

# Center for Latin American Studies

## The Ohio State University

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### MASTER OF ARTS IN LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES GRADUATE HANDBOOK

This handbook is the primary faculty and student guide to the policies and procedures of the Latin American Studies M.A. Program at The Ohio State University. Additional important material about graduate study at The Ohio State University can be found in The Ohio State University [Graduate School Handbook](#) published by The Graduate School.

#### INTRODUCTION

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The M.A. in Latin American Studies is an interdisciplinary degree granted by the Graduate School, administered by the Center for Latin American Studies and overseen by the Latin American Studies Graduate Studies Committee. The program is designed to prepare students who desire to continue their undergraduate studies in international relations and diplomacy, economic development and globalization, languages and literatures, history and anthropology, business and economics, to acquire a broader knowledge of Latin America or concentrated training in specific disciplines and/or topics regarding Latin America. This encompasses different scenarios, such as students who want to a) prepare to continue graduate studies in a discipline-specific Ph.D. program; b) complement with further specialization on Latin America a discipline-specific M.A. or Ph.D. graduate program they are currently enrolled in; or c) pursue a non-academic career in government (including the foreign service and the military); pre-college and community college education; educational institutions or other non-profit institutions with a cultural mission; or in the private sector, such as law, journalism, international business, etc.

This program is intended to serve undergraduate students who desire to continue graduate studies, and graduate students who wish to pursue a dual degree and complement with a rounded interdisciplinary formation on Latin American Studies the discipline-specific degree they are currently pursuing (e.g. in anthropology, history, economics, Spanish, etc.). It constitutes a well-defined, intellectually cohesive structure that provides students with a balanced, solid foundation for their future careers, but nonetheless, it is flexible enough to accommodate students who enter with different levels of preparation and allows for its completion in normally two academic years.

Students pursuing a MA or PhD at OSU in any department or discipline (e.g. Political Science, Sociology, etc.) and who wish to complement it with further specialization in Latin American Studies can apply to the MA in LAS as a dual degree. The application process for the dual degree program is very simple, and the coursework needed significantly reduced, since up to 50 percent of the credits used for one degree can be used for the second degree. In a word, it will require only 15 credit hours (normally International

Studies 5640 plus 12 credit hours in an area of concentration other than their discipline) to fulfill the requirements for the MA in LAS as a dual degree. This will be the primary concentration for the MA in LAS.

## APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION

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### General Requirements

Admission of students to the program is the dual responsibility of the [Graduate School](#) and the Latin American Studies Graduate Studies Committee. Candidates for admission to the program must hold at least a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. Applicants will be expected to meet or exceed minimum Graduate School requirements for GPA/GRE levels. A minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 for all previous undergraduate work and 3.2 for all previous graduate work is required. Applicants should demonstrate at the time of admission intermediate-high writing and speaking proficiency in Spanish or Portuguese, or the equivalent of at least six semesters of undergraduate work in these languages. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis; however, we strongly encourage students to apply during the fall semester prior to their intended entrance to the program, and to matriculate in the following fall, since many courses are offered sequentially.

Graduates of U.S. and Canadian universities are obligated to submit GRE scores. Any student, international or domestic, wishing to be considered for nomination to one of the University's Fellowship awards must also submit GRE scores.

Application is done through the [Graduate School Admissions](#) site. Applicants should complete the appropriate admission forms, and submit a transcript from each college or university attended; a curriculum vitae; three letters of recommendation from people who have direct first-hand knowledge of applicants' intellectual capability and academic potential; a statement of purpose detailing past achievements, present research interests, educational objectives, career plans, and reasons for choosing a field of study; and a research writing sample. When applicants apply a number of years after completing their last degree, admission will also take into consideration experience-based language acquisition, social work and any similar pertinent non-academic endeavors.

### International Students

Students whose first language is not English, and who have not earned a degree in an English-speaking country, are required, as a condition of admission, to take and pass the [Test of English as a Foreign Language \(TOEFL\)](#) with a score of 550 or above (paper/pencil version) or 79 or above (computer-based version). The Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB) may be taken in lieu of the TOEFL, in which case a score of 82 or above is required.

