Latin American, Caribbean, and Iberian Studies, M.A.

The Latin American, Caribbean, and Iberian Studies (LACIS) Program offers three graduate programs: master of arts, a doctoral minor, and a dual degree in law and Latin American, Caribbean, and Iberian studies.

The mission of the graduate program is to provide an interdisciplinary foundation for the study of Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain, and Portugal. The University of Wisconsin–Madison is nationally recognized for excellence in research and teaching on these regions. The LACIS program includes a core faculty of more than 50 members and course offerings in 40 disciplines and professional schools, including agricultural and applied economics, anthropology, business, community and environmental sociology, comparative literature, environmental studies, gender and women's studies, geography, history, law, music, political science, population health, Quechua, Yucatec Maya, sociology, and Spanish and Portuguese.

Core faculty have received extensive national and international recognition. Faculty research interests include development and labor economics; Andean ethnohistory and ethnology; African Diaspora art; conservation of the neotropics; cultural geography; social history of Latin America; democratic consolidation; Brazilian social stratification; comparative social movements; Luso-Brazilian literature and culture; colonial and modern Latin American literature, film, and culture; Spanish literature from the medieval to the modern period; and political economy. UW–Madison also publishes the journal Luso-Brazilian Review.

While the majority of candidates in the program are from the United States, a significant number are from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Iberia. Since 1994, 30 percent of the program's candidates have been Latino/Latin American/Caribbean. Seventy percent have been women. Funding assistance for candidates specializing in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Iberia includes Title VI Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships, Helen Firstbrook Franklin Fellowship, Advanced Opportunity Fellowship (if applicable), Latin America course (260) teaching assistantships, and the Tinker-Nave Field Grant Program. Please contact the program office for more information on funding opportunities.

Originally established in the 1930s, the program has a long history of university and federal support. Since 1961, LACIS has been recognized as a National Resource Center (NRC) by the U.S. Department of Education, which provides Title VI support for program activities and for FLAS fellowships. The program has a faculty of extraordinary diversity and across-the-board strength. These strengths encompass not only the classic social science and humanities fields, but also the natural and ecological sciences and the agricultural and professional schools. It is unlikely that any one university exceeds the overall range of UW–Madison's faculty expertise in Latin American, Caribbean, and Iberian studies. The UW–Madison's general excellence is reflected by its consistent ranking among the top ten graduate universities in the United States.

Dual Degree Program

Candidates interested in earning a dual degree in law and Latin American, Caribbean, and Iberian studies must apply to both programs and must meet the degree requirements for both programs. Applicants should follow normal procedures for admission to the Graduate School. They may, however, substitute LSAT scores for the GRE. The dual degree program can be completed in seven semesters. Typically, the student begins the LACIS portion of the program in the second year of Law School. See the program office for more information on course work.

Requirements

Minimum Degree Requirements and Satisfactory Progress

To make progress toward a graduate degree, students must meet the Graduate School Minimum Degree Requirements and Satisfactory Progress (http://guide.wisc.edu/graduate/#policiesandrequirementstext) in addition to the requirements of the program.

Master's Degrees

M.A.

Minimum Graduate Degree Credit Requirement

30 credits

Minimum Graduate Residence Credit Requirement

16 credits

Minimum Graduate Coursework (50%) Requirement

Half of the degree coursework (15 credits out of a total 30 credits) must be in graduate-level coursework; courses with the Graduate Level Coursework attribute are identified and searchable in the university's Course Guide (http://my.wisc.edu/CourseGuideRedirect/BrowseByTitle).

Prior Coursework Requirements From: Graduate Work From Other Institutions

With program approval, students are allowed to count no more than 6 credits of graduate coursework from other institutions.

Prior Coursework Requirements From: UW–Madison Undergraduate

No credits from a UW–Madison undergraduate degree are allowed to count toward the degree.

Prior Coursework Requirements From: UW–Madison University Special

Students are allowed to count no more than 6 credits of coursework numbered 300 or above taken as a UW–Madison University Special student. The student would not be allowed to count courses toward the 50% graduate coursework minimum unless taken at the 700 level or above.

Credits per Term Allowed

15 credits
PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COURSES REQUIRED
6 credits of LACIS A E/ANTHRO/C&E SOC/GEOG/HISTORY/POLI SCI/ PORTUG/SOC/SPANISH 982 Interdepartmental Seminar in the Latin-American Area (or equivalent seminar)

OVERALL GRADUATE GPA REQUIREMENT
3.00 GPA required

OTHER GRADE REQUIREMENTS
The Graduate School requires an average grade of B or better in all coursework (300 or above, not including research credits) taken as a graduate student unless conditions for probationary status require higher grades. Grades of Incomplete are considered to be unsatisfactory if they are not removed during the next enrolled semester.

PROBATION POLICY
The status of a student can be one of three options:
1. Good standing (progressing according to standards; any funding guarantee remains in place).
2. Probation (not progressing according to standards but permitted to enroll; loss of funding guarantee; specific plan with dates and deadlines in place in regard to removal of probationary status).
3. Unsatisfactory progress (not progressing according to standards; not permitted to enroll, dismissal, leave of absence or change of advisor or program).

