PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION		

1	**Awarding Institution**	Newcastle University
2	**Teaching Institution**	Newcastle University
3	**Final Award**	MA
4	**Programme Title**	Latin American Interdisciplinary Studies
5	**Programme Code**	4084
6	**Programme Accreditation**	n/a
7	**QAA Subject Benchmark(s)**	n/a
8	**FHEQ Level**	7
9	**Last updated**	May 2014

10	**Programme Aims**

1. To develop systematic understanding and critical awareness in the field of Latin American studies from the perspectives of the history, politics, society, culture, and geography of the region.

2. To develop comprehensive and critical understanding of the theoretical and methodological approaches within Latin American Area Studies, with particular focus on interdisciplinary research and enquiry.

3. To train students in the advanced use of conceptual tools for studying Latin America within a globalised Area Studies perspective, with focus on such issues as identity, migration, postcolonialism, the environment, international trade, and the interplay of the local, the regional, and the global.

4. To produce graduates who are capable of developing and communicating complex arguments in writing and in oral communication; and, who demonstrate self-direction in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks.

5. To produce graduates with regional knowledge, intellectual skills, and intercultural awareness who are capable of entering the job market in a broad range of fields: eg. education, international development aid, multilateral institutions, business, government, non-governmental organisations, media and the arts, tourism.

6. To provide a knowledge and research training basis for doctoral study, responsive to the requirements of the AHRC Doctoral Studentships scheme.

7. To provide a programme which complies with University procedures and policies?

8. To provide a programme which meets the requirements of the HEQF for an M level programme.

11	**Learning Outcomes**

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. The programme outcomes have references to the benchmark statements for Area Studies.

Knowledge and Understanding

On completing the programme students should have:

A1 Systematic knowledge of the Latin American region stemming from the evaluation of advanced scholarship within a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary framework.

A2 An insight, informed by cutting-edge research, into the distinctiveness of Latin America, the similarities and divergences of its countries and sub-regions in the past and present, their asymmetric integration into the world economy and international politics, and the differential impact of globalisation on the region's societies, cultures, and identities;

A3 An understanding and appreciation of the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences as contested subject areas, identifying problems and lacunae, and constructively and sensitively critiquing the scholarly literature.

A4 Where language modules are taken, knowledge and understanding of the relevant language up to the level studied.

Teaching and Learning Methods

A mix of lectures and seminar discussions, combined with independent study and written assignments (culminating in a 60-credit dissertation of 12,000-15,000 words) will ensure delivery of outcomes A1-A3 inclusive. Outcomes A1-A3 will also be enabled by provision of specialist bibliographies and guidance in use of specialist internet sites, backed up by critical commentary in class. A1-A3 will also emerge from sustained independent study, and one-to-one supervision on the chosen dissertation topic.

Language skills (oral, aural, reading and writing) will be developed at the relevant levels by those opting for language modules (A4).

Assessment Strategy

In the case of 20 credit modules, assessment of knowledge and understanding will be through a 4,000-word essay. In the case of 10-credit modules this will be through shorter tasks, such as textual commentaries or book reviews. Research methods modules will be assessed through practical work such as bibliographic exercises, questionnaire design, and interview exercises and data analysis. The 12,000-15,000-word dissertation will provide the opportunity most fully to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in relation to outcomes A1-A3. Language skills (A4) will be assessed as set out in the relevant Module Outlines.

Intellectual Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

B1 Formulate a research question; identify and apply appropriate methods for exploring the research question.

B2 Apply themselves to independent research and learning, using advanced bibliographic search techniques applied to library and on-line electronic resources.

B3 Engage in a creative and innovative way with key theoretical concepts, established methodologies, and inter-paradigmatic debates arising within the disciplines and in the critical dialogue across disciplines - as relevant to Latin American Studies.

B4 Develop, in written form, significant analytical questions, new hypotheses, and substantive arguments, based on the critical analysis of a wide range of empirical evidence (written and visual primary sources; secondary literature; field work; different types of databases; interviews; etc.).

B5 Demonstrate detailed knowledge that comes from undertaking a sustained piece of original research into a chosen topic.

Teaching and Learning Methods

B1-B2 will be supported by teaching and class discussion in the Research Methods modules (SML8000 and LAS8005); one to one tutorials will provide guidance on independent research strategies and techniques; written feedback on assessments will consolidate learning. Outcome B3 will be delivered through the critical commentary on key concepts and theoretical debates, relative to research published in specialist Latin American Studies journals, conference proceedings, books, published project reports, and other sources, which will form the substance of lectures and seminar discussions. Outcome B4 will be ensured by providing guidance in the choice of relevant materials for analysis, according to specific research questions and assignments. B5 will be delivered by independent learning, backed up by one-to-one supervisions and written feedback

Assessment Strategy

In the case of 20 credit modules, assessment of intellectual skills will be through a 4,000-word essay. In the case of 10-credit modules this will be through tasks such as textual commentaries or book reviews. Intellectual engagement with research methods will be assessed through practical work such as bibliographic exercises, questionnaire design, and interview exercises and data analysis. The dissertation will provide the opportunity most fully to demonstrate intellectual development in relation to outcomes B1 to B5.
Language skills will be assessed as set out in the relevant Module Outlines.

