

Degree Requirements, Latin American Studies

Graduate handbook information is updated and maintained by each program. Graduate handbooks are available within each program's office and online at <https://utexas.box.com/v/UTAustinGraduateHandbooks>. Please contact the program with concerns or questions.

Master of Arts

The Latin American Studies Master's Program is interdisciplinary and very flexible. In consultation with the graduate advisor and faculty mentor(s), students should design their program of study to incorporate basic theory and methodology courses relevant to their academic interests.

Students must choose a major (15 semester hours of coursework) and a minor (nine semester hours). Major and minor fields may be: (a) any disciplinary areas that offer Latin American or relevant methodological content coursework, such as Anthropology, Community and Regional Planning, Economics, Geography, Government, History, Sociology, Public Policy, Literature/Culture, Art History, etc.; (b) any interdisciplinary areas with content relevant to the student's academic interests such as African and African Diaspora Studies, Mexican American and Latina/o Studies, Native American and Indigenous Studies, Religious Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, etc.; (c) general themes such as violence, feminism, the environment, media, LGBTQ studies, etc.; or (d) methodologies such as Statistics, Geographical Information Systems, Information Technologies, qualitative methods, etc.

Students may also organize their coursework to fulfill the requirements for one of the [Portfolio Programs](#) offered by the Graduate School. Typical Portfolio Programs that some Latin American Studies Master's students complete include: [Digital Studies](#), [Native American and Indigenous Studies](#), and [Women's and Gender Studies](#).

Most plans require the completion of at least 33 semester hours of coursework. The only required courses for the LAS MA program are the Proseminar (Latin American Studies 384) and the thesis (Latin American Studies 698A and Latin American Studies 698B) or the primary and secondary report courses (Latin American Studies 397R and 398R). Dual degree programs may require a different number of hours.

Under all the Master of Arts degree plans, the student must develop a proficiency (reading level competency) in Spanish, Portuguese, an indigenous language of Latin America, or another language as approved by the Graduate Advisor with substantial scholarship in the student's field of interest. Examinations are held each academic year, and the student may repeat them until proficiency is indicated.

During the first year after admission, students will work to select two supervising professors to serve in their thesis committee. The committee chair or mentor must be a member of the Latin American Studies Graduate Studies Committee. The second member or reader can be a faculty member from any other unit within The University of Texas at Austin. The thesis format must be in accordance with the Graduate School [requirements](#) and must also be approved by the two thesis committee members. Master's students who wish to write a thesis or report in a language other than English must consult with their mentor(s) and the graduate advisor before submitting a formal [petition](#) to the Graduate School.

Doctor of Philosophy

The doctoral program in Latin American Studies provides flexible yet rigorous training for a select number of excellent students whose proposed doctoral program requires an interdisciplinary approach. Our doctoral students combine interdisciplinary training with a focus on practical applications, acquiring not only specialist knowledge of their chosen subject, but also a range of skills and expertise in problem solving and connecting ideas. Upon completion of the degree, students frequently enter academic and non-academic professions in which they apply theoretical and methodological knowledge to real-world problems. As part of this training, students are required to participate in a professional placement before defending their doctoral dissertation.

Doctoral students must complete at least 30 semester hours of coursework beyond the master's degree program, excluding hours in the dissertation courses (Latin American Studies 399W, Latin American Studies 699W, or Latin American Studies 999W). The only required course for the LAS Doctoral program is the Proseminar (Latin American Studies 384). Upon approval of the Graduate Advisor, the LAS 384 requirement may be waived only for those students that satisfactorily completed this requirement as part of their MA program in Latin American Studies at UT Austin.

