



Master of Arts in Regional Studies - Latin America and Caribbean (MARSLAC) Student Guide

July 2017

Welcome to MARSLAC, the Master of Arts in Regional Studies – Latin America and Caribbean in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS) at Columbia University. This guide is designed to introduce you to the Program and the University. If you have questions or concerns, which are not addressed here or in the accompanying material, please consult the Institute’s personnel or other resources at the University.

Personnel and Contact Information

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Program Background

Established in 2009, the interdisciplinary M.A. program in Regional Studies—Latin America and the Caribbean (MARSLAC) provides a broad social science-based approach to modern and contemporary Latin America and the Caribbean. The curriculum combines a core seminar on region-specific scholarship and research with the opportunity to take courses in different disciplines throughout Columbia University. Upon entering the program, students select a concentration, or focus of study, which could be a particular country or group of countries, discipline(s), topic or problem. They complete a plan of study form (attached) in consultation with the academic advisors. During the first semester of the core course (LCRS G6400) students establish a solid foundation in the most relevant scholarship on key issues of contemporary Latin America (democratization, rule of law, urban development, environmental change, trade and immigration, gender relations, cultural expression of diversity, among others). In the second semester students hone research methodologies and the critical use of scholarship in order to develop their own projects and complete a M.A. thesis.

M.A. Requirements

To complete the Master of Arts Degree in Regional Studies—Latin America and the Caribbean, students take a minimum of 30 points of graduate course credits, which includes an M.A. thesis. Students must complete two (2) Residence Units (RU) and maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.00 (B) and the program's director and the thesis advisor must approve the thesis first. In order to complete the degree in two semesters, students in the MARSLAC program will take a minimum of five (5) courses, or at least 15 credits, (including the required Core Courses) in the Fall and in the Spring semesters. However, students may consider an option of taking a third semester or completing the program on a part-time basis in four to six semesters. The two semesters of the core course must be taken in sequence but do not need to be taken in consecutive semesters.

Language Proficiency Tests

Columbia's programs in Spanish and Portuguese languages are administered by the Department of Latin American and Iberian Cultures, formerly known as Department of Spanish and Portuguese (Casa Hispánica). Casa Hispánica offers Reading Proficiency Examination for students who want to determine their ability level and fulfill their primary language requirement in Spanish or Portuguese (<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/spanish/resources/proficiencyexam.html>).

There is also an Undergraduate Placement Examination for those who want to take Undergraduate language courses. The Spanish Placement Examination is online <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/spanish/>. For more information, please contact the Department directly (612 West 116th Street and Broadway; Tel: 212-854-4187). For more information on the language fulfillment, contact the student affairs coordinator at ILAS.

NOTE: *Language courses under 4000 level cannot be accepted for credit towards the program requirement. However, upon evaluation, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) will be able to request an approval for graduate level credits.*

Academic Conduct

Students are expected to follow the University's guidelines for academic and scholarly work and refrain from plagiarism, cheating and fraud in their research. Please see the included sheet entitled Frequently Asked Questions about the Expectations of Scholarly Writing for further information. *Plagiarism*

expectations are different in other countries so if you are an International Student please read our policies carefully.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Human Subjects Research

Due to federal regulations, all research involving human subjects conducted by students, faculty and staff is subject to review and approval by Columbia's Internal Review Board (IRB). All graduate students conducting research involving human subjects are required to 1) completed a web-based basic training program on the protection of human research participants, and 2) submit their research application to the IRB. For more information, please go to the IRB website: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/irb/>

Computer Account and University Network Identification

To activate your electronic mail and computer account and university network identification, go to www.columbia.edu/acis/accounts/create and follow the instructions. Once you've activated your Columbia account, please send us your new email address so that we can update our records. It is essential that you open your Columbia email account because this will be the only way the University will contact you.

Student Services On-Line

Student Services On-Line (SSOL) (www.ais.columbia.edu/cgi-bin/ssv/ssol) gives you access to useful information regarding your academic and financial status at Columbia, including: Academic Profile, Registration, Student Schedule, Grades, Deactivate a Lost/Stolen Columbia Card, Holds, Account Detail and Refund Request, Financial Aid, Addresses: View and Update. Please report all address and telephone changes using SSOL.

Registration

The registration period (for incoming students) for the fall 2017 semester starts on Tuesday, September 5 to Friday, September 8. Then, the registration period (a fee may apply) runs through Friday, September 15. Students must register for at least one class during the regular registration period to avoid a late fee. MARSLAC students entering in the fall semester must register for the core course **LCRS G6400: Scholarly Literature and Research on Latin American and Caribbean Studies I**. Students can register by web during their appointment times using their personal identification number (PIN). **PIN and appointment times can be obtained through SSOL**. Under Academic Data, please click "Registration Appointment." You will need to have an active Columbia UNI. Some classes, within and outside of GSAS, may require approval signatures prior to registration.

Note: MARSLAC student will NOT be able to register for courses outside of GSAS (for example, SIPA, Journalism and Teachers College) until the cross-registration period is open on Tuesday, September 5.

Please note the list of interdisciplinary courses is subject to changes and cancellations, so you will need to consult the [Directory of Classes and/or the Department](#) for the most updated information.

Residence Units (RU)

Students in the Graduate Student of Arts and Science are required to register for Resident at University. This is typically done by registering for Residence Units (RU), which provide the basis for tuition charges. In order to graduate, students in the MARSLAC program will require fulfilling two (2) RUs and a minimum of 30 credits.

Students may register for one (1) Full RU, ½ RU or ¼ RU:

- A student who is registered for a full Residence Unit may enroll in any number of courses; additional tuition is charged per point if the student registers for more than 20 points per semester.
- A student who is registered for a half Residence Unit may enroll in no more than three courses.
- A student who is registered for a quarter Residence Unit may enroll in one or two courses.