Practical Skills

On completing the programme students should be able to:

C1 Interrelate two or more aspects of a Latin American country or sub-region - such as its history, culture, society, politics, sociolinguistics, or ecology - in an interdisciplinary way.
C2 Use the intercultural knowledge and competence acquired during the programme to interact effectively with people of different backgrounds, and, as appropriate, take decisions in complex and unpredictable situations.
C3 Use Spanish and Portuguese language skills developed through language modules and/or informal use (eg. interaction with the NE Latin American community; interaction with Latin American visiting scholars, students, lecturers on the programme; etc.).

Teaching and Learning Methods

Acquisition of C1 will arise from the interdisciplinary delivery of the programme, inherent in the acquisition of A1-A3 and B3-B5. C2 will benefit from the intercultural composition of the class, plus any opportunities for relevant outreach activities. Fuller opportunity to apply intercultural competence will arise from travel and employment experience after graduation; in this sense C2-C3 are interconnected with transferable skill D3. Formal development of language skills (C3) will be achieved through relevant language modules.

Assessment Strategy

C1 will be assessed through written assignments. C2 is not formally assessed during the programme. C3 is formally assessed as set out in the relevant Module Outlines. C3 is also indirectly assessed when candidates draw on Spanish and/or Portuguese language sources for their written assignments.

Transferable/Key Skills
On completing the programme students should be able to: D1 Work together as a team and build leadership qualities; D2 Construct and present a set of complex facts in the shape of a well-founded argument, both orally, aided by audio-visual technology, and in writing. D3 Apply practical skills of intercultural communication (C2-C3).

Teaching and Learning Methods
D1-D3 will be developed during seminar preparation, carried out during the independent learning hours allocated for each module; seminar delivery will provide opportunity to demonstrate D2. Opportunity for D3 will largely become available after graduation.

Assessment Strategy
Assessment of D1-2 will be achieved through written coursework. These are key skills whose development and exercise are inherent to the application of A1-3 and B1-5, achieved in turn by attendance at lectures, seminars, supervisions, and in the independent research for, and writing of, coursework.

12	Programme Curriculum, Structure and Features
Basic structure of the programme	

12 months full-time; 24 months part-time

Key features of the programme (including what makes the programme distinctive)
The programme is distinctive on three main counts: (a) In its cross-school delivery and interdisciplinary aims: Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty staff from the Schools of Geography, Politics & Sociology, Modern languages and Historical Studies work collaboratively to deliver the programme, and many of the modules are team taught; this facilitates the development of a truly interdisciplinary product. (b) In offering Spanish and Portuguese language training as optional assessed components of the programme; this is the only programme of its kind in the UK which combines Social Science training with language skills. (c) By offering a Quechua language option; this will be the only MA programme in the UK currently to teach this major Amerindian language (widely spoken in Bolivia, Peru, and Ecuador). We shall put our distinctive multi- and interdisciplinary profile to good use for recruitment purposes.

Programme regulations (link to on-line version)
http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/programme/

13	Criteria for admission

Entry qualifications

Candidates should normally hold a first degree – usually with a 2:1 pass or its equivalent - in any relevant subject area within the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. Candidates should hold at least a GCSE – or its equivalent qualification – in a second language

14   Support for Student Learning

The Student Services portal provides links to key services and other information and is available at: *http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/*

Induction
During the first week of the first semester students attend an induction programme. New students will be given a general introduction to University life and the University's principle support services and general information about the School and their programme, as described in the Degree Programme Handbook. New and continuing students will be given detailed programme information and the timetable of lectures/practicals/labs/ tutorials/etc. The International Office offers an additional induction programme for overseas students.

Study skills support
Students will learn a range of Personal Transferable Skills, including Study Skills, as outlined in the Programme Specification. Some of this material, e.g. time management is covered in the appropriate Induction Programme. Students are explicitly tutored on their approach to both group and individual projects.

Numeracy support is available through Maths Aid and help with academic writing is available from the Writing Development Centre (further information is available from the Robinson Library).

Academic and Pastoral support
Each undergraduate and taught postgraduate student will be assigned a personal tutor.*
A personal tutor is one part of a wider network of advice and guidance available to students to support their personal and general academic development. The module leader acts as the first point of contact for subject-specific academic advice. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Student-Staff Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies. Within the academic unit, students may also receive additional academic and pastoral advice from a range of other student-facing staff including degree programme directors, dissertation/project supervisors, and administrative support staff.
*Arrangements may vary for students taking special types of provision.

