

Latin American Linkages

2017

This guide is meant to provide the Latin American participants in the Yale Latin American Linkage Program with details regarding the program's structure and goals as well as useful information to prepare for the visit.

Guide to the
Yale Law
School leg of
the program

Guide to the Yale Law School side of the 2017 Linkages Program

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Preparations

Program Dates

The United States leg of the 201 Linkages Program will run from Wednesday, January 25 through Wednesday, February 15. Many participants choose to travel to the United States earlier or leave later in order to combine the program with sightseeing in other parts of the country, such as New York or Washington DC, but while we can offer advice such travel is solely the responsibility of the student. Linkages participants are also invited to attend the largest student-run law conference in the country at Yale ([RebLaw](#)), which will take place on February 17-18, at no charge. Participants who are coming directly to Yale upon arriving in New York will be picked up at the airport. Participants who come to the U.S. early in order to do some site-seeing will be picked up from the train station in New Haven. Participants should plan on coming to New Haven no later than Tuesday, January 24. We will also do our very best to accommodate your housing needs in New Haven if you need to come a day or two before the program or stay a day or two after it.

Travel Insurance

Buying travel insurance that covers emergency medical expenses is extremely important. Each year there have been incidents during the Linkage Program that, while very minor, such as a stomachaches, have required medical attention. It can cost hundreds of dollars just to have a doctor look at you. When you purchase the insurance, please look at the conditions for coverage. Many insurers require that you contact them **before** seeking medical attention. If that is the case for your insurance, make sure to keep the appropriate telephone number and insurance policy numbers with you at all times.

At the same time, I want to assure you that the people at the health clinic on campus are wonderful and that you will receive prompt and competent attention if an accident occurs. Still, please get the insurance, and if possible scan and email the program coordinator¹ proof of it so that we have a copy here just in case it is lost.

Getting to and from New Haven

In general, the best way to get to and from New Haven from South America is by flying into JFK airport in New York City (flights that stop in Dallas or Atlanta often land in Newark or LaGuardia airports, which is not a problem). There are several methods available for traveling from the New York area airports to New Haven. We will organize ground transportation to and from the airport for people who are coming directly to Yale or going directly home after the program. For those who are either coming early to the United States or staying later, we will arrange ground transportation to and from the train station in New Haven (the [Metro-North](#) train line runs from Grand Central Terminal in New York City to New Haven). Do not hesitate to ask questions if you are unsure about your itinerary and the arrangements for transportation between your point of entry and the law school.

¹ The program coordinator is Bradley Hayes (bradley.hayes@yale.edu), tel. +1 203 436 3534

Living Conditions

Climate

February is often the coldest month in New Haven. Bring warm clothes: a thick winter hat or something else to keep your ears warm; a thick scarf; warm gloves or mittens; shoes or boots appropriate for walking in dry or wet snow; and a good, preferably water resistant, winter coat. Either bring lip balm or buy some once you arrive. An umbrella is useful if you have the space in your suitcase (but you will probably prefer to save space in your suitcase for the books you will get in New Haven).

Housing

The biggest surprise for the Latin American participants in the Linkages Program is usually learning that they will be staying with Yale law students here in New Haven. For this reason, we should start with reassuring you that your hosts will make every effort to make your stay as comfortable as possible. Staying with the students will greatly enrich your Yale Law School experience.

Living with the students also deepens the amount of exposure to U.S. culture you will gain. Three weeks is a very short time but by immersing yourselves in the culture much can be accomplished. In order to avoid as many surprises as possible, however, it is a good idea to start preparing for the trip before you board the airplane. That is why a brief description of the living conditions of the average Yale law student may be helpful.

There are two factors which immediately distinguish the average American and Latin American law students. The first is age. The JD, or Juris Doctor law degree is a graduate degree in the United States, meaning that law students must first complete a bachelor's degree in another field before studying law. Furthermore, the Yale Law School is currently the most selective law school in the country and one criterion it values is community service, so many of the students it admits are people who, after university, spend time working in "the real world." Some students are even older, having pursued doctorate degrees in other fields before realizing the utility of a law degree, or having reached a point of success in their professional life that makes a law degree attractive. In general, then, the average age of the students here is between 23 and 28.

The second factor is that university students in the U.S. almost never live at home, but rather live in residences or share apartments close to campus. Students generally enjoy the freedom they have to study when they want and sleep when they want, and generally prize this freedom over the advantages that can be gained from living at home (such as not having to cook and clean for oneself).