PhD Years 1 and 2

The first two years of the doctoral program are typically dedicated to coursework. Doctoral students must choose a major (15 semester hours of coursework), a first minor (nine semester hours), and a second minor (six hours) using [this form](#). Major and minor fields may be: (a) any disciplinary areas that offer Latin American or relevant methodological content coursework, such as Anthropology, Community and Regional Planning, Economics, Geography, Government, History, Sociology, Public Policy, Literature/Culture, Art History, etc.; (b) any interdisciplinary areas with content relevant to the student's academic interests such as African and African Diaspora Studies, Mexican American and Latina/o Studies, Native American and Indigenous Studies, Religious Studies, Women's and Gender Studies, etc.; (c) general themes such as violence, feminism, the environment, media, LGBTQ studies, etc.; or (d) methodologies such as Statistics, Geographical Information Systems, Information Technologies, qualitative methods, etc.

Students may also organize their coursework to fulfill the requirements for one or more of the [Portfolio Programs](#) offered by the Graduate School. Typical Portfolio Programs that some Latin American Studies doctoral students complete include: [African and African Diaspora Studies](#), [Cultural Studies](#), [Digital Studies](#), [Native American and Indigenous Studies](#), and [Women's and Gender Studies](#).

During the first year after admission, students will work to select one or two supervising professor(s) from within the Latin American Studies Graduate Studies Committee membership for their dissertation committee. The supervising professor(s) will serve as chair(s) of the dissertation committee and will be responsible for coordinating the program of study with the student and the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies graduate advisor. The supervising professor must be from the academic area about which the work is being written. Coursework and other requirements for the degree are decided upon jointly by the student, the dissertation committee chair, and the graduate advisor.

PhD Year 3: Advancing to Candidacy

Students are required to take comprehensive examinations and to defend their dissertation prospectus by the end of the third year in residence. Students are admitted to candidacy upon passage of written

and oral examinations conducted by a three-member examination committee. The three-member examination committee must be comprised of members of the Latin American Studies Graduate Studies Committee and are chosen by the student in consultation with the mentor(s) and graduate advisor. Upon a successful oral defense of the comprehensive exams, a fourth member (ideally from a unit outside Latin American Studies Graduate Studies Committee) will be selected by the student and the mentor to form part of the examining committee that will evaluate the student's dissertation research proposal (i.e., the dissertation prospectus). The prospectus should be submitted and be approved by the examination committee no later than one semester after the student has successfully passed the comprehensive exams. Doctoral students in Latin American studies must prepare a dissertation prospectus of an interdisciplinary nature. Approval of the proposal requires defending it in an oral forum. More information regarding the doctoral examination and prospectus defense process can be found [here](#).

PhD Years 4 and 5: Research, Dissertation Writing, & Defense

A dissertation committee of at least four professors will be selected by the student and the mentor before being approved by the graduate advisor and the Graduate School. This is required to complete the process of advancing to candidacy. Three of those members (including the dissertation chair) must be members of the Latin American Studies Graduate Studies Committee. The fourth member should be from a unit outside of Latin American Studies and could be either a faculty at UT-Austin or elsewhere (i.e., pending approval of dissertation chair and graduate advisor). Once the student has advanced to candidacy, the remaining of the doctoral program is centered on the preparation of the dissertation.

The dissertation format must be in accordance with the Graduate School [requirements](#) and must also be approved by all members of the dissertation committee. Doctoral students who wish to write a dissertation in a language other than English must consult with their mentor(s) and the graduate advisor before submitting a formal [petition](#) to the Graduate School.

Students are expected to develop a high level of competence in reading and speaking in Spanish, Portuguese, or an indigenous language. They must also attain reading-level competence in another language appropriate to the program of study and approved by the dissertation committee and graduate advisor.

Additional details on both the master's and the doctoral degree program are available [here](#) or from the graduate advisor.

Dual Degree Master's Programs

The Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies offers the following dual degree programs. More information is available [here](#).

| Major(s) | Degree(s) |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Business administration | Master of Business Administration |
| Communication studies | Master of Arts |
| Community and regional planning | Master of Science in Community and Regional Planning |
| Global policy studies | Master of Global Policy Studies |
| Information studies | Master of Science in Information Studies |

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|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Journalism and media | Master of Arts |
| Law | Doctor of Jurisprudence |
| Public affairs | Master of Public Affairs |
| Radio-television-film | Master of Arts |
| Social Work | Master of Science in Social Work |