Latin American and Caribbean Studies
Assistant Professor Carlos Dimas, Ph.D., Chair

- The Latin American and Caribbean Studies Minor
- Combined Major in Latin American and Caribbean Studies
- The Interdisciplinary Major in Latin American and Caribbean Studies
- Courses
- Visit the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Web site

Courses:
LAS 160
Caribbean Cultures
This course exposes students to various issues that shape the Caribbean region today and strengthens their critical thinking skills as they begin to grasp the commonality and complexity of this region. Topics include status of women, education, democracy and dictatorship, relations with (former) colonial powers, relations with the United States, Caribbean federalism, language and everyday life. Although history is not the focus of the course, its impact on these topics is examined. Satisfies general studies humanities foreign language cultural requirement.

LAS 195
Tradition and Revolution in Contemporary Latin American Literature and Society
Latin American government and society arises out of a tradition of centralized power that is vastly different from that of democratic society in North America. This course provides some insight into the often troubled relationship between the U.S. and its Latin American neighbors. It examines the development of this tradition in some classic statements by D. F. Sarmiento, José Martí and Octavio Paz, among others. The bulk of the reading is comprised of literary works that either support or subvert the authoritarian tradition of government and society in Latin America. Emphasis is placed on class discussion analyzing the ways in which the literary works in question tend to support or subvert the portrait of Latin America established at the opening of the semester.

LAS 201
Salsa, Samba and Santana: The World of Latin Music
Latin music is a rapidly rising phenomenon. This course explores the roots and evolution of Latin musical styles from their origins in the Catholic cultures of southwestern Europe and its mixing with Native American and African cultures in the colonial Americas beginning in the 15th century. The focus is the urban popular musical styles that emerged in the late 19th century, and which developed into the famous regional styles of Argentine tango, Brazilian samba, Cuban son and salsa, Dominican merengue, Mexican rancheros and baladas, and many others over the course of the 20th century. Students will also consider the roles the Latin regions have had in other styles such as jazz, classical music, rock and roll, and rap. Students will assess the varying degrees of success Latin sounds are having in the major world musical markets today.

LAS 215
US and Latin America Relation
The great Latin American "liberator," Simón Bolívar, commented that, "The United States seems destined to plague us with miseries in the name of liberty." This course examines the historical development of the relationship between Latin America and the United States from Latin American independence to the present, concentrating mostly on the 20th century. It examines specific historical examples, including the Spanish-American War, the Panama Canal, the occupation of Haiti, the Cuban Revolution and the drug wars in Colombia. It looks at how this relationship developed in specific historical contexts, such as the Cold War. Students will discuss how the historic relationship and the present day context impact relations between Latin America and the U.S. today.

LAS 220
Pirates, Plantations and Sugar: A History of the Caribbean
The Caribbean is an incredibly diverse region that boasts a rich and complex history. This course examines the history of the Caribbean from the time of the indigenous groups up to the 20th century. Students look at the indigenous cultures that preceded Spanish colonization, the shock of colonization, the age of the pirates and buccaneers, the growth of the plantation economy and the slave trade, the age of independence and the modern period. They will examine the modern period by studying four case studies - Haiti/Dominican Republic, Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Commonwealth (English speaking) Caribbean.

LAS 221
Ancient Cultures of Latin America
The great civilizations of the Americas flourished centuries before the Spanish arrived (uninvited) to those shores. There were three great regions in Latin America in which cultures developed – in what is today central Mexico, in southern Mexico and northern Central America, and in Peru. The final civilization in each of these regions was the Aztec, Maya, and Inca respectively, yet these empires were built on the foundation of the important civilizations that preceded them. The course is divided into three sections, and in each one of these regions will be discussed.

