

Latin American and Caribbean Studies

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The Master of Arts in Latin American and Caribbean studies (MALACS) is a multidisciplinary program that requires students to concentrate half their courses in one disciplinary or topical area. The program's main objective is to prepare graduates for careers as analysts for the public and private sectors. Many graduates also continue on to doctoral-level studies in a variety of academic disciplines. While the program is strongest in the social sciences, opportunities are available for students to also concentrate their study in the areas of cultural studies, environmental studies, history, international business, Hispanic literature and film and Bilingual Journalism. Full-time students can expect to complete the program in 12-24 months. The program stresses a close faculty-student advising relationship and includes the participation of visiting scholars from Latin America, the Caribbean, and other regions.

MALACS is administered by the FIU Latin American and Caribbean Center (LACC), one of the largest area and language studies centers in the US that specializes in the region. In addition to the MALACS degree, LACC also administers joint JD/MALACS and MBA/MALACS degree programs that allow the student to receive both degrees in substantially less time than would be required to pursue each degree individually. LACC also administers partnership degree programs with the Joint Forces Staff College and the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC). More information on joint and partnership degrees is found at the end of this section.

For further information please contact LACC Graduate Program Director, Latin American and Caribbean Center, Florida International University, University Park DM 353, Miami, Florida 33199. Phone: (305) 348-2894; Fax: (305) 348-3593; email: MALACS@fiu.edu, or see the MALACS web site at <http://lacc.fiu.edu>.

Admission Requirements

Applicants must meet the following minimum admissions requirements:

1. Completed FIU graduate application.
2. A baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution for higher education, or equivalent.
3. A grade-point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale (or equivalent) for the last two years of undergraduate study and for any post-baccalaureate study.
4. A combined verbal and quantitative score of at least 1000 (40th percentile) on the GRE or the equivalent percentile or higher on other exams such as EXADEP, GMAT or LSAT.
5. A statement of purpose consistent with the goals of the program.

6. Three letters of recommendation.
7. International graduate student applicants whose native language is not English are required to submit a score for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or for the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). A total score of 80 on the iBT TOEFL or 6.3 overall on the IELTS is required.
8. Application for M.A. assistantship or fellowship (if applicable).
9. Approval by the program admissions committee.

Note: The above admission requirements are minimums and not all students meeting them are assured admission. Students with either a grade-point average or GRE score below the above minimums may still apply and request conditional admission. The student must provide an explanation of why the waiver is being requested.

Degree Requirements

The MALACS program requires 36 graduate credits. Nine credits consist of the program's multidisciplinary gateway course (3 credits) and two research methods courses (6 credits). Twelve credits are taken in one of the MALACS concentrations. Nine credits of breadth requirements are taken from at least two other areas of MALACS concentration or from courses outside the concentrations with Latin American and Caribbean content. MALACS offers four graduation exit options (see exit options below):

1. Completion of thesis project (6 credits),
2. Participation in one semester internship and preparation of a major research paper (6 credits),
3. Completion of two directed research projects (6 credits), or
4. Completion of six (6) additional credits of Latin American and Caribbean courses and passing a comprehensive examination.

As a non-credit requirement, students must demonstrate advanced knowledge in Spanish or Portuguese or, when approved, another foreign language from Latin America or the Caribbean.

Note: The International and Comparative Law concentration is only available to students in the joint JD/MALACS degree program described below.

MALACS Course Work

A minimum of thirty credits of course work, to be selected from the approved list of MALACS graduate courses, is required. Courses must be passed with a grade of 'B' or better and distributed as follows:

- 1) The gateway course, LAS 6003 Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean (3 credits).
- 2) Two research methods courses: (1) introductory research methods course either in the student's concentration or (2) one offered by MALACS; and LAS 6930 Latin American and Caribbean Data Analysis (3 credits).
- 3) MALACS concentration: 12 credits (four courses) selected from the graduate offerings of the student's concentration (Andean Studies, Brazilian Studies, Caribbean Studies, Comparative Politics, Comparative Sociology, Cuban Studies, Cultural Studies, Economics, Environmental Studies, Foreign Policy and Security Studies, Haitian Studies, Hispanic Literature and Film, History, International Business, International and Comparative Law, International

Development, International Relations, or Bilingual Journalism). The 12 credits must include the concentration's introductory foundation or theory course(s) when designated.

- 4) Breadth requirements: nine credits (three courses) selected from the graduate offerings of at least two MALACS concentrations other than those of the student's primary concentration. Subject to approval of the LACC Graduate Program Director, up to six credits (two courses) may be selected from the graduate offerings of FIU programs outside those of the MALACS concentrations, provided the courses have substantial Latin American and Caribbean content.

