative economic and political experiments that a Major in Latin American Studies would most credibly focus and analyze.

Requirements for the Major:

The new Major will require 10 courses with **a minimum of 30 credits.**

1. **Language Requirement**:Two (2) courses of advanced Spanish or advanced Portuguese language or literature courses.
2. **One Capstone Seminar** is envisioned to be an interdisciplinary and team-taught seminar on Latin America from a global perspective.
3. **Three Broad thematic courses,** one each in the Humanities, Social Sciences, and History.

4. **One course in Research Methods**

5. **Three Electives** with options for Internship and independent study.

6. **One semester of Study Abroad:** Students are **mandated** to spend a semester abroad at a university in Latin America and can satisfy multiple requirements of acquiring linguistic skills, cultural immersion, and course requirements.

Program in Chile

The Program offers all undergraduates a unique six week summer experience annually at the **Pontificia Universidad Catolica de Valparaiso** in Chile. Participants can earn six Villanova credits by taking two courses from the offerings in language, literature, economics, politics, culture, and social issues. Students are placed individually with carefully selected Chilean families in order to have an opportunity to be part of the daily life of the city and its people.

Program in Costa Rica

The Program strongly encourages students to use the short and long academic programs offered through our partner institution, **International Center for Development Studies** (ICDS), in San José, Costa Rica. ICDS's programs exclusively cater to student needs in the areas of sustainable development, environment, justice, and human rights. Students may earn anywhere from 6 to 15 credits by spending six weeks to a semester, even a year, at ICDS and hone their skills in analyzing the real problems of Latin America today.

Internship

The Program also offers exciting internship opportunities in both Costa Rica and Chile. Students participate in challenging ongoing projects and asked to produce reports at the end of the assignment. The United Nations Program for Crime Prevention, The Inter-American Court for Human Rights, Chiquita Bananas, and the Chilean National Legislature are only a few of many prominent institutions in the region that offer our students internship opportunities. All internship requests must be processed through the College's Office of Internships in close collaboration with the Office of International Studies.

A LAS Minor will require 7 courses with a minimum of 21 credits that include 2 Spanish or Portuguese language courses, 4 electives, and one Capstone seminar. For info visit:

www.villanova.edu/artsci/latinamerstudies

Other Activities

Each year, LASP sponsors a variety of lectures and performances open to the Villanova and surrounding communities. Past events have included lectures by scholars, journalists, and politicians, and presentations by poets, novelists, and musicians. The Program reaches out to the greater Latino community in the Greater Philadelphia Area by linking up with high schools and cultural organizations. The Program also provides guidance to students interested in careers related to Latin America.

Latin American Studies and the Villanova Mission

An understanding and appreciation of Latin America will be vital to the leaders of America in the twenty-first century and a valuable asset for careers of the future. Trade and investment between the United States and Latin America are expanding rapidly; many see recent consolidation of democracy and free markets promising. The region remains crucial to American national security in the post 9/11 setting as new issues of terrorism, drugs, and migration take center stage. Organizations concerned with improving the human conditions see the region's poverty, rural isolation, and urban sprawl as challenges that demand attention. Latin America's proximity to the United States will inevitably lead to greater cross-cultural study, research, travel, and business opportunities.

Villanova's Catholic Augustinian heritage and mission has had a special relationship with the peoples of Latin America. The Augustinians were among the first religious leaders to arrive in the New World. In the twentieth century, the Province of St. Thomas of Villanova established the Universidad de Villanueva in Havana, Cuba, and continues to participate in an active mission at Chulucanas in Peru.