

Latin American Studies College Prep ~ 1 Semester



Latin American Studies is a one semester course that examines the historical, political, economic, and most importantly cultural achievements of the modern countries located in this region of the world.

Course Objectives:

As a result of completing this course, the student will be able to:

1. Locate and identify the geographic region known as Latin America.
2. Explain the impact of geography on the political and economic development of the region.
3. Identify the major indigenous groups that lived in the region and explain their contributions to modern civilization.
4. Describe local situations and issues existing in Latin America today.
5. Identify individuals who contributed to the development of the modern nations.
6. Understand the rich heritage of Latin America as it expands its global influence in the 21st century.
7. Recognize the importance of appreciating the cultural differences between the United States and all nations.

Unit 1 Geography of Latin America

- o Locate and identify the four main geographic regions of Latin America
- o Explain the impact of geography on the political and economic development of Latin America
- o Locate the countries of South America on a map
- o Locate the countries of Central America on a map
- o Identify the capital cities of South America and Central America

- o Appreciate the diversity of the physical environment in the region of Latin America
- o Recognize the region of the West Indies and the largest islands
- o Identify the main landforms that characterize Latin America
- o Understand the relationship of topography and climate to cultural development in Latin America
- o Discuss patterns of land use rooted in Latin America's colonial past

Unit 2 The First Americans

- o Describe the arrival of people in the Americas
- o Cite reasons for the emergence of ancient American civilizations
- o Appreciate the technological and cultural achievements of major pre-Columbian societies
- o Distinguish between major Mexican and Andean indigenous cultures
- o Assess the impact of early indigenous cultures on Latin America today
- o Define vocabulary words and terms important to the unit
- o Explain how the five key traits of civilization apply to the culture groups studied
- o Understand and explain the difference between ethnocentrism and cultural relativism

Unit 3 Colonization and Independence

- o Appreciate the impact the exploration of the Americas had on the European view of the world
- o Understand that European exploration and claims in the Americas increased patterns of global interdependence
- o Recognize that a scarcity of Indian labor led to the forced migration of millions of African slaves to Latin America
- o Discuss the cultural influence of Spain and Portugal on Latin America
- o Identify experiences in the colonial period that created preconditions for independence
- o Assess the changing role of the Roman Catholic Church in opposing abuses of human rights in Latin America

- o Trace changing political boundaries of South American countries as South American nations fought for independence
- o Cite the causes for revolution and separation from European governments
- o Define vocabulary words and terms important to the unit

Unit 4 People and Culture

- o Describe the racial and ethnic makeup of geographic areas within Latin America today
- o Appreciate the importance of family ties in contemporary Latin American society
- o Identify relationships between social class and educational opportunities in Latin America
- o Compare the various ways of life that emerged in the cities and rural villages of Latin America
- o List accomplishments of Latin American artists, writers and entertainers

Unit 5 Latin American and the World

- o Trace United States policy toward Latin America from the Monroe Doctrine to recent times
- o Cite examples of Latin American efforts at regional cooperation
- o Identify obstacles to Latin American unity
- o Understand the complex role that Latin America plays in the global economic and political system today
- o List reasons for the debt crisis in Latin America
- o Understand that foreign indebtedness poses one of the most serious challenges to Latin American progress in the 21st century
- o Brainstorm current political, economic and social issues facing Latin American progress in the 21st century