

Joint BA/MA in Latin American and Caribbean Studies

Department Website: <http://clas.uchicago.edu>

The master of arts program in Latin American and Caribbean Studies (LACS) makes it possible for highly qualified students in the College to combine a BA program in an undergraduate major with an interdisciplinary MA program in Latin American and Caribbean Studies, which provides students with a thorough knowledge of the cultures, history, politics, and languages of the region. Students are enabled to augment their undergraduate studies by placing their knowledge of a particular field in an interdisciplinary context and by continuing specialized work on the graduate level.

BA/MA students participate with MA students in all aspects of the LACS program and pursue a specific course of study depending on their research and professional interests. Students with interests across the humanities and social sciences can take advantage of the MA in Latin American and Caribbean Studies. Undergraduate students pursuing this option are in “concurrent residence” beginning in the Autumn Quarter of their fourth year at the University and remain in this status for three contiguous quarters.

For more information about course offerings and the MA program, please visit the Center for Latin American Studies (<http://clas.uchicago.edu>) webpage.

Where to Begin

Undergraduate students interested in the BA/MA program should begin by discussing this option with the director of undergraduate studies in their major and the College BA/MA adviser (Pete Segall (psegall@uchicago.edu)), followed by conversations with the student affairs coordinator of the Latin American and Caribbean Studies program and the Dean of Students Office in either the Division of the Humanities or the Division of the Social Sciences. Interested students are advised to begin these discussions in the spring of their second year in the College.

Potential applicants should meet with the BA/MA adviser in the College in the autumn of their third year and fill out a BA/MA Worksheet. The BA/MA adviser’s signature certifies that prospective applicants are far enough along in their College program to complete the course requirements for both degrees within four years.

Eligibility

Permission to receive concurrent BA/MA degrees in Latin American and Caribbean Studies is a privilege extended only to those undergraduate students who have demonstrated a record of uncommon excellence and who are sufficiently advanced in the fulfillment of the undergraduate degree requirements. The academic demands on these students are significant, and applicants are carefully reviewed in the context of both their undergraduate major and the LACS degree requirements.

- Applicants should have a GPA of 3.55 or higher for their undergraduate work and are expected to have entered their major.
- Applicants are expected to have completed 39 of the 42 courses required for graduation, including all general education requirements (exceptions must be approved by the program coordinator), before entering concurrent residence status for the three quarters preceding the anticipated quarter of graduation.

How to Apply

Interested students should apply through the online graduate application from the division in which they intend to focus their MA studies, either Humanities or Social Sciences. Consultation with the LACS student affairs coordinator will clarify the appropriate division for students who are uncertain. The application should be completed by February 1.

Applicants must submit the following items:

- MA application
- Three letters of recommendation
- Official transcript(s)
- BA/MA Worksheet, signed by the College BA/MA adviser

Applicants are not required to pay the application fee nor are they required to sit for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE).

Applicants will be interviewed by the LACS program director. These conversations will focus on the program’s requirements and the applicant’s qualifications and objectives.

The application is evaluated by the admissions committee of the MA program on the basis of the student’s academic record, letters of recommendation, and personal statement of intellectual and academic goals. Admission to the MA program is highly competitive and subject to approval by the College.

Time Limits

This course of study is not intended to prolong registration beyond four undergraduate years. All courses for both degrees must be completed in three quarters after enrollment into the LACS MA program. Students who have finished all requirements for the BA and the MA in the Spring Quarter may take both the BA and MA degrees at Spring Convocation.

The MA degree must be received no later than the Summer Quarter convocation after Autumn Quarter admission to concurrent residency.

Course Requirements

Students selected to participate in the joint degree program fulfill all general education, elective, and major requirements for the BA.

Students will be required to take nine courses, three per quarter, over the course of the year. Students are required to enroll in the LACS core course (LACS 40501 MA Proseminar). The proseminar is only offered in the Autumn Quarter. Among the remaining eight courses, five must be Latin American content courses. Students must complete an MA paper that is approved by a faculty adviser and the LACS postdoctoral lecturer.

The program is worked out by the student in consultation with the student affairs coordinator and the LACS program director. Students should note that they must have a B average in their graduate work, including the MA thesis.

Thesis Requirements

Students prepare their theses under the supervision of faculty members and the LACS postdoctoral lecturer. During the Winter and Spring Quarters, students consult with their faculty adviser as well as the LACS postdoctoral lecturer as they develop and write their theses. The lecturer will schedule biweekly individual and group meetings.

Students in a major in which a BA paper is required may (subject to the approval of their BA paper adviser, MA paper adviser, undergraduate adviser, and the director of the MA program, and with the understanding that it is based on substantial additional research and analysis) submit an MA paper proposal related to their BA essay. Undergraduate LACS majors who pursue the BA/MA option should consult with the director of the MA program about how to proceed with their theses.

Additional Guidelines

- Students who begin work towards the LACS MA degree and then leave the University without completing the program will not be allowed to complete the LACS MA degree at a later date.
- Once a student has begun to pursue both the BA degree and the MA in Latin American and Caribbean Studies degree, a leave of absence is not normally possible. Students who find that they must take a leave of absence for a medical or family emergency during this period must obtain the approval of the dean of students in the Humanities or Social Sciences as well as the dean of students in the College.
- Admissions decisions are usually not released before College pre-registration for the following year takes place. The admissions committee often wishes to see Winter Quarter grades before making decisions. Thus, applicants should pre-register for the coming academic year as usual.



Font Notice

This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

Times was used instead of Trajan.

Times was used instead of Palatino.

The editor may contact Leepfrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.