

UW-Whitewater Audit and Review

Latin American Studies Minor

I. Academic Assessment

A. Highlights and Initiatives

There is only one available track in the Latin American Studies minor, which includes a required core of social science and literature courses (16 credits) and 3 electives from additional courses that concentrate on Latin American topics (9 credits). See attached APR.

In practice, the infrequent rotation of both required and elective courses, as well as the loss of key courses because of personnel changes, have meant that Latin American Studies (LAS) minors have received authorization from the Coordinator of the program to receive credit for additional courses with a substantial focus on Latin America in order to fulfill their requirements. These courses have included Independent Study courses, special topics courses, and newly offered courses that have not yet been formally incorporated into the minor.

B. Educational Objectives and Assessment Techniques

As an interdisciplinary course of study, the LAS minor offers students a comprehensive overview of Latin American civilization based on advanced language and literature study (goal 1) and social science and humanistic perspectives on the region (goal 2). Minors will therefore be in command of the Spanish language, as well as have demonstrated sufficient knowledge of the region's history, culture and contemporary issues. The specific cognitive and skill objectives for the program are defined by the sponsoring Departments and typically include critical thinking (goal 3), effective communication (in Spanish and English) (goal 4), and the ability to apply their knowledge of Latin America (goal 5). See LAS minor course list and assessment objectives.

C. Assessment Data

This is the first assessment report for this program. No institutional data has been supplied. All data is therefore the result of exit interviews, advising conversations and discussions with participating faculty in the LAS program. See student letters.

II. Strategic Purposes and Performance

A & B. Centrality, Goals and Objectives.

The original design of the LAS minor was motivated by the important student interest in Latin American courses, particularly in the College of Letter and Sciences, the dominance of Spanish among the languages studied at UWW, and the institutional commitment to significantly expanding the scope of global studies on campus. In organizing a pedagogically sound and coherent course of study, the committee charged with drawing up the LAS minor curriculum found that the current courses offering at UWW were insufficient to permit an "English language" track in the minor for those students who might be interested in the cultural or social science aspects of the minor but who might not have the language skills for upper-level Spanish level language classes. Therefore, one-half of the required courses for the minor are upper level Spanish literature and language classes. In practice, this requirement has limited the appeal of the minor to Spanish Language majors. The other natural constituency for the minor are majors

in International Relations, but here again the paucity of courses mean that it is impossible to combine the two programs.

This program, therefore, has remained quite small, but it does have its virtues. The reality is that the program functions as a kind of honors program for highly motivated students. The challenge for the coordinator, therefore, is to mentor these students and design a challenging study programs in order to engage their interest. All of the students in this program have therefore participated in at least one such Independent study course. Moreover, last year, two LAS minors won Undergraduate Research grants for their projects and presented their results at regional and national conferences. One student also participated in a travel study course to Latin America and now has an internship in Argentina. Two of these graduates will likely continue to graduate school in the next few years. Two others will receive secondary teaching certificates in Spanish language instruction.

C. Trend Data.

There have been two graduates in the LAS minor. Two more are currently enrolled.

D. Program Improvement Resulting from Assessment Efforts

The most important assessment initiative for the minor will be to conduct a new survey of UWW department course offerings on Latin America and ascertain the commitment of the sponsoring departments to include them in regular rotation in order conclude whether a re-design of the minor will both meet the interdisciplinary goals of the minor as well the need of LAS minors to be assured that the necessary courses will be reasonably available.

III. Resource Availability and Development

A. Faculty and Staff Characteristics.

Seth Meisel, History, is the program coordinator and principal advisor of LAS minors. He regularly offers four different upper level courses in Latin American history (342, 343, 346, 347) and at the end of this year will have six different courses in rotation. Prof. Meisel has conducted extensive archival research in Argentina, has published in Latin American history, has served on the board of the North Central Council of Latin Americanists and was recently appointed Research Associate at the Center for Latin American Studies at UW-Milwaukee.

Sharon Tiffany is Professor of Anthropology and has conducted research in Oaxaca, Mexico. In the last four years she as offered Anthropology 228 and 312 one time each. She has also offered a special seminar on “Gender and Development.”

Carol Rosen is Professor of Geography and offers Geography 363 approximately every two years. Geography 365 is no longer offered as the faculty member who developed that course has left the University.

Manuel Ossers and Elaine Johnson, Professors of Spanish, and have published on Latin American authors. They share teaching duties in Spanish 360, 333, 334, 453, 454 which are in regular rotation. Professor Johnson has also introduced a new course on “Women Writers of Spain and the Americas” (686-496).

Carlos de Onis, Professor of Spanish and Ethnic Studies, teaches, 615-330. 615-480 has been discontinued.

B. Teaching and Learning Enhancement

There are two new courses that the LAS minor will consider integrating into the major. Tom Schweigert, Economics, has introduced a new course on Latin American Economies and Mike Allsen, Music, is currently teaching a new course on Latin America Music.

Further, Sociology and Political Science have both in the last two years hired personnel with teaching and/or research experience in Latin America. It is, as yet, unclear whether either department is committed to developing a Latin America focused course.