International students who fall into the category specified above and who wish to be given appointment as a Graduate Teaching Associate (GTA) must, additionally, according to the laws of the State of Ohio, certify their proficiency in spoken English before assuming GTA duties involving direct student contact. They may become certified by scoring acceptably on the TOEFL or the SPEAK test, or by passing the mock-teaching test. The SPEAK test and the mock-teaching test are administered on campus by the [Spoken English Program of The Ohio State University](#). The TSE, like the TOEFL, is administered by the Educational Teaching Service, and should be taken in the applicant's home country in conjunction with

the application process. Applicants from abroad are encouraged to take the TSE, since it may not be possible to delay the offer of appointment as GTA until the Department has received the results of the SPEAK test or the mock-teaching test.

International students whose first language is not English, and who have not earned a degree in an English-speaking country should also be aware that they are required to take a written English placement examination upon arrival on this campus. Based on the testing result, students needing English instruction will be placed in corresponding English courses. These courses do not count toward graduation. For further information of importance to students from abroad, please see the [International Students](#) page of the Office of International Affairs.

### **Application Procedures**

All applications for admission are processed through the Office of Graduate Admissions. The online application is found at the [Office of Graduate Admissions](#) Web site. Among the materials that all applicants, both domestic and foreign, are required to submit are: 1) the completed application; 2) a current *curriculum vitae*; 3) a statement of purpose detailing your past achievements, present research interests, educational objectives, career plans, and reasons for choosing your field of study; 4) a sample of academic writing, preferably related to your anticipated field of concentration; 5) three letters of recommendation, preferably from faculty members who are familiar with your work; and 6) the official transcripts from each college or university attended; if from a foreign university the transcript must be accompanied by an English translation. The statement should be concisely written and not exceed two pages in length. Non-native English speaking applicants from foreign countries must also submit the results of either the TOEFL or the MELAB examination, and all international applicants must submit a certified statement indicating that financial resources are available to defray the cost of graduate education. (Ordinarily, the awarding of a GTAship, GRAship, or another fellowship is sufficient to meet the requirements of this statement.) As stated earlier, graduates of U.S. and Canadian universities must submit GRE scores, as is also the case for all applicants from other countries who wish to be considered for nomination for a University Fellowship. All those applying for a dual degree that wish to be considered for appointment as GTA in other programs are asked to fill out a separate application for that position. This application is available at the corresponding department's web site.

For full consideration for admission see deadlines for the 2016-2017 academic year; all materials must be received by specific deadlines. Please click [here](#) to view the deadlines for both domestic and international students.

While online submission of all application materials is preferred, applicants may submit hard copies of the CV, statement, writing sample, and/or letters of recommendations by mail to the address below.

### **Mailing address:**

MA in LAS Graduate Studies Committee  
OSU Center for Latin American Studies  
309 Oxley Hall  
1712 Neil Avenue  
Columbus, OH 43210

The Graduate School Handbook: Section II (Admission) contains important additional information on admission requirements. See, in particular, these paragraphs:

2.2 Admission Criteria

2.3 Admission Credentials

2.5 Admission Decision Procedures

*NOTE:* When a student is accepted into a graduate program and defers acceptance and/or the teaching associateship for the year of offer, s/he will have to compete with the new cadre of applicants or potential GTAs in order to be re-instated. Likewise, graduate students who take a leave of absence for 3 or more semesters may be asked to re-apply to the program.

## FINANCIAL AID

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### Graduate Teaching Associateships

Graduate Associateships are offered to several thousand OSU students each year. These positions include graduate teaching associates (GTAs), graduate research associates (GRAs), and graduate administrative associates (GAAs). GTAs may be asked to teach, assist with laboratory work, and/or perform other related activities. GRAs are assigned to research projects supervised by graduate professors. It is usually possible to carry out thesis and dissertation research on such projects. GAAs perform a variety of administrative and management duties. Most graduate associates work 20 hours per week for 9 months, and receive a monthly stipend and a fee authorization for tuition. Ohio State offers stipends that are competitive with other universities of similar size and scope. Associateship positions generally begin in the Autumn Semester and are renewable, depending upon the student's job performance and grades, and the availability of funds.

