LACA TOPICS COURSES  
(from Fall 1998 to present)

LAC 205 Topic: Ancient Maya Civilization. Explores issues of the ancient Maya culture from the beginnings of sedentary farming villages to the emergence, collapse, and revitalization of powerful political states. The Maya are one of the most significant complex societies of pre-Columbian America who practiced advanced agriculture, built beautiful stone architecture, and lived in large cities set within a challenging tropical environment. Archaeology minor elective course.

LAC 205A Topic: Latino/a America - Understanding the Latino/a Community Locally and Nationally. An interdisciplinary course for first-year students that examines the history, politics, culture, and issues surrounding the national debate on the impact of the growing Hispanic population and immigration to the U.S. Students will gain knowledge of the socio-cultural experience of Hispanics in the U.S.; an understanding of the complex relationships between immigration, economics, and politics; an appreciation for the artistic expressions of the Hispanic experience; and an understanding of the similarities and differences between the diverse peoples of the Hispanic Diaspora. Through service and experiential learning, as well as a field study (May 6-8) trip to South Florida at the end of the semester, students will come to a personal understanding of the issues facing Hispanic immigrants in our society. Prerequisites: first-year student standing and participation in the Language Living and Learning Community in Elizabeth Hall; instructor's consent required. Fee: Students will be responsible for additional cost for South Florida field study: $700.

LAC 205A Topic: Mexico as a Global Culture. Introduces the students to Mexico as a global culture, from its pre-Hispanic past to today. Topics include: the pre-Hispanic past; the native cultures at contact; Indians into Mexicans; problems of independence, revolution, and civil war and the founding of modern Mexico; the perils of economic development up to NAFTA; the globalization of Mexico’s culture today; the U.S. border and beyond; and Mexican-American culture in the U.S.

LAC 205A Topic: Peoples of the Andes. Survey of the cultures of the Andean region during both pre-Hispanic and modern times, beginning with a discussion of pre-Inca peoples, the rise and fall of the Inca Empire, and the impact of the arrival of Pizarro and his men on Andean society. Also analyzes the impact of processes such as war and political upheaval, the internationalization of labor, national austerity programs, the global economic crisis, urbanization, migration, development projects, etc., upon Andean peoples. The economic and political strategies Andean people use to ensure their interests at several levels: the household, social class, neighborhoods, and special interest groups, will also be discussed.

LAC 305A Topic: The Real and the Supernatural in Latin America. Examines the relationships between people's belief systems and the economic, social, and political components of their cultures. Explores ways in which people of different cultures cope with the unpredictability of everyday life during normal times and those of rapid culture change. Focuses on the folklore traditions in Latin America of the supernatural, including conditions under which incidences of witchcraft increase, and explores pharmacological and psychological causes of the Haitian zombie phenomenon, uses of magic, ritual sorcery among tropical groups, and shamanism and healing.
LAC 305D Topic: Cuba, Haiti, Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico. Introduction to the basic social problems confronting these nations in recent memory. Examines the commonalities and problems among these islands, and how their people have been able to cope with issues such as racism, economic dependency, stratificational and ethnic disparities, and the presence of the United States in their lives, amongst others. No background in the area is necessary.

LAC 305E Topic: Argentina and Chile As Global Cultures. A study of the Republics of Argentina and Chile, from Independence in the early 1800's until the present. Methods of analyses employed by the instructor are those of the anthropologist and the ethnohistorian, in the hope of providing an in-depth analysis of Argentinean and Chilean culture and society. Special attention paid to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. An optional spring break field study trip to Argentina and Chile during Spring Break will be offered in conjunction with the course.

LAC 400 Seminar: Cuba, the U.S., and Cuban-Americans. Covers the social and political background of Cuba, from 1800 to the Cuban Revolution, to current events. Special attention is paid to interrelationships between Cuban society, culture, political economy, and its turbulent relationship with the U.S. An understanding of Cuban-American issues is also included. Preference given to LACA and ANT majors.