The Bowdoin German department believes that knowledge of German language and culture is a valuable asset in almost any post-graduate endeavor. Students are strongly encouraged to study one or two semesters in a German-speaking country in order to become literate in the language and culture, as well as to gain a better understanding of their own culture in a global context.

The German curriculum at Bowdoin is divided into three major areas: language and culture, literature and culture, and literature and culture in translation. The elementary two-semester sequence emphasizes speaking, understanding, reading, and writing and introduces aspects of German history and culture; the intermediate level concentrates on reading, speaking, composition, and review of grammar with an intensified focus on German culture. The advanced courses focus on reading strategies, conversation, critical writing, and culture. Each year a native German teaching fellow from the Johannes-Gutenberg-Universität, Mainz assists in individual and group sessions with advanced students.

The study of German literature and culture begins with an introduction to German cultural and literary studies. Advanced literature and culture courses are taught in German and address literature, musical theater, opera, and popular culture, including film in historical, social, and political contexts from the eighteenth century to the present. Examples of special topics courses offered are: Myth, Media, Modernity; Made in Germany; and Global Germany.

Literature and culture courses taught in English are open to all students and address topics of broad interest to the campus. Examples include: Berlin: Sin City, Divided City, City of the Future; Into the Wild: Untamed Nature in German-Speaking Culture; and Nazi Cinema. German department courses are regularly cross-listed with Cinema Studies and other interdisciplinary programs.

The Major Program

The German major attracts students who begin their study of German at Bowdoin as well as those with prior preparation in the language. The program is adaptable to individual student backgrounds, styles, and pace of learning and can be pursued as a single major or in combination with any other major or minor program at Bowdoin. Prospective majors work closely with the professors in the department, who are well acquainted with students and assist them in designing a unique program tailored to their individual interests.

The German major consists of seven courses above German 2204, the final course of the intermediate language and culture sequence. This requirement can be partially fulfilled through courses from study abroad programs, and one of the seven courses may be chosen from the German literature and culture courses in English translation. Majors are encouraged to consider one of a number of study abroad programs with different calendars and formats, and senior students may pursue honors projects.

Teaching Assistant Program

Students play a crucial role in the department’s teaching. Seniors returning from having studied abroad are selected as teaching assistants for the first four semesters of German language instruction and assist as tutors and graders. They work closely with faculty to develop teaching skills and contribute their ideas and experience to the program. Usually at least one of the department’s teaching assistants began the study of German at Bowdoin.
German

**Honors Projects**

Recent honors theses include:

- Joseph Roth, Harry Kessler, and Political Violence in Walther Rathenau's Weimar Germany
- Here to Stay: Arab German Voices from the 1970s to the Present
- Translating Gottfried Benn's Statische Gedichte
- Das Prestige der Reiche: Geostategische Konstellationen, interkulturelle Wahrnehmungen und die Gründung einer deutschen Kolonie im heutigen Qingdao, 1987-1914
- Graffiti in Berlin from 1980-Present: Examining Tensions between Subcultures
- Becoming Judas Maccabaeus: Representations of the Martial Jew in Ghettoliteratur from 1848 to 1933
- Spaces of Transit/Transitional Spaces: Examining the Partial Ruins of Berlin’s Anhalter Bahnhof
- From Germany to Maine: The Translation and Transportation of Kerstin Specht’s Lila
- Negotiating the Diaspora: Bleeding Boundaries in Fatih Akın’s Dialectical Cinema
- Towards a Contemporary Brechtian Dramaturgy: Reimagining Gender in Der Gute Mensch von Sezuan
- Amerika: Ausgangspunkt—Fluchtpunkt—Sehepunkt. Charaktere in der Schweizer Literatur
- Icarus Transformed: Cultural Constructs of Civil Aviation in Germany
- Locke and Lessing, from the Theorist to the Dramatist: The Interconnectedness of Enlightenment Tolerance
- Identity and Community: Two Generations of Afro-Germans through their Poetry, Prose, and Performance
- Localizing and Vocalizing within the Ether: Place, Parenthesis, and Dialogue in Paul Celan’s Atemwende
- Translating Otto Emersleben’s In den schründen der Arktik: A Perspective on Karl May, Robert Peary, and the Presentation of Historical Identity
- The Theme of Liminality in Ilse Aichinger’s Imaginative Writing, 1948-1957: From Novelist to Dialogist
- Und da ging etwas Großartiges in mir vor: Agency and the New Woman in Irmgard Keun’s Das kunstseidene Mädchen

**Study Abroad**

The German department has long-standing connections and affiliations with yearlong and semester programs in Germany and Austria, particularly in Berlin, Tübingen, Freiburg, Hamburg, and Vienna. Students may also opt for summer programs at either the renowned Goethe-Institut or in cooperation with universities in Germany (Berlin) and Austria (Vienna).

**Honors Program and Independent Study**

Independent study provides advanced students with the opportunity to explore in depth an area of German literature or culture with a faculty advisor. Advanced German majors are encouraged to engage in yearlong honors work during their senior year. Students are encouraged to use approaches that integrate other academic interests with German literature and culture. The department offers one- and two-semester independent study projects that differ in scope. Honors projects are reviewed by all of the department’s faculty members.

**Faculty**

- **Jens Klenner**, assistant professor of German, M.A. (Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg), M.A., Ph.D. (Princeton), Ph.D. (Universität Konstanz), specializes in German fiction from 1800 to the present, especially Austrian literature; the history and theory of the novel; nineteenth- and twentieth-century intellectual history; literature and the environment; and ecocriticism.
- **Kathryn Sederberg**, visiting assistant professor of German, B.A. (St. Olaf), Ph.D. (Michigan), specializes in twentieth-century German literature and culture, German modernism, autobiography and life writing, and the history of emotions.
- **Jill Suzanne Smith**, assistant professor of German, B.A. (Amherst), Ph.D. (Indiana–Bloomington), specializes in nineteenth- and twentieth-century German literary and cultural studies, the Weimar Republic, gender and sexuality studies, and Jewish studies.
- **Birgit Tautz**, associate professor of German, Diplomgermanistik (Leipzig), M.A. (Wisconsin), Ph.D. (Minnesota), specializes in eighteenth-century German literature, culture, and philosophy; Romanticism; manifestations of race; and ethnic and cultural differences in literature and film.

**Bowdoin**

For more information about Bowdoin, please write or call: Dean of Admissions Bowdoin College, 5000 College Station Brunswick, ME 04011-8441 207-725-3100 admissions@bowdoin.edu

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**For more information, go to:**

bowdoin.edu/german/