

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION



1	Awarding Institution	Newcastle University
2	Teaching Institution	Newcastle University
3	Final Award	MA
4	Programme Title	Latin American Interdisciplinary Studies
5	UCAS/Programme Code	4084
6	Programme Accreditation	n/a
7	QAA Subject Benchmark(s)	n/a
8	FHEQ Level	7
9	Date written/revised	June 2010

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 techniques of 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 LAS8100); 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 assessed components of the programme (compulsory for those without language skills on entry; optional for all others); 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

Admissions policy/selection tools

Interview where appropriate

Non-standard Entry Requirements

Candidates with non-standard requirements will be considered on a case by case basis

Additional Requirements

Experience of Latin America would be an advantage

Level of English Language capability

IELTS 7.0

14 Support for Student Learning

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 principal 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 (see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/international/coming_to_newcastle/orientation.phtml)

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.

Academic support

The initial point of contact for a student is with a lecturer or module leader, or their tutor (see below) for more generic issues. Thereafter the Degree Programme Director or Head of School may be consulted. Issues relating to the programme may be raised at the Staff-Student Committee, and/or at the Board of Studies.

Pastoral support

All students are assigned a personal tutor whose responsibility is to monitor the academic performance and overall well-being of their tutees. Details of the personal tutor system can be found at <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/tutor.phtml> In the School of Modern Languages your tutor will be the Degree Programme Director.

In addition the University offers a range of support services, including the Student Advice Centre, the Counselling and Wellbeing team, the Mature Student Support Officer, and a Childcare Support Officer, see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/welfare.phtml>

Support for students with disabilities

The University's Disability Support Service 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. For further details see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/disability-support/>

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, see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/acfacilities.phtml>

All new students whose first language is not English are required to take an English Language test in the Language Centre. Where appropriate, in-sessional language training can be provided. The Language Centre houses a range of resources for learning other languages which may be particularly appropriate for those interested in an Erasmus exchange. See <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/undergraduate/support/facilities/langcen.phtml>

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 School Teaching and Learning Committee and at the Board of Studies. Student opinion is sought at the Staff-Student Committee and/or the Board of Studies. New modules and major changes to existing modules are subject to approval by the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

Programme reviews

The Board of Studies conducts an Annual Monitoring and Review of the degree programme and reports to Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

External Examiner reports

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

Student evaluations

All modules, and the degree programme, are subject to review by student questionnaires. Informal student evaluation is also obtained at the Staff-Student Committee, and the Board of Studies. The National Student Survey is sent out every year to final-year undergraduate students, and consists of a set of questions seeking the students' views on the quality of the learning and teaching in their HEIs. Further information is at www.thestudentsurvey.com/ With reference to the outcomes of the NSS and institutional student satisfaction surveys actions are taken at all appropriate levels by the institution.

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback

Feedback is channelled via the Staff-Student Committee and the Board of Studies.

Faculty and University Review Mechanisms

The programme is subject to the University's Internal Subject Review process, see http://www.ncl.ac.uk/aqss/qsh/internal_subject_review/index.php

16 Regulation of assessment

Pass mark

The pass mark is 50 (Postgraduate programmes)

Course requirements.

Progression is subject to the University's Masters Degree Progress Regulations, Taught and Research (<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/tpmdepr.pdf>) and Examination Conventions for Taught Masters Degrees (<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/calendar/university.regs/tpmdeprexamconv.pdf>). Limited compensation up to 40 credits of the taught element and down to a mark of 40 is possible and there are reassessment opportunities, with certain restrictions.

Common Marking Scheme

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, after recommendation from the Board of Studies. The External Examiner is expected to:

- See and approve examination papers
- Moderate examination and coursework marking
- Attend the Board of Examiners
- Report to the University on the standards of the programme

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

The University Prospectus (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/postgraduate/>)

The School Brochure

The University Regulations (see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/regulations/docs/>)

The Degree Programme Handbook

Please note. This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and of the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities provided. The accuracy

of the information contained is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Mapping of Intended Learning Outcomes onto Curriculum/Modules

Intended Learning Outcome	Module codes (Comp/Core in Bold)
A1	SOC8100, LAS8103, LAS8104 , LAS8003, LAS8102, LAS8101, LAS8105,
A2	SOC8101, LAS8103, LAS8104 , LAS8003, LAS8102, LAS8101, LAS8105,
A3	SOC8101, LAS8103, LAS8104 , LAS8003, LAS8102, LAS8101, LAS8105
A4	LAS2027, SPA1065, SPA1066, SPA1071, SPA2061, POR1065, POR 1066, POR2061
B1	LAS8100, HSS8000, LAS8104 , LAS8105
B2	SOC8101, LAS8103, LAS8104 , LAS8003, LAS8102, LAS8101, HSS8000, LAS8100 , LAS8105,
B3	SOC8101, LAS8103, LAS8104 , LAS8003, LAS8102, LAS8101, LAS8105
B4	SOC8101, LAS8103, LAS8104 , LAS8003, LAS8102, LAS8101
B5	LAS8104
C1	SOC8101, LAS8103, LAS8104 , LAS8003, LAS8102, LAS8101,
C2	indirect practical application emerges in all modules
C3	LAS2027, SPA1065, SPA1066, SPA1071, SPA2061, POR1065, POR 1066, POR2061
D1	SOC8101, LAS8103, LAS8100 , LAS8003, LAS8102, LAS8101,
D2	SOC8101, LAS8103, LAS8100 , LAS8003, LAS8102, LAS8101, LAS8105,
D3	issues of intercultural communication inherent in all modules.