

# Latin America program among best

By RAMESH KRISHNARAJ

*Staff Writer*  
Deciding on a major is one of the most important decisions facing students here at the University. This is no simple task considering the University offers courses in more than 100 fields, leading to 69 different bachelors degrees.

However, students with a particular interest in Latin America should consider the Latin American Studies major offered by the University.

The Institute of Latin American Studies (ILAS), in conjunction with the College of Arts and Sciences, offers interested students a special interdisciplinary curriculum leading to a BA degree with a major in Latin American Studies (LAS).

The curriculum of the LAS major, developed by the Institute, has won national recognition in recent years. In 1980 and again in 1983, the Gourman Report on Academic Programs, which rates undergraduate curricula across the country, ranked the University's Latin American Studies program number one in the nation.

Various departments collaborate to provide the integrated course offerings which comprise the major. These courses are designed to give students a comprehensive introduction to the historical and cultural aspects of Latin America. This fall, more than 40 Latin American-related courses will be offered by 12 different departments.

One of the most appealing aspects of the LAS major is the limited number of majors in the program. Only 15 seniors graduated with degrees in Latin American Studies last spring. This relatively small number of majors allows for a great deal of personalized attention for students, something not always available to students in larger departments. For example, incoming majors are treated to dinner in the fall by ILAS, where they get an opportunity to meet other students as well as faculty members. In the spring, ILAS honors its graduates with an informal celebration.

These types of activities just aren't feasible for larger departments, said Dr. Lars Schoultz, professor of political science and director of ILAS since his appointment in 1986. The LAS program has remained small intentionally, said Schoultz, "because we simply don't have a large personnel." As of now, the Institute retains a core faculty of 40 professors from various departments who teach only Latin American courses, and 43 affiliated faculty members who teach some Latin American-related courses.

The Institute emphasizes quality and not quantity, said Schoultz. "We do a truly superior job of educating our students," he said.

Schoultz's statement is supported by the fact that many faculty members affiliated with the Institute, including Schoultz himself, have won undergraduate teaching awards.

Keeping the program small has been one of the main reasons behind the program's success, Schoultz said. The program could accommodate up to a half dozen more students, but any more would be exceeding the Institute's limitations, he said.

To graduate with a major in Latin American Studies, a student must complete eight courses in a primary concentration, and five courses in a secondary concentration. These 13 courses are required in addition to the 60 hours of General College requirements, as well as the requirements of the College of Arts and Sciences for a BA degree. This rigid curriculum attracts a small but highly motivated group of individuals.

Another attractive aspect of the LAS program is the opportunity it provides undergraduates for travel to Latin America. This is one of the advantages of a well-funded program, Schoultz said. This spring, four students were awarded the Federico Gil Undergraduate Travel Award. The award allows for summer travel and research in Argentina and Guatemala. The award is named for Federico G. Gil, Kenan Professor Emeritus of political science, who served as the director of ILAS from 1959 to 1983, and who is now a special consultant to ILAS.

Although the University does not offer a graduate degree in LAS, the Institute does issue a Graduate Certificate in conjunction with any other graduate program, provided the student fulfills certain requirements. There is no graduate degree in LAS because a graduate degree implies professional training and the Institute stresses a liberal education, Schoultz said. There are no jobs available for "Latin Americanists," but there is a demand for professionally trained individuals with a knowledge of Latin America, he said.

Students interested in the LAS major are encouraged to stop by the Institute's office in 316 Hamilton Hall, or 312 Hamilton Hall to talk to Sharon Mujica, the administrator of the Institute.

# Seats

ture of the Smith Center.

"This has become a second priority," Elliot said. "Right now we're interested in doing things that can be done expeditiously."

Officials will continue to research that plan and will decide by the spring of 1990 if it is feasible, he said.

"The athletic department is willing to talk about it, and that is positive," Frye said.

Elliot stressed that renovations will not affect current seatholders. "People who sat in certain seats will not be affected by reduction in the size of their seats or elimination of their seats," he said.

Members of the press, many of whom are University sports information staff members, who normally sat in the press boxes that were removed, will be accommodated elsewhere. "We are committed to giving the press adequate work space," Elliot said.

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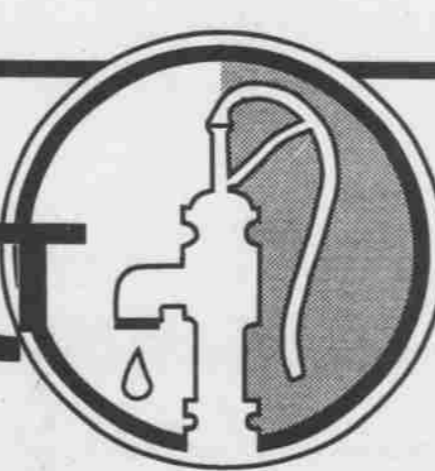


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