

Chicano and Latin American Studies



College of Social Sciences

Department of Chicano and Latin American Studies

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Social Science Building, Room 211

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B.A. in Chicano Studies

Minor in Chicano/Latino Studies

Minor in Latin American Studies

BCLAD Emphasis Program

Chicano and Latin American Studies

Chicano and Latin American Studies (CLAS) is an interdisciplinary department that has been successful in presenting a highly informed, active, and challenging view of the Chicano/Latino experience in the United States and in U.S./Latin American relations. Chicano and Latin American Studies provides an opportunity for a pluralistic exchange of ideas in an interdisciplinary academic setting, where faculty, students, and visiting Chicano and Latin American scholars can share experiences and create a dynamic, intellectual environment.

The Chicano and Latin American Studies Department is designed to meet the following objectives:

1. to promote an awareness of the historical and cultural roots of Chicanos/Latinos in the United States
2. to enhance an understanding of Latin America
3. to cultivate an appreciation of ethnic and national differences among all people
4. to critically analyze the Chicano and the Latin American experience in terms of significant issues, theories, current problems, and solutions, and
5. to provide students with a set of important professional skills to be utilized as they interact creatively and constructively with Chicano/Latino communities and multicultural society at large.

The department emphasizes an interdisciplinary approach to the study of family

life, history, politics, culture, and the arts of Chicano and Latin American communities. The courses reflect an integrated approach in providing students with greater knowledge and understanding of the social reality and diversity of Chicanos and Latin Americans.

Faculty and Facilities

The Chicano and Latin American Studies Department consists of faculty whose teaching and research expertise cover a broad spectrum, including anthropology, education, history, sociology, political science, Latin America, Latino literature, and the arts. The department is home to one of Central California's premier Mexican folkloric dance programs, Los Danzantes de Aztlán. This performance troupe is the only group of its kind in the entire CSU system to be designated as an official representative of a CSU campus (Fresno). The offices of the department also serve as a resource center for many of the Chicano/Latino student organizations and as an information center for the community.

Career Opportunities

Chicanos and other Latinos will soon be the largest ethnic group in California. Demographers estimate that in California 40 percent of the population will be of Mexican or Latino ancestry by the year 2030. This segment of our population will have a major impact on our society, as its presence translates into an increasing economic and political influence. Crucial social, economic, and political decisions will be made that

affect this group and the nation at large. The growth of Latino-owned businesses, Spanish language media networks, and political organizations are all indicators of the importance of the Spanish-speaking people in the U.S. economy.

Chicano Studies majors are trained to analyze social issues, to think critically, and to conduct research. All majors receive applied as well as theoretical training, by serving an internship with a school or community agency to observe firsthand the social issues and theories which they study. These skills are useful in professional life and are valued in the public and private sectors.

Students of non-Latino origin find that Chicano and Latin American Studies courses are personally rewarding because they enable them to understand and relate to persons of different social and cultural backgrounds. Chicano and other Latino students find these courses highly conducive to strengthening their sense of identity and pride in their heritage.

Students who graduate with a B.A. in Chicano Studies or minor in Chicano/Latino Studies or Latin American Studies work in such fields as education, public administration, psychology, marketing, journalism, social services, and throughout the public and private sectors. Physicians, educators, lawyers, counselors, civil service employees, and other professionals have found that training in Chicano and Latin American studies improves their abilities to serve their