The University also offers a wide range of institutional services and support upon which students can call, such as the Writing Development Centre, Careers Service and Student Wellbeing Service. This includes one-to-one counselling and guidance or group sessions / workshops on a range of topics, such as emotional issues e.g. stress and anxiety, student finance and budgeting, disability matters etc. There is specialist support available for students with dyslexia and mental health issues. Furthermore, the Student Union operates a Student Advice Centre, which can provide advocacy and support to students on a range of topics including housing, debt, legal issues etc.

Support for students with disabilities
The University's Disability Support team provides help and advice for disabled students at the University - and those thinking of coming to Newcastle. It provides individuals with: advice about the University's facilities, services and the accessibility of campus; details about the technical support available; guidance in study skills and advice on financial support arrangements; a resources room with equipment and software to assist students in their studies.

Learning resources
The University's main learning resources are provided by the Robinson and Walton Libraries (for books, journals, online resources), and Information Systems and Services, which supports campus-wide computing facilities.

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language Proficiency Test. This is administered by INTO Newcastle University Centre on behalf of Newcastle University. Where appropriate, in-sessional language training can be provided. The INTO Newcastle University Centre houses a range of resources which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange.

15	Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Module reviews
All modules are subject to review by questionnaires which are considered by the Board of Studies. Changes to, or the introduction of new, modules are considered at the Board of Studies and/or the School Teaching and Learning Committee. Student opinion is sought at the Student-Staff Committee and/or the Board of Studies. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee.

Programme reviews
The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee. The FLTSEC takes an overview of all programmes within the Faculty and reports any Faculty or institutional issues to the Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee.

External Examiner reports
External Examiner reports are considered by the Board of Studies. The Board responds to these reports through Faculty Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee. External Examiner reports are shared with institutional student representatives, through the Student-Staff Committee.

Student evaluations
All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Student-Staff Committee, and the Board of Studies. The results from student surveys are considered as part of the Annual Monitoring and Review of the programme and any arising actions are captured at programme and School / institutional level and reported to the appropriate body.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback
Feedback is channelled via the Student-Staff Committee and the Board of Studies.

Faculty and University Review Mechanisms
Every six years degree programmes in each subject area undergo periodic review. This involves both the detailed consideration of a range of documentation, and a review visit by a review team (normally one day in duration) which includes an external subject specialist and a student representative.

Following the review a report is produced, which forms the basis for a decision by University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee on whether the programmes reviewed should be re-approved for a further six year period.

Accreditation reports

Additional mechanisms

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16   Regulation of assessment

Pass mark
The pass mark is 50%

Course requirements
Progression is subject to the University's Masters Degree Progress Regulations, Taught and Research and Examination Conventions for Taught Masters Degrees. There are reassessment opportunities, with certain restrictions. Limited compensation up to 40 credits of the taught element and down to a mark of 40% is possible for candidates who commenced their programme in 2013/14 or earlier. For students starting their programme in 2014/15 or later, no compensation is possible.

The University employs a common marking scheme, which is specified in the Taught Postgraduate Examination Conventions, namely:

Summary description applicable to postgraduate Masters programmes		**Summary description applicable to postgraduate Certificate and Diploma programmes**	
<50	Fail	<50	Fail
50-59	Pass	50 or above	Pass
60-69	Pass with Merit		
70 or above	Pass with Distinction		

Role of the External Examiner
An External Examiner, a distinguished member of the subject community, is appointed by Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee, following recommendation from the Board of Studies. The External Examiner is expected to:
  i.   See and approve assessment papers
  ii. Moderate examination and coursework marking
  iii. Attend the Board of Examiners
  iv. Report to the University on the standards of the programme

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In addition, information relating to the programme is provided in:

The University Prospectus: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/

The School Brochure http://www.ncl.ac.uk/marketing/services/print/publications/ordering/

Degree Programme and University Regulations: http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/

The Degree Programme Handbook:

Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

Module	Type	Intended Learning Outcomes			
		A	B	C	D
SOC8101	Compulsory	1, 2,3	1, 2, 3, 4	1	1, 2,
LAS8103	Compulsory	1,2,3	2, 3,4	1	1,2
LAS8005	Compulsory	1,2,4	1,3		1,2,3
SML8000	Compulsory		1,2,4		1
LAS8104	Compulsory	1, 2,3	1,2,3,4,5	1	
LAS8105	Optional		1,3,4		3
GEO8202	Optional		1,3,4		3
SOC8100	Optional	1,2,3	2,3,4	1	1,2
LAS8004	Optional	1,2,3	2,3,4	1	1,2
LAS8106	Optional	3	2	1	2,3
SPA1065	Optional	3	2	1	2,3
SPA1066	Optional	3	2	1	2,3
SPA1071	Optional	3	2	1	2,3
SPA2061	Optional	3	2	1	2,3
POR1065	Optional	3	2	1	2,3
POR1066	Optional	3	2	1	2,3
POR2061	Optional	3	2	1	2,3