There is some truth to the saying, “If you don’t know history, then you don’t know anything.” History is a broad discipline encompassing an incredible range of human experience and scholarly methodologies. The study of history pushes us to pose challenging questions about events, cultures, and values outside of our own experience. It asks us to confront the relationship between cause and effect, well-intentioned actions, and unanticipated consequences. In short, historians explore the causes and consequences of humans’ relations with each other and with the broader environment. In the best spirit of the liberal arts college, the major and minor concentrations in the Department of History provide students not simply with a “usable past,” but with core skills that help us understand and participate in an ever-changing world.

The Curriculum
History offers an exciting array of courses that span the globe. Our department boasts an unusually deep faculty for a college of our size, which enables us to offer a wide range of courses in African, Asian, Latin American, European, and United States history. These courses introduce students to cutting-edge scholarship in various thematic fields, including the histories of gender, war, environment, race, science, and material culture.

The Major Program
The history major consists of ten courses. Majors may concentrate their studies in a range of ways, by focusing on a particular region (e.g., East Asia or the Atlantic World), theme (e.g., gender, war, or society), or time period (e.g., the early modern period). Students must take at least four courses that are concerned wholly or partially with areas outside of Europe and the United States (we keep lists of these on our department website). Some students choose to double-major, combining their passion for history with the pursuit of another discipline, such as government, economics, biology, and foreign languages or other area of study. Students who study away for a semester are eligible to take a maximum of one course taken at another institution (although this may not count as an intermediate seminar or higher), at least one course taken at the level of intermediate seminar or higher, and at least one course in a non-Euro/US field of study. All courses that will count toward the minor must be taken on a graded basis (not Credit/D/Fail).

Independent Research
The Department of History offers a variety of opportunities and types of support for students to pursue their historical interests and work closely alongside faculty. Honors projects offer students a semester- or year-long experience in intensive research and writing. Do you have a passion for Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain? Are you fascinated with medieval France? Are you interested in taking your study away experiences in Latin America or Africa one step further? Honors will give you the opportunity to work extensively on a project of your own design in close consultation with faculty advisors. To be eligible to register for honors, a student must have a B+ or higher average in courses taken in the department. Interested students may also consult with their advisers to conduct intermediate or advanced independent studies projects of their choice; research assistantships are also a possibility.

In addition to institutional fellowships at the college level, the Department of History offers several grants in support of independent student research. History majors or minors enrolled in either honors or an independent study are eligible for Nyhus travel grants, which support research-related travel expenses. History majors and minors may also apply for the Alfred E. Golz fellowships, which support research opportunities and internships during the summer months. Ranging from $500 to $3000, these fellowships are awarded to support faculty-student research collaborations, student-designed projects employing innovative technologies, and summer internships where students apply the skills, methods, and content learned in their history courses. Many history majors study away, which permits exciting opportunities to conduct research in foreign archives. Interested students should speak with their history department faculty advisors to discuss such possibilities.

AP and IB Credits
Students who received a four or higher on an AP history exam, or an IB score of five or higher, must complete a 2000-level or 3000-level history course with a minimum grade of B in order to receive a college credit for the exam. AP and IB credits do not count toward the history major or any college requirements; credits from AP or IB exams only count toward total credits needed for graduation. Students will not receive duplicate credit for AP and IB examinations that cover similar fields of history. If a student has scores for more than one AP or IB history exam, only one total credit will be awarded.

The Department
The history department is home to a community of more than a dozen committed scholarly-teachers. Trained at the nation’s outstanding universities, Bowdoin historians regularly publish their research in leading journals and with top-tier presses, earn fellowships to further their studies, and travel
History

Faculty Publications

Recent faculty publications include:

- Connie Chiang, Shaping the Shoreline: Fisheries and Tourism on the Monterey Coast (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008)
- Olufemi Vaughan, Religion and the Making of Nigeria (book manuscript in review)

Faculty

Connie Y. Chiang, associate professor of history and environmental studies, B.A. (California–Santa Barbara), M.A., Ph.D. (Washington), specializes in the history of the US West and social and environmental history.

Dallas G. Denery II, associate professor of history, B.A. (California–Berkeley), M.A. (Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology), Ph.D. (California–Berkeley), specializes in medieval and early modern European intellectual, cultural, and religious history.


David Hecht, assistant professor of history, B.A. (Brandeis), Ph.D. (Yale), teaches courses on the history of science and American history, focusing especially on nuclear history, Cold War politics, and modern cultural and historical perspective.

Page Herrlinger, associate professor of history, B.A. (Yale), M.A., Ph.D. (California–Berkeley), specializes in Russian history and teaches courses on modern Europe, Imperial and revolutionary Russia, the two World Wars, and Germany, 1918–1945.

Matthew W. Klingel, associate professor of history and environmental studies, B.A. (California–Berkeley), M.A., Ph.D. (Washington), specializes and teaches courses in urban history, environmental history, history of medicine and science, and the North American West.

Sarah F. McMahon, associate professor of history, A.B. (Wellesley), Ph.D. (Brandeis), teaches colonial and early national US history; the history of women, family, community, and utopia in the US; and the environmental history of Maine.

Brian Purnell, assistant professor of African studies and history, B.A. (Fordham), M.A., Ph.D. (NYU), specializes in African American history and teaches courses in urban history, history of twentieth-century America, and African American history.

Patrick J. Rael, associate professor of history, B.A. (Maryland–College Park), M.A., Ph.D. (California–Berkeley), teaches courses in African American history, the Civil War and Reconstruction, comparative slavery and race, and military history.

Meghan Roberts, assistant professor of history, B.A. (College of William and Mary), M.A., Ph.D. (Northwestern), specializes in the cultural and political history of early modern Europe, with a focus on the history of eighteenth-century France. Her courses include Old Regime and Revolutionary France, Crime and Punishment, and Culture Wars in the Age of the Enlightenment.

Rachel L. Sturman, associate professor of history and Asian studies, B.A. (Chicago), M.A., Ph.D. (California–Davis), specializes in modern South Asian history and teaches the histories of India, Pakistan, and of comparative modern imperialism and colonialism.

Susan L. Tananbaum, associate professor of history, B.A. (Trinity), M.A., M.A., Ph.D. (Brandeis), specializes in British, Jewish, and European history and teaches British surveys, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and courses on sports and culture and public health.

Olufemi Vaughan, Geoffrey Canada Professor of African Studies and History, B.A., M.A. (St. John’s), Ph.D. (Oxford), studies modern African political and social history, focusing on western and southern Africa, globalization, Diaspora studies, and comparative politics and international relations of Africa.

Allen Wells, Roger Howell Jr. Professor of History, A.B. (SUNY–Binghamton), A.M., Ph.D. (SUNY–Stony Brook), focuses on modern Mexican history, especially the Yucatán, and teaches colonial and modern Latin American history.

Leah Zuo, assistant professor of history, B.A. (Peking University), Ph.D. (Princeton), specializes in intellectual history in premodern China and teaches courses in the history of Chinese philosophy, Chinese cultural history, and science and technology in East Asia.

For more information about Bowdoin, please write or call: Dean of Admissions
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Brunswick, ME 04011-8441
207-725-3100
bowdoin.edu/admissions/bowdoin.edu

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For more information, go to: bowdoin.edu/history/