



Chicago Studies CIV 2025: Latin America/Latinx Chicago

Sequence Overview

The new Chicago Studies CIV, which will focus on a different theme each year, is an immersive, intensive sequence that will bring together a single cohort of students. Cohort members will take all three Chicago CIV courses *and* participate in associated excursions (like a domestic version of Study Abroad CIV sequences). Membership in the cohort will be based on an application; accepted applicants will be enrolled in *all three* classes of the sequence (CHST 10200, 10201, and 10202). There is *not* an option to take only two of the three inter-related classes.

The three courses that comprise this sequence will provide students with deep knowledge of how Latin(e/x) Americans have transformed and experienced Chicago. “Latin America in/at Chicago” examines hemispheric social, political, and intellectual connections in the city over the long twentieth century. “Immigrant Chicago” homes in on the specific experiences of Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Venezuelans to convey the diversity of Latine/x Chicago and historicize the contemporary reality of immigration from different regions of the Americas. The final course in the bundle, “Latinx Arts in Chicago,” examines artistic production as creative responses to the lived realities of Latinx populations in the city.

Classes will meet intensively on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday afternoons (see detailed course descriptions below), with Friday afternoons devoted to required experiential learning outings throughout Chicagoland. *Students who wish to take an additional class during the Spring 2025 term should only take other courses that meet M-Th before 2 PM and/or Friday before 12:30 PM.*

In addition to fulfilling their CIV requirement, students who complete the Chicago Studies CIV sequence will also fulfill the course requirements for the College’s interdisciplinary Certificate in Chicago Studies *and* may apply for a research stipend to extend their study of Latinx Chicago into summer 2025.

Detailed course descriptions on the following pages. Learn more and apply at:
<https://chicagostudies.uchicago.edu/civ>

CHST 10200: “Latin America in/at Chicago” (Tuesdays 2-4:50 PM; D. Schwartz Francisco)

This course explores the city of Chicago’s Latin American and Caribbean roots by considering hemispheric connections, both in the city at large and at the University of Chicago. Students will analyze 1) the ways Latin(e/x) American actors have participated in and shaped Chicago’s political economy, 2) how Latine/xs on both sides of the US-Mexico border have impacted and been impacted by social thought at the University of Chicago, 3) the collection and display of Latin American material culture in several of the city’s museums, and 4) Latin(e/x) American civil and human rights activism in the city. The course will move through the city chronologically as well as geographically over the long twentieth century.

Some specific events and themes we will cover include: the Latin American & Caribbean presence at the 1893 Columbian Exposition and the 1933 Century of Progress; early 20th-century Mexican community development and organizing around South Chicago’s steel industry; the Chicago School of Sociology’s fascination with Mexican migrants and Chicago Anthropology’s enchantment with Mesoamerica and Indigenous modernity; the Field Museum and Newberry Libraries as sites of Latin American “collection”; the Chicago School of Economics’ exportation of neoliberal reforms in Chile during the 1970s; and broader Latine transnational and civil rights activism during the late 20th century including the Young Lords, Chilean exiles in the 1970s, and sanctuary politics.

CHST 10201: “Immigrant Chicago” (Wednesdays 2:30-5:20 PM; R. Flores)

Since the early 1900’s, thousands of Latin Americans have made Chicago their home. Today, approximately one-third of Chicagoans trace their roots to Latin America. These significant demographic flows raise critical questions: Why have Latin Americans moved to Chicago? How have they adapted to the city? How have they influenced it? This course will expose students to the latest social science research on contemporary immigration with a strong focus on Latinos in Chicago. We will explore its origins, adaptation patterns, and long-term effects on our city.

To explore the Latino experience in Chicago, the course will focus on three communities: Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Venezuelans. These three groups migrated to Chicago during distinct periods, with Mexicans arriving in the early 1900s, Puerto Ricans in the 1940s, and Venezuelans in 2023. This temporal variation will enable us to investigate how the evolving social, economic, and political conditions in Chicago have influenced immigrants' experiences.

The ongoing arrival of thousands of immigrants from Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, and other South American nations to Chicago since the summer of 2023 has heightened the urgency of addressing these issues. In recent months, Professor Flores has collaborated with various city and civic organizations to facilitate the settlement of these immigrants. He will utilize his experiences working with these groups to provide context to this ongoing crisis. Guest speakers, including immigrants, activists, and city officials, will be part of the class.

CHST 10202: “Latinx Arts in Chicago” (Thursdays 2-4:50 PM; S. Delgado Moya)

This course is an overview of the Latinx arts in Chicago. It explores artworks and artmaking as documents and critical fictions created in response to the social realities of urban Latinx populations in the U.S. and in Chicago in particular. It challenges students to think about (Latinx) art and the humanities under two modalities: as privileged arenas for understanding experience and exploring the values that guide a society, and as economic engines and instruments of political intervention.

The course pursues these objectives through the study of the Latinx arts in Chicago, and through immersive engagements with local institutions where Latinx art operates (as historical object, as tool for social change, as fruit and seed of creative process, as instrument for economic development).

Using the work of Latinx artists, curators, filmmakers, and other cultural brokers based in Chicago, the course studies artworks in the context of the social realities that gave rise to these works.

Experiential Learning (excursions, field research, cultural programming, and meals) for the sequence will be programmed on Fridays 12:30-5:20 PM; these sessions will be led collaboratively by all three instructors. Experiences are an integral part of the CIV sequence, and are regarded as part of the assigned coursework for participants.