LAS 224
Latin American History: 1492-1820
This survey course examines Latin American history from the time of Columbus' first voyages to the end of the 19th century. The course discusses the contact between and mixtures of diverse peoples in the Americas, especially the pre-Columbian populations, the Spanish and Portuguese, and the Africans brought forcibly to the Americas as slave laborers. It covers period of conquest, the colonial period, the wars of independence and the first decades of nation building in Latin America in order to build a foundation in Latin American history. The course examines political, economic, social and cultural factors and how they played off one another throughout the 400-year period. The readings are a combination of primary texts and scholarly works on Latin American history. Film is used to explore parts of this history. The course format is a combination of lecture and discussion.

LAS 225
Introduction to Latin American Studies
This course introduces students to the many aspects of that region of the world known as Latin America. The course is interdisciplinary in nature in order to give students a more complete and unified picture of how the many aspects of cultural, economic, social and political life in Latin America come together to explain what is generally
meant by the phrases "Latin America" and "Latin American." The course explores native civilizations, historical evolution, political systems and institutions, cultural and artistic movements, social structures, regional economic/development issues, and many other topics such as drug trafficking, the environment and gender studies. General Studies Foundations-Humanities

LAS 228
Dictators and Revolutionaries in Latin America
In the 20th century, Latin American nations experienced cycles of revolutions, democracies and dictatorships. Revolutions have taken the form not only of familiar guerrilla-based insurrections, but also right-wing military coups. This course examines this cycle of revolution, democracy and dictators by looking at several of the key revolutionary movements and some of the long dictatorships that have shaped Latin America during that century. Specifically, it examines the Mexican Revolution (1910 - present), the Cuban Revolution (1959 - present), and the Zapatista struggle (1994-present), and the political situations that preceded or followed these revolutions. It also looks at some of the right-wing coups and populist movements, specifically examining cases in Argentina and Chile. Finally, students discuss if revolution remains a viable way to promote change in Latin America in the 21st century.

LAS 235
Major Authors and Topics in Latin American and Caribbean Literature
This course focuses on major authors, major literary forms, or significant intellectual issues in Latin American and Caribbean literature. Non-English works will be read in translation. May be repeated with a new topic. Recent topics include "Women Writers of the Caribbean" and" Latin American Poetry."

LAS 237
Gender, Women and Power in the Global South
This course explores the complex gender dynamics of women in non-Western societies during the years of Western imperialist domination, nationalist resistance struggles, and the post colonial era. This course begins by deconstructing the term "Third World" and seeing how that term can be read against the context of imperialism. This course examines gender constructs in the Global South (formerly Third World) through a variety of written and visual materials including autobiographical accounts, ethnographies, historical fiction, films, and slides. Topics include patterns of gender domination and female resistance; the interplay of race and gender hierarchies under colonial rule; the Western gaze and representations of Third World "primitive" Gender, and the feminization of labor and the global economy, reproductive strategies, and sex trafficking. CONNECTIONS-GLOBAL

LAS 240
Revolutionary Printmaking
This course provides an historical overview of political printmaking in Latin America. More specifically, it focuses on the graphic art surrounding the Mexican Revolution, the Cuban revolution and 20th century Brazilian folhetos. Students examine the social and political framework in which these artists lived and worked and explore traditional relief and intaglio processes. As a studio course, it meets six hours per week.

LAS 259
Religious Traditions in Latin America
This course examines the many religious traditions that co-exist in the diverse region we know as Latin America. Specifically, the course discusses Catholicism,
including Liberation Theology, Indigenous religious traditions that have survived and African traditions that have continued to thrive throughout Latin America. The course emphasizes how these traditions often adapted and blended together to form what we know as syncretic traditions. Finally, the course examines the growing influence of Pentacostalism in Latin America.

**LAS 260**  
**Environmental Science of Latin America and the Caribbean**  
This course addresses environmental topics as they pertain to Latin America and the Caribbean Islands. Topics include deforestation, agriculture, conservation of biodiversity, wetland loss, coral reef degradation, ecotourism and others. Emphasis is placed on merging Latin American and Caribbean culture with environmental management and policy.  
Prerequisite: EVS 101 or permission of the instructor

**LAS 270**  
**People of the World: America**  
This course examines the indigenous people of America. It begins with an assessment of who the first Americans were and when they arrived. Controversy surrounds this issue. Students will review the latest findings and hypotheses to develop a thorough understanding of the initial peopling of America. Then, the course examines four different groups who have, and to some extent still do, inhabit different regions of America—the Cree, indigenous populations of Pennsylvania, the Maya and the Yanomamo. Students will gain a better understanding of the heritage and diversity of Native Americans as well as the different effects that the modern world has on their lives.

