Overview

Despite impressive democratization and economic growth within much of Latin America and the Caribbean in recent decades, serious problems such as poverty, inequality, ethnic cleavage, crime, political violence, and illicit drug flows persist; while new issues, including those linked to climate change, resource competition, and natural disasters have emerged. The Elliott School’s Master of Arts in Latin American and Hemispheric Studies (LAHS) is an interdisciplinary program that helps students develop innovative approaches to the enduring problems and emerging challenges of the hemisphere. The program’s design and location facilitate employment at a broad spectrum of organizations based in Washington, DC, as well as elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere.

Is This Program For You?

LAHS is ideal for students seeking a rigorous academic program and an opportunity to develop professional skills for the workplace. The program’s curriculum combines required courses and electives selected to meet a student’s individual professional goals and intellectual interests. Classes meet in the evenings, accommodating the busy schedules of working professionals and allowing students to pursue daytime internships in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area.

Curriculum

The interdisciplinary 40-credit-hour M.A. program can be completed in two years of full-time study or over a longer period of part-time study. The LAHS program requires:

- A three-credit interdisciplinary cornerstone course that provides a foundation for understanding key issues in the hemisphere
- A nine-credit core field of courses that provide a multidisciplinary understanding of Latin America and the Caribbean. Students select three courses from three different disciplines including anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, and Spanish literature to fulfill this requirement
- Two specialized fields from which students take two courses in each. Disciplines include anthropology, art history, literature and culture, economic development, geography, global public health, history, international business, migration, political science, security, and sociology
- Nine credits of elective coursework that allow students to concentrate on language study; take additional courses in the fields listed above; and enroll in one-credit, career-enhancing professional skills courses
- A three-credit research methods course
- A four-credit capstone course sequence that provides student teams with an opportunity to collaborate with a sponsoring organization on a project of mutual interest in Latin America, the Caribbean, or North America
• A demonstrated oral and reading proficiency in Spanish. Other languages will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

A thesis option is available for exceptional students seeking to enhance research and writing skills.

▷ FACULTY

The LAHS program’s faculty members are internationally recognized authorities. Outstanding part-time professors are drawn from the Washington, DC, policy community, providing practitioners’ perspectives on key institutions and policies. Our outstanding faculty include:

Paula Alonso (D.Phil, Oxford University) Focus on Latin American history and politics.

Stephen B. Kaplan (Ph.D., Yale University) Focus on political economy of global markets and development and Latin American politics.

Robert E. Maguire (Ph.D., McGill University) Focus on development, Haiti, U.S.-Caribbean relations, cultural and regional geography.

Cynthia McClintock (Ph.D., Massachusetts Institute of Technology): Focus on Latin American politics.

Pablo Zuniga (Juris Doctor, University of Baltimore): Focus on current political issues in the Americas, the Organization of American States, governance, and the promotion of democratic institutions, values, and practices.

▷ INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Students in the Latin American and Hemispheric Studies program can take their study beyond Washington, DC. Study abroad options cover a semester or a shorter term.

Among the Elliott School’s semester-long exchange programs, those at Universidad Torcuato di Tella (Buenos Aires) and Carleton University (Ottawa) have particularly strong courses for LAHS students.

▷ CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The Elliott School offers career development programs for master’s students from their first semester on campus through graduation and beyond. The Graduate Student Career Development center offers career coaching, workshops, information sessions, and site visits to federal and international agencies, defense contractors, think tanks, non-profits, and other potential employers. Participation in LAHS on-campus, extra-curricular events also offers excellent networking possibilities for students. LAHS program graduates are currently working for a range of employers that include the U.S. Department of State, Inter-American Development Bank, and the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Alumni are employed in the public sector (45% of graduates), with non-profit organizations (27%), and in private-sector entities (27%) in the United States and abroad.

▷ ABOUT THE ELLIOTT SCHOOL

The George Washington University’s Elliott School of International Affairs is one of the world’s leading schools of international affairs and the largest school of international affairs in the United States. Located in the heart of Washington, DC, its mission is to educate the next generation of international leaders, conduct research that advances understanding of important global issues, and engage the policy community in the United States and around the world. In the January/February 2012 issue of Foreign Policy, the Elliott School’s undergraduate and master’s programs were ranked among the top ten international affairs programs in the United States by the Teaching, Research, and International Policy (TRIP) survey.