

LATINO LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES RESEARCH CAPSTONE

Research/Project Advisor: Manuel Grajales

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Office Location: Wooten Hall 266

Office Hours: By Appointment

Weekly Meeting/Check-ins: Wednesdays, 3pm

Course Description:

This Research Capstone Project is a culmination of a student's experience in Latino Latin American Studies, allowing them to engage in an independent, in-depth research project or creative endeavor that showcases their knowledge and interest in this field. Students will complete a research paper of at least 2,500 words or an equivalent creative project with a written component. They can work directly with the LMAS director, or they can work on this project with a professor that they have already had or that they are currently taking a class with. The project, however, must be an independent one (you will enroll in a separate course to complete this requirement). This means that the project cannot be done as part of another classes assignment. It can be an extension of a previous project, but the final product must be different enough to warrant credit.

Objectives:

- Develop a deep understanding of a specific topic related to Latino or Latin American studies.
- Conduct independent research using appropriate methodologies and academic sources.
- Apply critical thinking to analyze topics such as race, migration, politics, culture, or identity within the Latino/Latin American context.
- Produce a high-quality research paper or creative project with a scholarly contribution to the field.

Research Topics:

Students will choose a topic related to Latino or Latin American Studies in consultation with the instructor. Some suggested topics include:

- The role of Latino communities in shaping U.S. politics
- Migration patterns and their cultural impact on Latin American countries
- Intersectionality and identity within Latino populations in the U.S.
- Latino representation in media and popular culture
- The effects of colonialism in modern Latin America

Requirements:

Students must submit the following components:

1. Proposal (250 words) — Due between Week 3-5
 - Includes the research question(s), description of the topic, and a preliminary list of at least 10-15 academic references.
 - A **project proposal** is a detailed document that outlines a plan for a specific project, describing what the project will achieve, how it will be accomplished, and why it's worth pursuing. It serves to persuade stakeholders (e.g., supervisors, investors, or funding organizations) to approve or support the project. Key elements of a project proposal typically include:
 1. **Title:** A clear, concise title that reflects the project's focus.
 2. **Introduction/Background:** An overview of the problem, need, or opportunity that the project will address, along with any relevant context or background information.
 3. **Objectives/Goals:** The specific, measurable goals the project aims to achieve.
 4. **Scope:** A description of the project's boundaries, including what is and isn't included in the project.
 5. **Methodology/Approach:** The strategies, tools, and processes that will be used to complete the project. This section often includes timelines and project phases.
 6. **Deliverables:** The tangible outcomes or products the project will produce.
 7. **Timeline:** A schedule that outlines key milestones and deadlines.
 8. **Evaluation/Success Metrics:** Criteria or benchmarks that will be used to evaluate the success of the project.
 9. **Conclusion:** A summary of why the project is necessary and how it aligns with broader goals or objectives.
2. Annotated Bibliography (with 10-15 academic references) — Due between week 6-8:
 - Summarizes sources that will be used in the research project.
 - An **annotated bibliography** is a list of citations to books, articles, and other sources, accompanied by a brief description and evaluation of each source. The annotations are usually a few sentences to a paragraph long and typically include:
 - **Citation:** Full reference of the work in a specific citation style (e.g., APA, MLA, Chicago).
 - **Summary:** A brief summary of the source's content, covering its main argument, purpose, and scope.
 - **Evaluation:** An assessment of the source's credibility, relevance, and usefulness for your research topic.
 - **Reflection:** How the source fits into your research, including its strengths, weaknesses, and how you plan to use it.

3. First Draft — Due before the end of summer week 10-11
 - 2,100-word paper with complete citations. Citations do not count toward word count
4. Final Research Paper — Due at end of Week 15 (Reading Day)
 - Complete, polished, and edited version of the research paper.
 - 2,500 Words with complete citations

For students completing a creative project, it must include:

- **Creative Work:** A visual or performance-based project (e.g., video, art installation, etc.).
- **Written Component (1,500 words):** A description of the project, creative process, and scholarly context.

Grading Criteria:

- **Quality of Research (40%)**
Depth of analysis, use of academic sources, and ability to develop a coherent argument related to the Latino/Latin American topic.
- **Written Communication (30%)**
Clarity, organization, grammar, and proper use of citations.
- **Engagement with Course Material (20%)**
Ability to connect the research to course objectives.
- **Creativity and Originality (10%)**
For creative projects, originality in the artistic or visual expression.

Project Milestones and Deadlines:

- See deadlines above

Policies:

- **Plagiarism:** All work must adhere to UNT's academic integrity policy.
- **Communication:** Regular check-ins with the instructor are required for feedback and project guidance.
- **Submission:** All assignments should be submitted through Canvas.

Recommended Journals and Resources: Students are encouraged to utilize academic journals and databases such as:

- Journal of Latin American Studies
- Hispanic American Historical Review
- Latin American Perspectives
- Journal of Latino/Latin American Policy
- Cultural Anthropology

Capstone Schedule: Fall 2026

Note: We will meet on Mondays (Face to face or Zoom) to discuss the project

Week 1 Week of August 17th

Discuss expectations
Parameters of the project
Decide: Paper or Equivalent Creative Project
Go over preliminary project idea and sources

Week 2 Week of August 24th

Discuss draft of proposal
Discussions on preliminary sources and offer suggestions.

Week 3 Week of August 31st

Discuss ideas for annotated bibliography/questions about proposal

Week 4 Week of September 7th

Labor day, September 7th: We'll meet on another day through Zoom
Proposal due September 11th (11:59pm)

Week 5 Week of September 14th

Meet to go over proposal comments

Week 6 Week of September 21st

June 15-Discuss the visual component/Annotated bibliography questions/Draft of
Annotated Bibliography (if needed)

Week 7 Week of September 28th

Annotated Bibliography due October 2nd (11:59pm)

Week 8 Week of October 5th

Meet to discuss comments on Annotated Bibliography
Progress check, First draft of paper

Week 9 Week of October 12th

No meeting: Spend time working on draft

Week 10 Week of October 19th

No Meeting: Spend time working on draft

Week 11 Week of October 26th

Submit Rough Draft, October 28th (11:59pm)

Week 12 Week of November 2nd

Meet to go over rough draft comments
Submit First set of first draft corrections due November 8th (Flexible date)

Week 13 Week of November 9th

Optional: Go over to go over corrections
Or no meeting to work on final paper.

Week 14 Week of November 16th

No meeting: Spend time working on final paper

Thanksgiving: November 23-29

Week 15 Week of November 30th

Final deliverable due be December 2nd (11:59pm)