Food

For breakfast and lunch, you will be allocated a certain amount of money per day to spend at the law school dining hall, and for dinner you will have access to the dining hall at one of the undergraduate residences very close to the law school. The dining halls are closed on Friday nights and weekends, but we will try to organize group activities to minimize the cost of getting food then.

Fatigue

Given the differences in climate and culture, some degree of culture and body shock is to be expected. Any fatigue will slow mental performance, but if it accumulates to a certain point the body will react forcefully. Digestion problems are a very common example of one way the body signals distress. Stress also weakens the body's defense systems so catching a cold or flu becomes more likely.

The remedy for such stress is simple: by slowing down, getting rest, and relaxing, your mind and body will return to normal. You will probably reach a point during the program where you will need to take a short break from the program to relax and gather your thoughts and composure.

Academic Activities

The Linkage Program is in the beginning and at the end an academic exchange, and as in any fair exchange, you will get out of it what you put into it. The exact substance of what is exchanged is largely left to the participants.

Presentations

You are encouraged to make presentations at the law school. You choose the subject, generally in consultation with the program coordinator, usually concerning an area you have researched or current developments in the legal systems in your home country. The presentation is very short, 10 minutes at the most, so more time can be spent in discussion.

Meeting professors

Another opportunity for discussion arises from meetings of the Latin American students with Yale faculty members. These meetings also usually last between 40 minutes and an hour and vary in format according to the professor in question. We ask [professors](#) to take a little time out of their schedules to meet with the Latin American students based on the interest that is expressed (i.e., the ones you tell the coordinator that you want to meet). Usually you must read an excerpt from the professor's recent scholarship prior to the meeting.

Attending classes

Most of your time during the day will be spent sitting in on classes. Here are brief descriptions of the [classes](#) (select spring term at right to see the courses that will take place while you are here). If you are interested in other disciplines, we can also arrange it so you can sit in on classes in those subjects in other departments.

Meeting students from journals and clinics

There will also be opportunities to meet with students who work in the student-run [journals and organizations](#) and the legal service and policy [clinics](#). Please let me know if any interest you in particular.

Centers and guest lectures

Besides classes, there are also special events nearly every day at lunchtime and in the evening. These include guest lectures, panel discussions, and conferences, and are usually sponsored by student organizations or one of the law school's [centers](#). Refer to the [news](#) and [events](#) pages for details.

Research facilities

You will have access to the [law school library](#). You cannot take books home or access the electronic holdings from your personal laptops, but there are terminals that give you access to an enormous electronic collection and we will help you get any book you want to consult. Unfortunately access to the books and resources at the [main library](#) is even more restricted, but again, we can get any book you wish to see.

Other Activities

Sports & Exercise

You can have unlimited access during the program to the athletic facilities (the Payne-Whitney Gym) for a fee of around \$20. You have to go to the gym office during their business hours with photo identification and explain that you are with the law school's Linkage Program to purchase the pass card.

Outings

The Linkage students from Yale will also organize social activities for evenings, nights, and weekends. The sorts of events generally depend on the tastes of the students hosting you as well as your own. Those who like dancing tend to propose outings to the salsa club. Those who enjoy cooking will prepare large meals for the entire group. In the past, students have gone shopping, hiking, sledding and to church services together, although the most common activity seems to be going to bars and small parties.

Excursions

On the Thursday between the end of the program and the ReBLaw conference, we take a trip to New York to visit the 2nd Circuit Federal Court of Appeals, one of the large New York firms (last year it was Cleary Gottlieb), and a major international human rights NGO (such as Human Rights Watch).

Trips to other cities such as Boston or Washington over the weekend or outside the program dates are not covered by the law school, but we are always happy to make suggestions and connect people with former Linkages participants in those cities. We will also set up meetings with people from big firms and NGOs in New York at the end of the program.

Shopping

Before the dollar became so strong, trips were usually organized to go shopping at places like [Best Buy](#) for electronics. In the last couple years most people have preferred to save their money for books. We will have an opportunity to buy used law and case books at the law school and I also recommend www.abebooks.com for used and new books.

Religious Services

There are churches of all denominations and a multidenominational chapel at Yale, and affinity groups of all types at Yale. In fact, every year our beloved Guido Calabresi invites all the Catholic students to his farm for dinner, but unfortunately that will take place before the Linkage program.