

Subfield: Latin America

Field: America

Courses:

- History 1926. How Historians Imagine Latin American Pasts (elective)
- SW30: Moctezuma's Mexico: Then and Now (elective)

The subfield in Latin America appeals to me because, while I am primarily interested in North American history and literature, I am also fascinated by U.S.-Latin American relations and the works of Latino communities within the United States. I expect my senior thesis to engage with my interest in Latin America, and I would like my coursework in History and Literature to prepare me for such an undertaking. For this subfield, I am hoping to supplement my coursework in North American history and literature with two classes focused on Latin America to deepen my understanding of the cultures from which Latino communities evolve (History 1926 and SW30).

Spending the summer after my sophomore year in Mexico City, I immersed myself in the culture of Mexico, and this experience greatly contributed to my interest in and understanding of Latin America. Complementing the experience of living in the region, advanced Spanish language courses (Spanish 50, 61n, and 71b) introduced me to interplay of Latin American history and literature with that of North America. Themes from these Spanish courses inspired the research I am beginning for my junior paper on media treatment of 1950s Guatemala in the United States. I expect this project to analyze the extent to which the United Fruit Company and its principal public relations officials constructed a popular image of Guatemala that was flattering for the company yet disregarded the reality of Guatemalan politics, economics, and culture.

Thinking ahead, I hope my thesis can build on my junior paper, draw upon my fascination with Mexican art, and engage interests developed in HL90aq, an HL90 not in my field that I took for concentration credit, and to be expanded through Hist 1926 and SW30. HL90aq considered how artists (poets, fiction writers, playwrights, visual and performance artists) grapple with trauma and memory in the context of troubled political history, using artistic responses to the dictatorships of Argentina and Chile in the 1970s as case studies. Particularly, if my thesis centers on Mexican art, as I hope it will, SW30 will provide me with the context to situate a 20th-century artist within larger traditions of Mexican creative expression that have their roots in the colonial history of Mexico and Latin America as a whole.