The Center for Latin American Studies cannot appoint directly Graduate Teaching Associates (GTA) or Graduate Research Associates (GRA). However, the LAS Graduate Studies Committee will endeavor to secure aid from other academic and research programs in the university for M.A. applicants who are also applying to those programs (e.g. History, Spanish and Portuguese, etc.). Financial aid for most graduate students in other departments consists of an appointment as a GTA for the two regular semesters of the academic year (Autumn and Spring). This appointment, which is considered half-time employment, entails teaching one class during each of those semesters. Along with a basic stipend that is competitive with that of other major universities, the award provides for a waiver of tuition and academic fees, as well as other benefits (you will find additional information at <http://www.gradsch.osu.edu/graduate-associates-and-fellows.html>).

For those students who care to teach during the Summer, an additional appointment as Graduate Teaching Associate is often available. Such an appointment also carries a waiver of tuition and fees. Those students wishing to enroll in classes during the summer, but not teach, likewise have their tuition and fees paid by the University.

### Fellowships

Highly-qualified applicants are eligible for various fellowships. Most of these fellowships are awarded by [The Graduate School](#) on the basis of a campus-wide competition, and Latin American Studies M.A. students must be nominated by the Latin American Studies Graduate Studies Committee. The purpose

of these highly prestigious awards is to permit students of unusual promise to be freed from teaching duties in order to devote all their time to their studies. Most awards are for one year only, although some carry stipends that cover two years, and a small number cover three years. In addition to these fellowships for incoming students, each year the Graduate School awards several Presidential Fellowships which are designed to allow Ph.D. students to finish writing their dissertations. All Graduate School fellowships, like all appointments as Graduate Teaching Associates, provide a waiver of tuition and academic fees, in addition to the basic stipend.

A primary funding source for LAS M.A. students is the U.S. Department of Education's Title VI Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (FLAS). There are two types of FLAS Fellowships, academic year and summer, with separate competitions held for each. The purpose of the FLAS is to increase the number of American citizens and permanent residents who study and speak Latin American languages. The graduate level academic year FLAS includes tuition and fee authorizations for up to \$18,000 for full-time enrollment for the two semesters of the academic year, and a \$15,000 stipend. In exchange for receiving the FLAS, students agree to enroll full-time, including a 3-credit-hour Latin American language course and a 3-credit-hour Latin American Studies course each semester in addition to the regular course load. Summer FLAS Fellowships provide students with a \$2,500 stipend and up to \$5,000 in tuition and fee authorizations for intensive summer language programs in the US and abroad. FLAS applications are available through CLAS and are generally due the first week of February.

For more information concerning Graduate funding, including scholarships and grants, please click [here](#).

There are also several grants and fellowships available for travel for research abroad.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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### Language Requirements

Applicants should demonstrate at the time of admission one of the following: a) native proficiency in Spanish or Portuguese; b) a bachelor's degree in Spanish or Portuguese; c) communicative competence in Spanish or Portuguese equivalent to six semesters of undergraduate work; d) successful completion of a proficiency test equivalent to the HEA Title VI Foreign Language Reference Form, or other similar examination. Written and oral proficiency exams are administered by appropriate faculty of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, and the results are conveyed to the LAS Graduate Studies Committee. Knowledge of another Latin American language, including any indigenous language, is a plus.

### Coursework

A minimum of 30 credit hours of graduate level (5600 level and above) courses are required of all students. Students are required to earn a grade of at least "B" (3.0) in all courses to remain in the program. At least 18 credits must be from courses with a minimum of 25 percent Latin American content as assessed in the syllabi. Courses with less than 25% Latin American content that have comparative, theoretical, methodological, or professional relevance to the student's program can be taken in consultation with the academic adviser and the final approval of the Director of Graduate Studies. Some courses offered at the 4500 level can be taken as independent studies with the concurrence of the course instructor, the academic adviser and the final approval of the Graduate

Studies Committee. In all cases, the student must write a research paper focused on Latin America as part of the coursework.