**LAS 275**  
**Service Learning in the Dominican Republic**  
This Interim course provides Albright College students a first-hand opportunity to study the Spanish-speaking nation of the Dominican Republic from an interdisciplinary perspective. Following three two-hour seminars held during the fall semester preceding the January Interim, students will travel to Samana, Dominican Republic for three weeks to study language and culture. Students may choose to receive interdisciplinary, Spanish, Latin American studies or psychology credit. Students who wish to receive credit in psychology may do so by selecting projects in the discipline in consultation with a faculty member in the field.

Students enrolled in this course will observe and experience a cultural system distinct from their own in order to understand the complexity of this system as well as the complexity of their own cultural system. They will also have a better understanding of how human behavior influences and is influenced by perceptions of cultural "norms." Students will improve in all four areas of second language competency: listening, speaking, reading and writing. To accomplish the aforementioned goals, students will live with Dominican families in the small town of Samana. They will examine the social dynamics of this community beginning in the family unit, and observe and experience daily life in the community. They will also contribute to the community through a variety of service learning projects. Students will travel to other areas of the island and participate in a number of college-organized excursions.

**LAS 277**  
**History of the Family in Latin America**
The family, as both a cultural expression and a socio-economic unit, has played a seminal role in the historical development of Latin America. The study of the family is important not only for understanding society, but for understanding the ways in which political and economic power is structured in the region. The course is divided into two parts: part one examines the colonial period and the nineteenth century, and part two the twentieth century. In each section we will discuss different issues that have confronted Latin American families, such as family responses to the challenges of the church and/or the state; how poverty and wealth affect and create different types of families; how race and ethnicity play a role in the family structure; how families help to structure the economic realm of Latin America; how poverty perpetuates family disintegration, and some of the proposals of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to try to mitigate that situation. Finally, we will briefly discuss the issue of migration and family in Latin American and the United States.

LAS 280
Martinique Studies
This Interim course introduces students to the people and lands of the French speaking, Caribbean island of Martinique through an intensive and structured visit to the island. After reading and assessing a series of preparatory articles, students will travel to Martinique with faculty to complete a series of activities that will enlighten them to many aspects of Martinique life. These undertakings include lectures at the university, field trips to various parts of the island and a variety of directed events, which will encourage students to participate in many facets of Martinique culture.

LAS 285
Ritual in Latin America
This course examines the phenomena of ritual and festival by using case studies from Latin America. It first examines the linkages between religion and society, and then students discuss the symbolic action of ritual in order to learn how to "read" ritual action. Some of the rituals to be examined, in order to understand the themes above, will be the peyote ritual in Northern Mexico; Christmas rituals and Day of the Dead, also in Mexico; the rituals of Vodun and Santeria that are practiced in Haiti and Cuba respectively; the Afro-Brazilian ritual of congado (the devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary); rituals to the ancestors in highland Bolivia; and perhaps others.

LAS 298
Field Study in Peru
This course introduces students to the basics of field studies within the Anthropological and Ecological disciplines. The study culminates in student projects focused on a Communal Reserve in the Amazon region in Peru. Specific topics include techniques in biological surveys with emphasis on cataloging species diversity, habitat assessment, quantifying human influence, and evaluating efficacy of wildlife management techniques. Anthropological/Sociological methods include survey and demographic data collection, interviewing, direct observation and participant observation followed by methods of assessment including both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Students will be required to propose and conduct group projects during a 10-day field component in Peru.

