

Central American Studies

College of Humanities

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Faculty

Douglas Carranza Mena, Beatriz Cortez, Alicia Estrada, Jennifer Goett

Program Committee

Beatriz Cortez (Chair), Elizabeth T. Adams (Liberal Studies), Douglas Carranza (Central American Studies), Alicia Estrada (Central American Studies), Susan Fitzpatrick-Behrens (History), Jennifer Goett (Central American Studies), Michael Love (Anthropology), Breny Mendoza (Gender and Women's Studies), David Rodriguez (Chicana/o Studies)

Programs

B.A., Central American Studies

Minor in Central American Studies

Mission Statement

The Central American Studies Program has a tri-fold mission: to empower the large and growing Central American community in the United States by promoting academic excellence, community involvement, and cultural diversity; to open spaces of global citizenship and dialogue between academia and society that contribute to the construction of a Central American transnational identity; and to promote an understanding and appreciation of the diverse Central American cultures, ethnicities, experiences, and worldviews from an interdisciplinary global perspective.

Student Learning Outcomes

The Central American Studies Program has identified five learning outcomes:

1. Students will develop critical thinking, writing, and reading skills.
2. Students will acquire an awareness of the complexity of the historical, social, and cultural developments in Central America as well as an understanding of the diverse Central American cultures, ethnicities, experiences, and worldviews.
3. Students will expand their understanding of the transnational Central American community's experience, and its economic and cultural contributions to the US and Central America.
4. Students will develop the intellectual and social foundations, and leadership skills necessary for promoting social change in US society, especially, in relation to Central American peoples in the US.
5. Students will recognize, understand, evaluate, and change the culture of exclusion that has been prevalent in Central America and the United States.

Student Organization

The Central American United Student Association (CAUSA) strives for the growing Central American community in the United States to succeed in the world of higher education and to prepare an influential vanguard of future leaders who will impact the changing global, political, and economic arenas. CAUSA's objective is also to raise and promote awareness of the Central American community at CSUN and in the Los Angeles area. As a result, the Central American Studies Program works in collaboration with CAUSA in the organization of events and community programs. CAUSA maintains a collaborative partnership with other sister organizations on and off campus, works on student recruitment and community support, and plays a significant role in the formation of student leadership.

Academic Advisement

All program faculty members are advisors: Douglas Carranza Mena, Beatriz Cortez, Alicia Estrada, and Jennifer Goett. Call (818) 677-2736 for information on advisement office hours or for an appointment.

Research Institute

The Central American Research and Policy Institute (CARPI) was established in 2001 for the purpose of developing research, policy and knowledge supporting the socioeconomic, cultural and civic development of the transnational Central American community in the United States and Central America. Policy development and academic research includes issues of common concern such as immigration, civil society, economic development, and cultural identity of Central Americans. The research sponsored by CARPI is:

1. Undertaken by faculty mentors, experts in the discipline, and trained students.
2. Focused on concrete issues in the lives of the community.
3. Aimed at helping the community to understand itself and the challenges and changes it faces.
4. The basis for viable proposals for community advancement in the future.

CARPI brings faculty, students, and community together as partners and participants in creating and disseminating the knowledge that will enable the Central American community to live up to its tremendous potential.

Requirements for the Bachelor of Arts Degree

The Central American Studies Major consists of two options: The Standard Major and the Double Major.

A. Option 1: Standard Major (45 Units)

1. Lower Division Required Courses (12 Units)

Select one of the following:

CAS 100	Introduction to Central American Studies (3)
CAS 102	The Salvadoran Experience (3)

Required Courses:

CAS 201	Survey of Central American Literature (3)
CAS 202	Survey of Central American Visual, Installation, and Performance Arts (3)
CAS 270	Fieldwork in Central American Communities (3)

2. Lower Division Electives (3 Units)

Select one of the following:

ART 112	History of Non-Western Art (3)
CHS 202	Race, Racism, and Critical Thinking (3)
CHS 280	Workshop in Minority Writing (3)
PAS 274	History of Caribbean Societies since 1830s (3)
PAS 282	African Religion in the New World (3)
URBS 250	Planning the Multiethnic City (3)