**Required Courses (6 credits)**

- International Studies 5640, Globalization and Latin America: Multi-Disciplinary Approaches
- One course on research methods, related to the student's primary area of concentration, selected in consultation with the adviser from a number of qualitative and quantitative methodology courses offered in different departments, with the final approval of the Graduate Studies Committee.

**Two Areas of Concentration (21 credits)**

Students will choose or design, in consultation with their adviser and advisory committee, two areas of disciplinary or interdisciplinary concentration. They will take at least 4 courses for a total of 12 credit hours in the primary concentration and at least 3 courses for a total of 9 credit hours in the secondary concentration. Students pursuing a dual degree could apply credits earned in another program toward the secondary concentration, not to the primary concentration. Students writing a thesis may use up to 3 of the 12 credit hours allocated to the primary concentration toward their thesis writing. Each student is required to take at least 2 graduate seminars, one in each area of concentration, in which they will produce a research paper that indicates that they have mastered the skills of research, synthesis, and analysis required for academic scholarship. Thesis track students may use these papers as the basis for their thesis. The areas of concentration may be chosen from any of the following options:

**Disciplinary concentrations**

- Agricultural, Environmental, and Development Economics
- Anthropology
- Brazilian Literature and Cultures
- Business
- Education, Teaching and Learning
- Film Studies
- Geography
- Hispanic Linguistics
- History
- Latin American Literatures and Cultures
- Political Science
- Sociology
- Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies

**Interdisciplinary concentrations, such as:**

- Border and Latino Studies
- Democratization and Globalization studies
- Development and the Environment
- Gender Studies
- Latin American Cultural Studies
- Postcolonial and Indigenous Studies
- Transnational Migration

Each student, in consultation with her/his advisory committee and with the approval of the Graduate Studies Committee, may design additional ad-hoc interdisciplinary concentrations.

### **Electives (3 credits)**

After completing their requirements students will be able to choose one elective course, which could be related to any of the two areas of concentration or not, insofar it contains a minimum of 25% Latin American content.

### **Thesis and Non-Thesis Tracks**

By the end of the first academic year (if pursuing the degree in the regular two-year model) or by the end of the first semester (if pursuing the degree in the fast-track one-year model), all students will be required to choose, in consultation with their M.A. advisory committee, either the thesis or non-thesis track.

- **Thesis Track:** If a student chooses the thesis track, she/he will be expected to complete a substantial monograph (of approximately 80-100 pages in length, depending on the subject) on an original topic (theses overlapping is not allowed), in which she/he will be required to utilize their primary Latin American language as one of the main research tools. The principal purpose of the thesis is to demonstrate the student's ability to conduct sustained independent research on a Latin American subject related to one or both areas of concentration. The student must produce a written thesis prospectus that must be approved by the advisory committee at least one semester before the final defense. The thesis will be defended orally before the M.A. advisory committee in the last semester of the program.

Thesis track students may register for up to 3 credits of thesis research which will count as part of the 12 credits toward the main specialization without special permission. It is strongly recommended that students planning to apply to a Ph.D. program choose the thesis track.

- **Non-thesis Track:** If a student chooses the non-thesis track, she/he is required to take two take-home examinations, followed by an oral examination, in both areas of concentration.

Students receive authorization to take the examination only after they have presented to the Director of the Latin American Studies M.A. Program an updated Curriculum Plan and the Reading List endorsed by their adviser. The length and content of the reading lists will be determined in consultation with the student's committee members, but as a general guideline the total length of the combined reading list should be between 75 and 100 items (books and/or articles). This document should be submitted by the end of the semester preceding the semester during which the student intends to take the examination. Students must be registered for at least three graduate credit hours during the semester in which the M.A. examination is taken.

### **Examination Procedures**

The Master's Examination is a test of the student's knowledge of his/her two areas of concentration. They are the ultimate validation of performance within the M.A. program. Students receive authorization to take the examination only after they have presented to the Director of Graduate Studies an updated Curriculum Plan endorsed by their adviser. Ideally, this document should be submitted by the end of the semester preceding the semester during which the student intends to take

the examination, but must be necessarily approved by the Director of Graduate Studies at the time of the filing of the Application to Graduate form. The student must be registered for at least three graduate credit hours during the semester in which the examination is taken.