For more information on Residence Units, please consult the GSAS website:

<http://gsas.columbia.edu/content/residence-unit-and-other-registration-categories>

List of Fall 2017 Courses

Every semester ILAS provides a list of courses which has been accepted for MARSLAC curriculum. If you find a course which we have not listed, but you are interested, please obtain a copy of the syllabus directly from the professor and submit to the Student Affairs Coordinator at ek2159@columbia.edu for a formal approval.

The list of course is available at the Institute's website at

<http://www.ilas.columbia.edu/academics/courses/>

Please remember that all courses are subject to changes and cancelations. If you want to see the most updated information on a particular course, please check out the Directory of Classes at

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/bulletin/uwb/>

Incompletes

Students who do not finish the coursework for a given course in time for the semester's final grades will have the opportunity to take an "Incomplete." This is discouraged and can only be done with the approval of the course's instructor. **Students are allowed approximately six months** to satisfy and complete the designed INC. For example, if you register for a course in Fall 2017 you have until June 30, 2018 for the professor to give you a final grade. This means submitting your work in time for the professor to complete this grade. After this time the grade becomes an irreversible F so please make sure to plan your time accordingly!

For Spring and Summer Incompletes, the due date is December 31.

Cross Registration

For students who wish to take elective courses in Columbia schools or affiliated institutions other than GSAS, please be aware that each school has a distinct cross-registration process. We recommend that you look at the school's or institution's website for more detailed cross-registration information. In

many cases students are not able to cross-register using the phone or web registration systems. In some cases, the Registration & Add/Drop form or another school-specific form must be signed by the instructor or the school's dean. In some cases, students must submit a course application before or during the registration period. Please note that most schools restrict access to some of their courses and that there is often limited space for cross-registered students. Students should plan for alternative courses in case they are not able to register for courses outside Columbia's GSAS.

Cross-Registration for NYU Courses

Under the New York City Consortium for Latin American Studies (NYCCLAS), The Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies (CLACS) at NYU and ILAS are committed to combining our resources and expertise in order to expand the academic, cultural and community engagement opportunities. Every academic year, each institution has a list of approved cross-registration courses, which allows students to take courses. The list of courses for Fall 2017 is attached along with the approval form.

Note: MARSLAC students may count no more than two (2) NYU courses for the program requirements.

Degree Audit and Application for Degree

In order to have the degree conferred, each student must complete the following paperwork and give it to the Student Affairs Coordinator at the Institute:

- MARSLAC Degree Audit Form <http://www.ilas.columbia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/2014-FALL-MARSLAC-Degree-Checklist-FORM.pdf>
- A copy of Application for Degree or Certificate <http://registrar.columbia.edu/content/application-degree-or-certificate>

Degrees are awarded in October, February and May. Students must file a degree application at the Office of the Registrar by August 1 for October graduation, November 1 for February graduation and December 1 for May graduation. The completed form should be dropped in person on 210 Kent Hall, faxed to 212-854-8747 (attention: Jennifer Caplan) or emailed to diplomas@columbia.edu.

Please note that only Deans and advisors have the final authorities on whether graduation requirements have been met.

Student Identification Card

You must submit a photo online to be used on your Columbia ID card. You will be able to pick up your ID card in person at the ID Center in Kent Hall once you arrive on campus. In order to submit a photo online, please use this link: <https://ssc.columbia.edu/upload-photo>

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Facets Handbook

Almost anything and everything you need to know can be located in the Facets handbook or at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/facets/>.

Calendar

The academic calendar is online: <http://registrar.columbia.edu/academic-calendar/30>.

Computer Labs in International Affairs Building (IAB)

The International Affairs Building and other buildings of the campus have wireless services. Students are encouraged to have their own laptop computers. Also, there are designated computer labs with consultants in IAB, where GSAS students can do their work and print. For a more updated list of computer labs, please go to: <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/facilities/labs/locations.html>

Measles/Mumps/Rubella Immunization

New York State Public Health Law 2165 requires all students born on or after January 1, 1957 and registered for 6 or more credits to document proof of their immunity to measles (2 doses), mumps and rubella. There are several ways to document immunity. Please check <http://health.columbia.edu/students/immunization-compliance-requirements/immunization-compliance-requirements> for detailed information, or contact Columbia's Health and Related Services at 212-854-7210. All incoming students must complete the Columbia University Measles, Mumps and Rubella before the end of August. You must demonstrate compliance with this public health law or you will not be permitted to register for classes after your first semester.

Students Required to Maintain Full-Time Status

Two categories of students are required to maintain full-time status. 1) International students studying on F-1 or J-1 visas can be in violation of their legal status if they fall below full-time enrollment. 2) Students living in University housing will be asked to leave their housing if they fail to maintain full-time enrollment.

International Students

International students are strongly encouraged to use Columbia's International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) for assistance with issues pertaining to admissions, immigration matters and social and cultural activities. ISSO contact information: tel: 212-854-3587, e-mail: isso@columbia.edu, location: 524 Riverside Drive, Suite 200 (near 122 Street), web: www.columbia.edu/cu/isso. **Please remember to stop by the ISSO as soon as possible to make sure they know you have arrived and to ensure that your immigration status is current.**

Career Services

Columbia's Center for Career Education (CCE) is available to assist students with career development and job placement. CCE contact information: tel: 212-854-5609, e-mail: cce@columbia.edu, location: East Campus Building, Lower Level, web: www.cce.columbia.edu.

Financial Aid Office

Students are strongly encouraged to make appointment with the Office in order to seek financial assistance (loans, grants and fellowships available). The Financial Aid Office information: 107 Low Memorial Library; tel: 212-854-6725; email: scp3@columbia.edu