3. Upper Division Requirements (21 Units)

Select seven of the following courses:

CAS 303	Central American Film (3)
CAS 309	Ancient to Pre-Modern History of Central American Peoples (3)
CAS 310	Modern History of Central American Peoples (3)
CAS 311	The Central American Diaspora (3)
CAS 350	Urbanization in Central America (3)
CAS 355	Environment, Development and Social Exclusion in Central America (3)
CAS 356	Afro-Caribbean Central American Cultures and Identities (3)

CAS	364	Culture and Violence in Central America (3)
CAS	365	Changing Roles of Central American Women (3)
CAS	366	Contemporary Indigenous People of Central America (3)
CAS	367	Contemporary Religious Movements of Central America (3)
CAS	368	Central American Revolutionary Movements (3)
CAS	369	Contemporary Social Movements of Central America (3)

4. Upper Division Electives (6 Units)

Select two of the following:

ANTH	353	The Maya: Ancient and Modern (3)
ANTH	428	Archeology of Mesoamerica (3)
ART	403	History of Latin American Art (3)
CHS	381	Contemporary Chicana Writers (3)
ENG	487	Latino/a Literatures of the Americas (3)
GEOG	322	Latin America (3)
GEOG	350	Metropolitan Los Angeles (3)
HIST	463	20th Century Latin American History (3)
HIST	468	Social and Intellectual History of Latin America (3)
HIST	485B	The United States and Latin America since 1989 (3)
SPAN	380	Latin American Civilization (3)
PAS	376	African Enslavement in the New World (3)
PAS	465	Pan Africanism: Development of an Ideology, 1865-1954 (3)
PAS	487	Pan African Philosophical Thought (3)
POLS	332	Politics of Latin America (3)
POLS	433A	Politics of Central America (3)
URBS	380	Los Angeles: Past, Present, Future (3)

5. Central American Studies Seminar (3 Units)

Select one of the following:

CAS	440	Seminar on Central American Culture (3)
CAS	460	Seminar on Central American Politics (3)
SPAN	421	Seminar on Central American Literature (3)

Total Units in the Option	45
General Education Units	48
Additional Units	27
Total Units Required for Degree	120

Option II: Double Major (33 Units)

1. Lower-division Required Courses (9 Units)

Select one of the following:

CAS 100	Introduction to Central American Studies (3)
CAS 102	The Salvadoran Experience (3)

Select one of the following:

CAS 201	Survey of Central American Literature (3)
CAS 202	Survey of Central American Visual, Installation, and Performance Arts (3)

Required course:

CAS 270	Fieldwork in Central American Communities (3)
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2. Upper Division Requirements (21 Units)

Select seven of the following courses:

CAS	303	Central American Film (3)
CAS	309	Ancient History of Central American Peoples (3)

CAS	310	Modern History of Central American Peoples (3)
CAS	311	The Central American Diaspora (3)
CAS	350	Urbanization in Central America (3)
CAS	355	Environment, Development and Social Exclusion in Central America (3)
CAS	356	Afro-Caribbean Central American Cultures and Identities (3)
CAS	364	Culture and Violence in Central America (3)
CAS	365	Changing Roles of Central American Women (3)
CAS	366	Contemporary Indigenous Peoples in Central America (3)
CAS	367	Contemporary Religious Movements in Central America (3)
CAS	368	Central American Revolutionary Movements (3)
CAS	369	Contemporary Social Movements in Central America (3)

3. Central American Studies Seminar (3 Units)

Select one of the following:

CAS	440	Seminar on Central American Culture (3)
CAS	460	Seminar on Central American Politics (3)
SPAN	421	Seminar on Central American Literature (3)

Total Units in the Option	33
General Education Units	48
Additional Units	39
Total Units Required for	120

Minor in Central American Studies

1. Lower Division Requirements (9 Units)

Select one of the following:

CAS	100	Introduction to Central American Studies (3)
CAS	102	The Salvadoran Experience (3)

Select one of the following:

CAS	201	Survey of Central American Literature (3)
CAS	202	Survey of Central American Visual, Installation, and Performance Arts (3)

Required course:

CAS	270	Fieldwork in Central American Communities (3)
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2. Upper Division Requirements (15 Units)

Select two of the following courses:

CAS	303	Central American Film (3)
CAS	309	Ancient History of Central American Peoples (3)
CAS	310	Modern History of Central American Peoples (3)
CAS	311	The Central American Diaspora (3)
CAS	350	Urbanization in Central America (3)
CAS	355	Environment, Development and Social Exclusion in Central America (3)
CAS	364	Culture and Violence in Central America (3)

Select one of the following courses:

CAS	356	Afro-Caribbean Central American Cultures and Identities (3)
CAS	365	Changing Roles of Central American Women (3)
CAS	366	Contemporary Indigenous Peoples in Central America (3)

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Select one of the following courses:

CAS	367	Contemporary Religious Movements in Central America (3)
CAS	368	Central American Revolutionary Movements (3)
CAS	369	Contemporary Social Movements in Central America (3)

Select one of the following courses:

CAS	440	Seminar on Central American Culture (3)
CAS	460	Seminar on Central American Politics (3)
SPAN	421	Seminar on Central American Literature (3)

Spanish Language Recommendation

In order for students to complete the minor successfully, students are encouraged to develop a proficiency in Spanish listening, speaking, reading, and writing. While not a requirement, we recommend that students follow one of the two tracks listed below:

Language Option I for Native Speakers

SPAN	104	Elementary Written Spanish II (3) and either
SPAN	220B	Intermediate Spanish II (3)
	or SPAN 296A	Spanish for Natives: Intermediate Written Spanish (3)

Language Option II for Non-native Speakers

SPAN	220A	Intermediate Spanish (3)
	and SPAN 220B	Intermediate Spanish II (3)

Total Units

24

Course List**CAS 100. Introduction to Central American Studies (3)**

Comparative, historical introduction to political, cultural, and socio-economic aspects of the Central American experience both in Central America and in the United States. Considers the question of whether there can be a single Central American identity in light of the great variety of experiences of race, gender, ethnicity and social class in the Central American community. (Available for General Education, Comparative Cultural Studies).

CAS 102. The Salvadoran Experience (3)

Introduction to the political, economic, social and cultural realities of Salvadoran life in El Salvador and in the United States. Emphasis is on various aspects of the institutional and private life of Salvadoran communities. The course is framed by historical and contemporary comparisons with other Central American national groups with respect to their experiences of race, ethnicity, class, gender and national identity. (Available for General Education, Comparative Cultural Studies).

CAS 201. Survey of Central American Literature (3)

Analysis of literary traditions throughout the history of Central America from pre-Hispanic times to the present. The course will focus on 20th and 21st century literary movements, with the main emphasis placed on the historical and political elements, and the ideological proposals of these works. It includes a discussion of the relationship between literary creation and the construction of Central American identity (Available for General Education, Arts and Humanities).

CAS 202. Survey of Central American Visual, Installation, and Performance Arts (3)

Analysis of artistic traditions throughout the history of Central America from pre-Hispanic times to the present. The course will focus on the cultural and sociopolitical construction of Central American identities through historical and contemporary artistic creation and representation. The main emphasis will be placed on the historical and political

elements, Central American ethnic and cultural diversity, the multiple struggles for visibility, and the ideological proposals that these works pose. It includes a discussion of the cultural and sociopolitical dimensions of art and the relationship between artistic production and the construction of Central American identity.

CAS 270. Fieldwork in Central American Communities (3)

Preparatory: CAS 100 or 102. Field study in a selected Central American community. By reflecting on their work experience students learn how the needs of the community can best be met, and how the well-being of the community is impacted by its relationships to state and local governments, community organizations, and private institutions. Faculty Supervisor assists students in obtaining appropriate work placements. Field study to be conducted under supervision and after preparatory instruction to acquaint students with field learning techniques. Variable content. May be repeated for credit with permission of the instructor. Academic Internship course. (Available for General Education, Lifelong Learning).