The M.A. examination is a single examination consisting of two portions, written and oral. Both portions deal with the student's two areas of concentration. The written portion consists of a thesis (thesis track) or two take-home examinations (non-thesis track). In the latter case, students are expected to pick up the envelope containing the examination questions from the Graduate Secretary on the date and time pre-arranged with the M.A. advisory committee, and to submit the written responses, which may be in either English, Spanish, Portuguese or other appropriate Latin American language, in word-processed, printed and carefully proof-read format no more than 48 hours later. The oral portion of the examination will not be more than 120 minutes in length, and is scheduled to take place no later than one week after the completion of the written examinations. CLAS Master's exam has four evaluation categories: High Pass, Pass, Low Pass and Fail. The M.A. examination is based on the course work that the student has taken and on a short, selective reading list prepared by the student under the guidance of her/his M.A. advisory committee. This reading list must be submitted to the Graduate Secretary alongside the M.A. Curriculum Plan.

For the thesis, take-home exams, and oral examinations, the student will be guided by her/his academic adviser and advisory committee. The academic adviser chairs the examination committee and for students completing the non-thesis track, their adviser is responsible for: 1) soliciting and collecting questions for the written portion from the other members of the committee; 2) putting the written examination in final, fully edited, form; and 3) making sure that the committee members receive the written responses by the date required.

The oral examination is not restricted to the questions asked on the written examination. It may, in fact, include any topic covered in the courses that the student has taken or included on the reading list. The oral examination is regarded as an integral part of the total examination, and is not graded separately from the written portion. The language of the oral examination may be English, Spanish, or Portuguese, depending on the conditions set by the examining committee. All members of the examination committee must be present during the entire oral examination and are expected to participate fully in the questioning and the discussion of and decision on the result.

At the conclusion of the oral portion of the exam, the examining committee will determine if the student has passed the entire examination and will inform the student of the examination result. The student is considered to have completed the Master's Examination successfully only when the decision of the committee is unanimously affirmative. Each examiner indicates judgment by signing the Master's Examination Report that must be submitted to the Graduate School no later than two weeks prior to commencement.

If the examination committee does not evaluate the examination as passing, the committee will recommend whether the student may retake the examination, and which portions will be retaken. If a second examination is held, the examination committee must be the same as the original one, unless a substitution is approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. The second examination will normally be scheduled no earlier than the semester following the semester of failure, particularly in the event that



both areas of the examination need to be retaken. The timing of the second examination is left to the discretion of the Examination Committee.

On written appeal by the student or a member of the Master's Examination Committee, the Policy and Standards Committee of the Council on Research and Graduate Studies will review the Master's Examination to ensure its conformity to Graduate School rules and to determine if it was conducted fairly and without prejudice to the student.

### **DUAL DEGREE PROGRAM**

A dual degree program is defined as a graduate student's pursuing any two graduate degrees concurrently, with the exception of two PhD programs. A dual degree program can be the concurrent pursuit of a master's degree and any other graduate degree (master's, PhD, or a professional doctorate) or a PhD and a professional doctorate. The dual program does not apply to students pursuing a master's and a PhD in the same graduate program.

The student and advisor(s) in each graduate degree program must plan an integrated course of study to satisfy the requirements of both degree programs. The program plan form for dual degree students must be completed and submitted to the Graduate School within one semester of planning the integrated course of study with both advisors.

Students who are interested in pursuing a concurrent second degree are not required to reapply through the Graduate Admissions Office. Rather, they should contact the graduate studies committee chair and/or the graduate coordinator in the proposed second degree program to gain a clear understanding of the graduate program's application process and deadlines.

Typically, students will complete a separate master's examination for each degree program. However, if the following conditions are satisfied, a student pursuing two thesis option master's degree programs may be required to complete only one master's examination and one thesis. The graduate studies committee in each graduate program must approve.