ADVISOR / COMMITTEE
The program director or associate director will be the formal advisor for all students in the program. In addition, students are expected to work with a faculty advisor to complete a final paper to be defended to a three member committee.

ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATIONS
Candidates are expected to finish the degree in four semesters of full-time study; after four semesters, the student must petition for extension. Time to degree will be customized for students in dual or articulated degree programs. Students must also petition for part-time (fewer than 6 credits per semester) status.

TIME CONSTRAINTS
Master’s degree students who have been absent for five or more consecutive years lose all credits that they have earned before their absence.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS
Candidates must obtain certification of basic proficiency in Spanish or Portuguese or offer proof of proficiency.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS
• Students should demonstrate an understanding of the principal historical, societal, scientific and humanist concerns that are rooted in the realities of the broader Latin American, Caribbean and Iberian regions. These include but are not limited to: knowledge of pre-colonial indigenous societal organizations; the experience of colonialism; the biodiversity of the region; and the regions tumultuous social, economic and political trajectory and the specific challenges these have posed for the peoples of the regions. In particular, students should demonstrate an understanding of the unique historical trajectory of these regions as the product of the global confluence of various cultural, social, political and economic influences beginning in the late 15th century. This includes not only the especially profound mutual impact of Iberian colonization of the Americas, but also the larger context of European imperial conflict in the Western Hemisphere, the central place of African slavery in the development of the Atlantic economy, and the significant and multifaceted role that the United States has played in shaping Latin America and the Caribbean. Students should recognize how these histories and contemporary realities impact more specific questions, contemporary or historical, and humanist, social scientific or scientific in nature.
• Within students’ more specific area of interest, they should be able to articulate key theoretical and empirical concerns and identify appropriate theoretical approaches to the problem of interest and identify empirical sources that can help to answer that question or problem.
• Students should demonstrate proficiency, and preferably advanced language ability, in either Spanish or Portuguese. Additional indigenous language learning, such as Kichwa, Quechua, Quich and Nahuatl, are also encouraged.
• Students should demonstrate the ability to conduct interdisciplinary research that
  a. includes a critical literature review,
  b. selects appropriate research methodologies,
  c. proposes an appropriate research design to collect, analyze, interpret, and present findings, and
  d. successfully carries out this research plan.
• Students should demonstrate the ability to articulate and elaborate their research findings.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT
• Students should recognize and apply principles of ethical and professional conduct. This includes, in particular, an understanding of the ethics of research and professional activities in cross-cultural contexts.

ADMISSIONS
Admission to the master’s program is competitive and requires a strong undergraduate academic background, a clear demonstration of interdisciplinary interests, and a strong statement of purpose illustrating the applicant’s goals. In addition to the online application, applicants must submit to the program: transcript(s) of all undergraduate work, three letters of recommendation, Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores, a statement of reasons for graduate study, and a current CV.

PEOPLE
Faculty: Professors Scarano (LACIS director) (History), Allen (Plant Pathology), Albuquerque (Spanish and Portuguese), Apple (Curriculum and Instruction), Barham (Agricultural and Applied Economics), Belin (Spanish and Portuguese), Bilbija (Spanish and Portuguese), Calderon (Music), Collins (Sociology), Corfis (Spanish and Portuguese), De Ferrari (Spanish and Portuguese), Drewal (Art History), Egea (Spanish and
Portuguese), Escalante (Art), Ewig (Gender and Women’s Studies), Frantzen (Spanish and Portuguese), Hildner (Spanish and Portuguese), Hill (English/American Indian Studies), Hutchinson (Spanish and Portuguese), Madureira (Spanish and Portuguese), Mallon (History), Marquez (Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies/Political Science), Medina (Spanish and Portuguese), Mello (Business), Naughton (Geography), Neinhuis (Horticulture), Olaniyan (African Languages and Literature), Patz (Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies), Pevehouse (Political Science), Podesta, (Spanish and Portuguese), Popkewitz (Education), Radano (Ethnomusicology), Rojas (Journalism and Mass Communication), Sanchez (Spanish and Portuguese), Stier (Anthropology), Sweet (History), Sytsma (Botany), Tochon (Curriculum and Instruction), Tripp (Political Science), Waller (Botany and Environmental Studies), Wattieux (Animal Science), Zamora (Spanish and Portuguese), Zepeda (Consumer Science); Associate Professors Alix-Garcia (Agricultural and Applied Economics), Cabrera (Dairy Science), Close (Spanish and Portuguese), Emshwiller (Botany) Gaus (Medicine), Hernandez (Spanish and Portuguese), Huneeus (Law), Kallenborn (Design Studies), Marin-Spiotta (Geography), Pellegrini (Spanish and Portuguese), Schechter (Agricultural and Applied Economics), Stafford (Spanish and Portuguese, Walker (Dance); Assistant Professor Clayton (Anthropology), Associate Faculty Barrett (Sociology), DiPrete Brown (Global Health), Egon (Spanish and Portuguese), Gemrich (Spanish and Portuguese), Kaakiola Strohbusch (Spanish and Portuguese), Vargas, (LACIS associate director); Lecturers Druc (Anthropology), Munigaerriea (Economics), Muyolema (Anthropology), Woodward (Botany)