LAS 299
Disease, Death and Society in Latin American 1850-1990
This course is designed to offer an introduction to major issues in public health by analyzing these issues from national and global perspectives. A review of case studies
and theoretical approaches will help illustrate the challenges - and solutions - involved in addressing diseases and illnesses in the 21st century. This course will give special attention to the relationship of health to globalization, poverty, identity, and conflict.

General Studies Connections-Global-Humanities

LAS 307
Organized Crime
Now with a significant unit on Latin American organized crime, this course examines criminal activities carried out through criminal organizations and focuses on organized crime as it relates to cultural history, assimilation processes and characteristics of its home societies that have fostered its growth and successes. Trends in organized crime in terms of ethnicity, structure and activities are investigated.
Prerequisite: SOC 251

LAS 308
Hispanics in the U.S.
This course covers the social, historical, and economic reasons for migration to the United States in recent times as well as the development of older Hispanic communities such as those in the Southwest. The course includes readings of Chicano, Puerto Rican and Cuban literature, the study of Hispanic contributions to North American life and culture, and field trips to agencies in the Reading area that work closely with Hispanics. All readings and discussions are in Spanish.
Prerequisite: SPA 302 or permission of the instructor

LAS 319
Hispanic Culture
A study of the intellectual, artistic and socio-political achievements of Hispanic peoples. Readings, discussions, reports and examinations are in Spanish. Prerequisite: SPA 302 or permission of the instructor

LAS 320
Civilization and Culture of Mexico
This course explores Mexican history, civilization and culture through a variety of different forms such as literature, film, song and other written and vocal media. Students will gain an appreciation of the Mexican perspective of their own history, culture and civilization. Consequently, the course is in Spanish, and all course requirements such as exams, reports, oral presentation, projects, etc. are in Spanish. Satisfies Spanish concentration requirement. Prerequisite: SPA 302 or permission of the instructor

LAS 321
Contemporary Culture in the Southern Cone
The countries of the Southern Cone of South America, which include Chile, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay share many characteristics: they are all located geographically in the Southernmost part of the Western Hemisphere; they have been somewhat removed from contemporary global balance-of-power rivalries; for the most part they have fairly homogenous societies (Paraguay is the one exception to this); they generally have more developed economies; and they have all experienced harsh dictatorships followed by democratic transitions. But these countries also have features which distinguish them as well. This course explores the many aspects of contemporary life and culture in these Southern Cone countries and introduces students to a part of Latin America that often gets overlooked. Readings and lectures are conducted in Spanish. Satisfies Spanish concentration requirement. Prerequisite: SPA 302 or permission of the instructor
LAS 322
The Andean World
This course focuses on the Andean nations: Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia. Topics include the geographic setting of desert highlands and jungle; the Inca culture and its legacy; Inca and Spanish cultures in contact; social problems and social protest; transitions from dictatorship to democracy; writers and artists from the pre-Columbian era to the present who reflect the Andean experience. Readings and lectures are in Spanish. Satisfies Spanish concentration requirement. Prerequisite: SPA 302 or permission of the instructor

LAS 325
Latin American Perspectives
The course begins with a study of some of the basic premises about Latin America. Then, using these ideas, a particular question or problem is examined in each of the following areas: Latin American history, political science, economics, anthropology, art and literature. Along with the readings, other cultural events are incorporated into the course, including films and slides. Prerequisite: SPA 302 or permission of the instructor

LAS 330
Mexico: Race, Nation and Culture
This course will introduce students to the history of “Mexico.” The quotations are there for a reason. The Mexico we think of now has only existed since the 1820s, as a bureaucratic and administrative space. This course is a study of not only of Mexico as a country and state, but the formation of Mexico as an idea. Beginning in the pre-Columbian, the course will move to the colonial era, and close into modern day events in Mexico. Some of the events we will focus on will be life as a colony, connections to Asia, the turbulent 1800s, the Mexican Revolution, relations with the US, etc. The purpose will be to build not only an understanding of Mexico, but of the nation’s place within Latin America and the Globe.