Upper Division**CAS 303. Central American Film (3)**

Preparatory: Completion of lower division writing requirement and either CAS 100, CAS 102 or permission of the instructor. History of the development of Central American cinema and analysis of film and video production by Central Americans. The course will focus on 20th and 21st century film and video production, with the main emphasis placed on the historical and political context in which Central American cinema is produced, the ideological proposals that these works make, and the ways in which this production contributes to the construction of a contemporary version of Central American identity.

CAS 309. Ancient to Pre-Modern History of the Central American People (3)

Preparatory: Completion of lower division writing requirement. Survey of the history of Central Americans from pre-Hispanic times to the pre-Independence days. Major topics include: Indigenous cultures (complex and single societies); Indigenous and European (Spanish and Anglo) relations; religion, family and land tenure; language and education; disease, labor and population; local and global trading; Indigenous revolts and pre-independence movements. (Available for General Education, Social Sciences).

CAS 310. Modern History of the Central American People (3)

Preparatory: Completion of the lower division writing requirement. Survey of the History of Central Americans from Independence times to the present. Major topics include: Independence movements; 19th and 20th century dependency; state-nation and identity formation; politics of mestizaje; indigenous resistance; imperialism and economic growth; relations with the United States and Europe; politics of development; contemporary social movements; Central American diaspora. (Available for General Education, Social Sciences).

CAS 311. The Central American Diaspora (3)

Preparatory: Completion of the lower division writing requirement. Comparative survey of the socioeconomic conditions and cultural life of Central American peoples in the United States today, particularly in California. Issues of immigration, employment, income, education, gender, family, language, national identity, acculturation and political participation will be examined. Discussion of Central American diaspora communities in other parts of the world may also be included. (Available for General Education, Comparative Cultural Studies).

CAS 350. Urbanization in Central America (3)

Preparatory: Completion of lower division writing requirement and either CAS 100, CAS 102 or permission of the instructor. During the second half of the twentieth-century the Central American societies were transformed from an agrarian to an urban based service economy. As a result of this process and the political instability in Central America, the Central American population was massively displaced towards urban areas inside and outside the region. This interdisciplinary course will provide students with an understanding of the cultural, social, economic, demographic, and political implications of the planning and development of the urban landscape in Central America and of the Central American population movement to urban spaces inside and outside the region.

CAS 355. Environment, Development and Social Exclusion in Central America (3)

Preparatory: Completion of lower division writing requirement and either CAS 100, CAS 102 or permission of the instructor. The focus of this course will be the origins and ramifications of environmental degradation that stems from developmental policies which have historically impoverished Central American peoples. It examines the socio-cultural, demographic, economic, political and environmental problems experienced by Central America. It also addresses the effects of mono-crop cultivation and the devastation produced by the use of pesticides. Additionally, this course shows the linkages of land degradation and poverty, strategies of survival and resistance, and the communal response to the dynamics of global capitalism.

CAS 356 Afro-Caribbean Central American Cultures and Identities (3)

Preparatory: Completion of lower division writing requirement and either CAS 100, CAS 102 or permission of the instructor. This interdisciplinary course examines the history of colonization and racism, as well as the socio-economic, political, and religious conditions that Afro-Caribbean peoples in Central America have endured since the time of their arrival as part of the slave trade until their most contemporary quests for self-determination. This course explores the diverse cultures of the Afro-Caribbean population, the transnational movements and initiatives linked to this population's struggle for liberation, and the challenges that such struggles have represented to the Central American nation/states. Emphasis will be placed on Afro-Caribbean Central American peoples' cultures, identities, movements, rights, media, gender, and migratory issues.

CAS 364. Culture and Violence in Central America (3)

Preparatory: Completion of lower division writing requirement and either CAS 100, CAS 102 or permission of the instructor. This course will provide students with a basic theoretical and practical understanding of the relationship between culture and violence in Central America and the historical and socio-economic conditions that have generated a culture of violence in the region. The course will include an analysis of the concept of violence as it takes ideological and physical forms, both in public and private spaces. Major topics of discussion include the historical legacy of exclusion, authoritarianism, and the militarization of Central America; the colonial legacy of ethnic exclusion, the destruction and exploitation of the environment; the role that violence plays in the experience of displacement that Central American immigrant communities undergo, as well as the relationship between violence, culture, and the construction of Central American identity.

