BA MAJOR IN LATIN AMERICAN & CARIBBEAN STUDIES

GUIDELINES FOR THE BA THESIS PAPER

A BA thesis is required for all Latin American Studies majors. The BA thesis paper should demonstrate that the student has achieved the level of competence in their specialization that is expected of Bachelor’s degree candidates at the University of Chicago. The paper provides the opportunity to apply disciplined research skills and critical abilities to a piece of research on a topic of the student’s choice. The BA thesis should be more comprehensive in both information gathering and analysis than a general term paper.

BA theses may be based upon: empirical research, testing a hypothesis or deploying a specific disciplinary perspective; a theoretical critique of existing literature on a chosen topic; a systematic survey of an evaluation of research; or any other disciplined inquiry acceptable to both the faculty reader and the BA colloquium instructor. Theses should: demonstrate a student’s ability to develop a good, original research question; demonstrate a student’s ability to utilize discipline-appropriate methodologies and conduct topic-appropriate research; and utilize both primary and secondary sources.

The length of the BA thesis paper will vary according to the approach chosen and the subject matter involved. Most projects will be between 20 and 40 pages. The student is advised to consult and follow published style guides appropriate to a specific discipline.

Theses may be supervised and evaluated by faculty members from any department or professional school of the University.

The student is responsible for working out arrangements with the faculty reader, including a schedule for the completion and evaluation of the paper, within the time frame set out by CLAS and the convocation deadlines.

BA thesis papers in Latin American Studies should fulfill criteria of excellence comparable to those employed in the evaluation of BA papers in other degree departments. Although BA theses are not formally graded, papers must be of an equivalent quality to earn a grade of B or higher in order to be acceptable.

*The paper in its final form must be approved by the faculty reader and should be turned in to CLAS by the assigned date. Papers should include a signed BA Paper Certification form with separate written comments.* In the case of irreconcilable differences in questions of thesis acceptability and/or grade, the CLAS Director will select a second reader and make the final determination.

BA theses that demonstrate particularly high quality may be recommended for honors. Faculty readers may recommend/decline to recommend a student for honors on the BA thesis approval form.