LAS 340
Women and Gender in Latin America
This course follows the history of women and gender ideologies in Latin America from the beginning of the colonial period up to the present. In the first half of the course, the colonial period, students discuss European gender expectations in Latin America, and look at the responses to those expected roles that many women took: mother, lover, nun, wife, widow, plantation owner and adventurer. The course looks at the very different experiences of and standards for non-European women in the Americas. The second half of the course looks at women in Latin America from the mid-19th century up to the present, again exploring different roles those women assumed, such as workers, suffragettes, artists, politicians and revolutionaries. The course also looks at gender ideologies such as patriarchy, machismo and marianismo, and how they impacted both men and women. Throughout the course students examine both extraordinary and ordinary women and discuss the diverse roles they have played in the history of Latin America through the reading of texts, primary accounts, the viewing of films and documentaries, and discussion.

LAS 345
Latin American Politics
Many world problems emerge in Latin America—high infant mortality, drugs, hunger, population growth without jobs, economic stagnation, the debt crisis, foreign aid, trade and outside intervention. This course is about the origins of traditional and
contemporary political problems and potential remedies for these problems. Students are encouraged to do the assigned reading with a view to offering their own analyses and possible solutions.

**LAS 352**  
*Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World: Explorations in the History of the Black Diaspora from Sao Tome to Saint Dominigue*  
A majority of the persons who migrated to the Americas before 1800 came from Africa. Very few of them came willingly, but without their economic and cultural contributions the world we know today would not have come into being. The goal of this course is to begin to understand the experiences and achievements of these Africans and their descendants in four regions of the Atlantic world - Africa itself, Brazil, the West Indies and the Chesapeake - between the mid-15th century and the revolutionary struggle for Haitian independence at the beginning of the 19th.

**SPA 375**  
*Service Learning in the Dominican Republic*  
This Interim course provides students a firsthand opportunity to study the Spanish-speaking nation of the Dominican Republic from an interdisciplinary perspective. Following three, two-hour seminars held during the fall semester preceding the January Interim, students will travel to Samaná, Dominican Republic for three weeks to study language and culture. Students may choose to receive credit in interdisciplinary studies, Spanish, Latin American studies or psychology. Students who wish to receive credit in psychology may do so by selecting projects in the discipline in consultation with a faculty member in the field.

Students enrolled in this course observe and experience a cultural system distinct from their own in order to understand the complexity of this system as well as the complexity of their own cultural system. They will also have a better understanding of how human behavior influences and is influenced by perceptions of cultural "norms."

Students improve skills in all four areas of second language competency: listening, speaking, reading and writing. To accomplish the aforementioned goals, students live with Dominican families in the small town of Samaná. They examine the social dynamics of this community beginning with the family unit. They observe and experience daily life in the community and contribute to the community through a variety of service learning projects. Students also travel to other areas of the island and participate in a number of college-organized excursions. Prerequisite: SPA 302 or permission of the instructor.

**LAS 380**  
*Special Topics in Latin American Literature and Culture*  
This course offers special topics of interest in Latin American literature and culture. Readings, discussions, reports and examinations are in Spanish. Prerequisite: SPA 302 or permission of the instructor.

**LAS 400**  
*Seminar on Latin America*  
This advanced level course takes an in-depth look at Latin America from an interdisciplinary perspective. The purpose of this course is twofold: Students are exposed to interdisciplinary methodologies and will learn in the process how to synthesize effectively multiple disciplines around common themes; and they will then review current trends and research directions on Latin America from a variety of disciplines (politics, economics, history, society and culture) and, in a major seminar
research project, will apply an interdisciplinary methodology to this material in order to gain a broader, more holistic understanding of the region.

SPP J60
Floral and Fauna of Yucatan, Mexico
An exploration of the Yucatan Peninsula as experienced by the ancient and modern Maya. This Interim course will begin with a series of lecture experiences followed by a tour of the Yucatan's significant archaeological sites and natural areas. The tour will be organized by a professional archaeologist and include lectures by specialists in local flora and fauna, natural medicine and ecology. Upon return to campus, the course will conclude with additional lectures and presentations of students' research projects.