FIU policy also allows the transfer of 6 graduate credits from other universities or between FIU graduate programs, provided the courses meet program subject matter requirements.

Foreign Language

Each student is required to demonstrate reading proficiency in either Spanish or Portuguese, or in another language such as French, Haitian Creole, or Dutch when justified by research interests. Proficiency demonstrated by scoring an advanced level on the ACTFL exam for Spanish, Portuguese, or French. For other languages, corresponding tests of proficiency and levels of achievement will be required.

Advanced level on the ACTFL exam (2+ on the US government scale) can normally be attained by students with six undergraduate semesters of language instruction (in basic, intermediate and advanced level). Attainment of the required language proficiency is the responsibility of the student and extra instruction to achieve the required proficiency level must be taken outside the MALACS curriculum. Fellowships and scholarships to study Portuguese and Haitian Creole are available to selected MALACS students. Opportunities for students to improve their language proficiency is provided in courses offered by the FIU Modern Languages Department, through special summer institute language programs, and by taking designated Foreign Language Across Curriculum (FLAC) courses. Completion of a FLAC course meets the MALACS language proficiency requirement.

MALACS Graduation

Exit Options

1) Thesis Option

Students pursuing careers in the public or private sectors requiring strong research and analytic skills, or students planning to continue with Ph.D. studies, are encouraged to select the MALACS thesis exit option. The thesis is publicly defended and approved by a committee of three graduate faculty members. The committee chair and at least one other member must be from FIU departments offering courses in the MALACS concentrations. The committee as a whole must be drawn from at least two concentration departments. During the thesis period, students register for thesis credits (six credits minimum required) with their thesis committee chair.

2) Internship and Major Research Paper Option

As a substitute for the thesis option, students may select an internship and major research paper exit option. The internship exit option entails a one semester resident internship in either the public or private sector. Internships

are related to the student's MALACS concentration. A major professor from a department offering MALACS concentration courses supervises the internship. Internships may be arranged through LACC or by the student. Upon completion of the resident internship, the student prepares and publicly defends a major research paper related to the internship. During the internship period, students register for internship credits (six credits minimum required) with their major professor.

Directed Research Option

Another substitute for the thesis option is a directed research exit option. Students selecting this option will prepare and publicly defend two major research papers during this option. One research paper will address a topic in the student's MALACS concentration and the second paper will be a topic of more general interest to the region. Students will register for two directed research seminars (3 credits each) with their major professor(s).

Comprehensive Examination Option

A comprehensive examination exit option is available for mid-career professionals who already possess strong research and analytic skills or for those whose educational interests do not encompass a thesis or internship option. Students selecting the comprehensive examination option complete two additional courses in Latin American and Caribbean studies (6 credits required). The LACC Graduate Program Director arranges for the student to take comprehensive examinations covering the student's MALACS concentration and multidisciplinary Latin American and Caribbean issues. Students will not receive credit for the comprehensive exam.

Course Descriptions

Definitions of Prefixes

FLAC – Foreign Language Across Curriculums;

LAS – Latin American and Caribbean Studies;

SSI – Interdisciplinary Courses.

F – Fall semester offering; S – Spring semester offering;

SS – Summer semester offering.

LAS 5301 Culture and Society in the Rio de la Plata (3).

Argentinean and Uruguayan societies through an interdisciplinary approach and a series of relevant texts. Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor.

LAS 5907 Independent Study (1-3).

Supervised readings or field research and training. Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor. (F,S,SS)

LAS 5920 Teaching Latin American Studies (1).

Fundamentals in the teaching of Latin American Studies. Relevance and effectiveness of various methods and strategies, as well as pedagogy-related exercises. Prerequisite: Graduate standing. (F)

LAS 5933 Graduate Seminar in Latin American Studies

(1). Exposes graduate students to interdisciplinary issues for students pursuing the MA in Latin American and Caribbean Studies. May be repeated for credit up to 3 times. Prerequisite: Graduate Standing. (F,S,SS)

LAS 5955 Haiti Study Abroad (3).

Study abroad examination of Haitian Politics and Society. Part of Haitian Summer Institute. Prerequisite: Graduate standing.