Students pursuing a master's degree in one graduate program and a PhD in a separate program must submit a Dual Degree Program Plan form to pursue the two degrees concurrently and to be listed on the university's student database as a dual degree student. Students must satisfy the credit hour requirements for each degree program. A minimum of 50 percent of the hours counted toward the credit hour requirement for each degree must be unique to that degree and cannot be used for dual credit. The graduate studies committee may establish a minimum higher than 50 percent. All other respective degree requirements must be completed independently. An individual thesis or dissertation cannot be used toward degree requirements for both degrees.

### **PROGRAM ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE**

As an interdisciplinary program, no single college or school encompasses the proposed M.A. program activities. Consequently, administrative support, record-keeping, and publicity for the program will be housed in the offices of the Center for Latin American Studies, part of the Office of International Affairs. CLAS has affiliated faculty throughout the university (see Appendix B, Graduate Faculty in Latin

American Studies). Administration of the M.A. program within the CLAS is outlined in the following chart.



All graduate faculty members who participate in the program through the courses they teach in their respective academic units are consulted to choose among its ranks the members of the **LAS Graduate Studies Committee** which administers the program. The Graduate Studies Committee consists of five members nominated and then chosen by the Latin American Studies graduate faculty members in a way that it is fully representative of its diverse disciplinary constituency. Graduate Studies Committee members serve for staggered two-year terms. The Committee deals with routine administrative matters and makes recommendations for basic policy changes as needed. The Director of the CLAS chairs this committee and serves as **Director of the Latin American Studies M.A. Program**.

## ADVISING

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The Director of the LAS M.A. Program and Chair of the LAS Graduate Studies Committee will support new students during their first semester of registration and assist in the selection of an appropriate adviser. Students must designate a formal permanent adviser within the first semester of study.

Thereafter, course registration should always take place in close consultation with the student's adviser. The adviser can be replaced any time upon request by the student or the current adviser to the Graduate Studies Committee.

In consultation with her/his adviser, the student will form an advisory committee. The advisory committee, which will be formed at least two semesters before graduation, will consist of at least two faculty specialists in the student's areas of concentration. In any case, the final composition of the student's advisory committee should be validated by the Graduate Studies Committee. Once the advisory committee has been formed, adjustments in its composition will be decided by the student in consultation with her or his adviser and the committee members. Appropriate notification will be made to the Graduate Studies Committee and will be recorded in the student's file. The student's principal adviser will chair the advisory committee.

The adviser and the student's advisory committee are charged with advising students in light of their career goals. Their judgment of suitable committee composition (e.g., the need for additional members), appropriate courses and/or appropriate interdisciplinary breadth of coursework beyond the minimum requirements should guide development of the student's program.

At the beginning of each semester, the student is required to obtain the signed approval of her/his adviser for the program of study for that semester. This plan of study must be authorized by and formally filed with the Director of the Graduate Studies Committee. Advising credit will accrue to the adviser's home department.

Course selection and advising will take place in the context of the following considerations:

1. Students are required to select two areas of concentration by the end of their second semester in the program. These areas of concentration could be chosen according to disciplinary boundaries; or could be designed by the student, in consultation with her/his advisory committee and with the approval of the Graduate Studies Committee, around a specific topic approached in an interdisciplinary manner.
2. By the end of their third semester in the program students will choose between the thesis and the non-thesis track. The thesis track entails the production of a substantial research project, to be defended in an oral examination; the non-thesis track, two written examinations followed by an oral defense.
3. Students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of CLAS' partnership with Latin American research and learning institutions (see Coursework above). Students pursuing a thesis will be particularly encouraged to apply to applicable grants and pursue study and research abroad with specialists in their respective fields for at least one semester, preferably during their second year of studies. Advisors and the Director of the Graduate Studies Committee provide all necessary information and guide students through this process.

The [CLAS website](#) offers a complete list of both core faculty and faculty in non-Latin American studies disciplines who are professionally active in/with the region in some meaningful way, e.g. through their research, publications, collaborative projects with Latin American scholars and universities, conference presentations, study abroad programs, student and faculty exchanges, support of Latin American or Latino/a student programs and activities.

#### **LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES COURSE LIST**

A comprehensive list of courses offered by different departments and programs can be found at the [CLAS website](#). For more specific information, please contact Megan Hasting ([hasting.6@osu.edu](mailto:hasting.6@osu.edu)) or your advisor.

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