CAS 365. Changing Roles of Central American Women (3)

Preparatory: Completion of the lower division writing requirement and either CAS 100 or 102. Comparative examination of the shifting cultural, political, economic and sex/gender roles that have shaped the lives of Central American women, including women's roles prior to

and after the revolutionary movements. Also includes discussions of women activists and women's movements in various Central American communities both in the United States and in Central America; the search of Central American women for identity in the United States; and women's contributions to art, music, poetry, literature, politics, and culture. (Available for General Education, Comparative Cultural Studies).

CAS 366. Contemporary Indigenous Peoples of Central America (3)

Preparatory: Completion of lower division writing requirement and either CAS 100, CAS 102 or permission of the instructor. This interdisciplinary course examines the new socio-economic, political, and religious conditions that contemporary Indigenous people of Central America are facing in their daily quest for self-determination. In the last two decades the study of Indigenous practices has challenged the traditional notion that portrays native peoples as passive subjects of the modern forces of assimilation. This course explores the transnational spaces occupied by Indigenous associations and the challenges that this Indigenous movement represents to the Central American nation/states, the participation of women in defining the future of Indigenous communities, and resistance to the imposing socio-cultural and political paradigms. Emphasis will be placed on contemporary Indigenous culture, identity, movements, rights, media, gender, and migratory issues.

CAS 367. Contemporary Religious Movements in Central America (3)

Preparatory: Completion of lower division writing requirement and either CAS 100, CAS 102 or permission of the instructor. Designed to provide students with a basic theoretical and practical understanding of the contemporary religious movements that shape Central American life in both Central America and the U.S. Emphasizes the transnational nature of Central American religious movements, as well as the ways in which these movements are responding to the legacy of war and violence that has impacted Central American life, both in the region and in diaspora communities.

CAS 368. Central American Revolutionary Movements (3)

Preparatory: Completion of the lower division writing requirement and either CAS 100 or 102. Examines the historical and socio-economic conditions that have shaped the Central American revolutionary movements. Major topics of discussion include: the history of Central America leading up to these movements, the role of the U.S. policy in the region before and during the movements, the ideological sources of the revolutionary movements and their organizing strategies, the impact of the U.S. anti-intervention and solidarity movements, the peace processes in the region, and the influence of these movements on the post-revolutionary diaspora communities in the United States. (Available for General Education, Social Sciences).

CAS 369. Contemporary Social Movements in Central America (3)

Preparatory: Completion of lower division writing requirement and either CAS 100, CAS 102 or permission of the instructor. Designed to provide students with a basic theoretical and practical understanding of the contemporary social movements that shape Central American life in both Central America and the U.S. Emphasizes the transnational nature of Central American social movements, as well as the ways in which these movements are responding to the legacy of war and violence that has impacted Central American life, both in the region and in diaspora communities. (Available for General Education, Social Sciences).

CAS 440. Research Seminar on Central American Culture (3)

Preparatory: Upper Division standing; six units in Central American Studies, including CAS 201. Techniques and practice of the critical analysis of culture. Develop and implement comparative research project that explore in depth some aspect of Central American cultures. Variable content. Possible topics include the role of literature in the construction of national identity, the creation of texts through oral history, cultural transformation and continuity in the Central American diaspora, art and social protest, medicine, religion and sorcery in the Central American diaspora. May be repeated for credit with instructor consent.

CAS 460. Research Seminar on Central American Political Issues (3)

Preparatory: Upper Division standing; six units in Central American Studies, including CAS 201. Purpose of this seminar is to acquaint students with the techniques and practice of theoretical research. Students will develop and implement comparative research projects that explore in depth some aspect of the Central American political experience. Variable content. Possible topics include: Sandinismo in theory and practice; the role of the Catholic Church and the influence of Evangelical Protestantism in Central American communities; postwar democracy in Central America; political activism in Central American diaspora communities in California.