LAS 6003 Survey of Latin America (3). A multidisciplinary, multimedia survey of the history, politics, societies and cultures of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Prerequisite: Graduate standing. (F)

LAS 6025 Seminar: The Humanities in Cuba (3). Interdisciplinary graduate seminar on the development of the humanities in Cuba, focusing on the major movements, artists and works in architecture, visual arts, literature, music and dance. FLAC course. Prerequisite: Graduate Standing. (F)

LAS 6905 Directed Research in Latin American and Caribbean Studies (3). Directed research under a major professor conducted to meet MALACS graduation requirements instead of a thesis. Two directed research courses are required. Prerequisite: Completion of all MALACS courses. (F,S,SS)

LAS 6930 Latin American and Caribbean Data Analysis (3). This course introduces students to basic empirical data analysis techniques while they complete an empirical research project in a Latin American or Caribbean topic. Prerequisite: Recommend a graduate research design course. (S)

LAS 6934 Research Seminar in Latin American and Caribbean Studies (3). Introduces students to intermediate level research methods while they complete a directed research project in Latin American and Caribbean studies. Prerequisites: LAS 6930 or equivalent. (F)

LAS 6942 Internship in Latin American and Caribbean Studies (1-6). Supervised internship leading to a major research paper in Latin American and Caribbean Studies. Prerequisite: All MALACS course work completed. (F,S,SS)

LAS 6970 Thesis (1-6). Requires students to enroll for thesis research for at least one credit hour every semester until thesis is completed. Prerequisite: Completion of all MALACS courses. (F,S,SS)

MALACS Approved Courses

A sample of courses approved for each MALACS concentration is provided on the MALACS web site at <http://lacc.fiu.edu>.

Courses approved for the MALACS program are posted each semester on the FIU Class Schedule at <http://sis2.fiu.edu/classschedule>. Under Special Programs and Certificate Programs select Latin American & Caribbean Studies. All courses listed from 5000 through 7000 series may be applied to the degree program. Approved courses are also posted each semester outside LACC (DM 353) or are available from the Graduate Program Director.

MALACS Joint and Partnership Degree Programs

Joint JD/MALACS Degree Program

An agreement approved by the University Graduate School, between the FIU College of Law and the College of Arts and Sciences allows students to pursue simultaneously the Juris Doctor (JD) and MALACS degrees, thereby saving considerable time over pursuing each degree separately. Students must meet the entrance requirements for both the JD and MALACS programs. Fifteen credits from the law school curriculum will be

allowed toward the MALACS program and will constitute a MALACS concentration in International and Comparative Law. Nine credits from the MALACS program will also count toward the law school curriculum requirements. All other requirements to receive either the JD or MALACS degree must be met. Additional information on the joint degree program is available on the College of Law and MALACS web sites.

Joint MBA/MALACS Degree Program

An agreement approved by the University Graduate School, between the FIU Alvah H. Chapman, Jr. Graduate School of Business and College of Arts and Sciences allows students to pursue simultaneously the Master's in Business Administration (MBA) and MALACS. In doing so the student will finish both programs much sooner than if they pursue each degree separately. Students must meet the entrance requirements for both the MBA and MALACS programs. Twelve credits from the MBA curriculum will be allowed toward the MALACS program and will constitute a MALACS concentration in International Business. Nine credits from the MALACS program will also count toward the MBA curriculum requirements. All other requirements to receive either the MBA or MALACS degree must be met. Additional information on the joint degree program is available on the Chapman Graduate School of Business and MALACS web sites.

MALACS Partnership Degree with the Joint Forces Staff College

An agreement between FIU and the Joint Forces Staff College (JFSC) of the National Defense University allows JFSC graduates to transfer 15 JFSC credits toward the MALACS degree completion requirements. Students will receive a MALACS concentration in Foreign Policy and Security Studies from JFSC courses. Students wishing to take advantage of this partnership must be accepted into the MALACS program through normal application procedures. Once accepted, students are required to take 15 credit hours of MALACS courses (5 classes): a research methods class, LAS 6003, LAS 6930, and two breadth courses in at least two MALACS concentrations other than Security Studies. JFSC students must also complete a MALACS exit option (6 credit hours) and meet MALACS language proficiency requirements. Additional information on the JFSC partnership degree program is available on the MALACS web site.

MALACS Partnership Degree with the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation

An agreement between FIU and the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) allows WHINSEC graduates to transfer 15 WHINSEC credits toward the MALACS degree completion requirements. Students will receive a MALACS concentration in Foreign Policy and Security Studies from WHINSEC courses. Students wishing to take advantage of this partnership must be accepted into the MALACS program through normal application procedures. Once accepted, students are required to take 15 credit hours of MALACS courses (5 classes): a research methods class, LAS 6003, LAS 6930, and two breadth courses in at least two MALACS concentrations other than Security Studies. WHINSEC students must also complete a MALACS exit option (6 credit hours) and meet MALACS language proficiency requirements. Additional information on the WHINSEC

partnership degree program is available on the MALACS web site.