Latin American Studies Minor Course List and Objectives

GOALS: 2, 3, 5

740-342 EARLY LATIN AMERICA TO 1860 GH 3 cr

An introduction to the history of Latin America from pre-Columbian times to 1860. Traces the development of colonial rule and the formation of new nations after 1810. Topics include the nature of pre-Columbian societies, the resistance and accommodations of indigenous peoples to European conquest, the institutions and culture of African slavery, the role of the Catholic church, the evolution of race, gender, and class hierarchies, and fragility of the new nation-states after Independence.

Prereq: Sophomore standing or consent of instructor.

GOALS: 2, 3, 5

740-343 MODERN LATIN AMERICA GH 3 cr

This course surveys the history of Latin America from the 1860 to the present, centering discussion on the examples of Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Mexico and Cuba. Topics include the legacy of colonialism, the consolidation of nation-states, Latin America's participation in the world economy, reformist and revolutionary political movements, military dictatorships, foreign intervention and the emergence of social movements.

Prereq: Sophomore standing or consent of instructor.

GOALS: 2, 3, 5

892-312/512 ARCHAEOLOGY OF MESO- AND SOUTH AMERICA GS 3 cr

Survey of Pre-Columbian civilizations and contemporary indigenous societies of Latin America, with emphasis on Mesoamerica (Maya and Aztec) and Andean South America.

Prereq: Individual and Society or Global Perspectives or consent of instructor.

GOALS: 2, 3, 4

615-330 CHICANO AND LATINO AMERICAN THOUGHT GE/Diversity 3 cr

A close analysis of the ideological perspectives of the Hispanic Movement will show that the issues inherent in this movement are not new ones. The Hispanic situation, that of a conquered people, traces its beginnings to the early XVI century with the conquest of Tenochtitlan by Hernan Cortes. Essays from both the conqueror and the conquered will be studied that show that ideologically Aztlan and Latino American countries have a similar point of reference.

GOALS: 1, 3, 4

686-360 SPANISH AMERICAN CIVILIZATION 3 cr

An introduction to the geography, history, literature, sociology, economics and political life of Spanish America.

Prereq: 6 cr. of 300 level courses in Spanish or cons instr.

GOALS: 2, 3, 5

722-363 GEOGRAPHY OF SOUTH AMERICA 3 cr

A study of countries south of the Caribbean with emphasis on their natural resources and economic activities. Considerable attention will be given to problems of cooperation among the Americas.

Prereq: 900-140 or 722-230 or junior standing or consent of instructor.

GOALS: 2, 3, 5

722-365 GEOGRAPHY OF MIDDLE AMERICA 3 cr

A study of the activities of the peoples of Mexico, Central America, and the West Indies, their problems in relation to their natural environment, and their problems as a transitional area between two large continents.

Prereq: 900-140 or 722-230 or junior standing or consent of instructor.

GOALS: 1, 3, 4

686-333 SPANISH-AMERICAN READINGS I 3 cr

Language study through reading and discussion in Spanish of selected works of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Spanish America. Emphasis on vocabulary acquisition.

Prereq: 686-321 or equivalent or consent of instructor.

GOALS: 2, 3, 5

892-218 CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY GS 3 cr

Varieties of human cultures past and present throughout the world, emphasizing the comparative study of social systems.

GOALS: 1, 4, 5

615-491/691 TRAVEL STUDY 1-3 cr

Repeatable

GOALS: 2, 3, 5

230-360 GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE WORLD ECONOMY 3 cr

The historical growth experience of industrialized economies; the challenge of development in Asia, Africa and Latin America; problems of transition in formerly centrally planned economies. Economic growth and structural change; income distribution and poverty; population growth and human resources; international trade, foreign investment and development assistance.

Prereq: ECON 202 or ECON 211

GOALS: 2, 3, 4

740-346 HISTORY OF MEXICO GH 3 cr

A survey of the social, economic, political, and cultural history of Mexico from the pre-Columbian period to the present. Emphasis on the twentieth century.

Prereq: Sophomore standing or cons of instr

GOALS: 2, 5

150-144 CULTURAL MUSIC OF THE AMERICAS GA/Diversity 3 cr

An exploration of the musical culture of native Americans, Latin Americans, and black Americans with regard to their significance in U.S. history and society of the present. Through music, ethnic similarities and differences will be studied to obtain a broad and meaningful perspective of these cultural effects.

Prereq: 900-110.

GOALS: 1, 3, 4

686-453 SURVEY OF SPANISH AMERICAN LITERATURE 3 cr

General survey of main developments, works and authors of the literature from the discovery of the New World until 1888.

Prereq: 9 cr of 300 level courses in Spanish.

GOALS: 1, 3, 4

686-454 SURVEY OF SPANISH AMERICAN LITERATURE 3 cr

General survey of main developments, works and authors of the literature from 1888 until the present time.

Prereq: 9 cr of 300 level courses in Spanish.

GOALS: 1, 3, 4

686-483 CONTEMPORARY SPANISH AMERICAN NARRATIVE 3 cr

Students will study in depth selected novels and short stories from the beginning of the Spanish American new narrative in the 1940's through its "boom" in the 1960's, to the present. Different works and/or authors will be studied each term the course is offered.

Prereq: 9 credits of 300 level courses in Spanish.