As you prepare for your first semester at Bowdoin, you likely know that the one course with in-person learning options will be the First-Year Writing Seminars. We are excited for the opportunity to welcome you to campus, to engage with you in small seminars, and to build practices of close reading, revised writing, and engaged discussion with you. Even in this unprecedented structure, there are some things that you can expect from your First-Year Writing Seminar:

- **Writing**—Faculty from across the curriculum craft courses around important questions, historical texts, and complex issues. The First-Year Writing Seminar helps transition students to the expectations of college-level writing through a deep engagement in disciplinary content. As you make your way through complex texts and writing assignments, you will receive frequent feedback from faculty. This “write to learn” approach rewards the hard work of writing your way through difficult questions and challenging content. Rather than seeing writing solely as a product or a performance, writing is taught as a process.

- **Revision**—As a process, writing is revised with input from faculty and fellow writers in your course. You can expect to write frequently and for your writing to improve as you engage in consistent and deep revision throughout the semester. When you finish the course, you should have effective strategies for revision to apply to other courses throughout your Bowdoin career and beyond Bowdoin.

- **Discussion**—These courses depend upon the active and engaged participation of you—the students. Led by an expert in the field, you will discuss the questions that shape your course, wrestle with complex ideas, and engage in a collaborative experience of meaning making.

- **Transition to College**—As you settle in to Bowdoin, your First-Year Writing Seminar will introduce you to Library Resources and will engage you in reflections on academic integrity. You’ll be supported in your transition from student to scholar and develop skills citing sources in your academic communication, and understandings about why it matters to cite and what it means to be a part of an ethical academic community. You’ll learn about academic support available through the Baldwin Center for Learning and Teaching, and will work directly with Writing Assistants.

- **Connection**—One of the benefits of our small, writing-intensive seminars is a connection to faculty and to classmates from your first day of classes as a Bowdoin student. This Fall will be no different. You should expect the opportunity to get to know your fellow classmates as you work together to transition to college and write to learn within a discipline. Students in First-Year Writing Seminars frequently get meals together, study together, and form lasting friendships. These small classes provide a welcome landing as you make a new home at Bowdoin.

**FAQs**

**Who teaches FYWS?**
Bowdoin is proud to have faculty from across many disciplines teach this writing across the curriculum program. This fall, we have faculty from 17 departments teaching First-Year Writing Seminars. You will get to know faculty who you can stay connected with during your 4 years at Bowdoin.

**What are some examples of FYWS this fall?**
You’ll see the full list soon, but here is a smattering of courses you can anticipate:

- Affirmative Action and U.S. History
- Ties that Bind: The Anthropology of Relatedness
How do I select a FYWS?

Your advisors will talk to you about selecting a FYWS, asking about your interests and preferences. You are encouraged you to explore the curriculum with your FYWS. Follow your curiosity and select a few courses that seem interesting to you.

When you and a First Year advising team member complete your Corse Information Survey between July 15-23rd, you will list your top three FYWS in ranked order. Selection for FYWS is a lottery system among all First-year students.

What does it mean to be “in person” or to have “in-person components”?

Bowdoin is committed to connecting you to your classmates and to faculty. FYWS faculty will construct their courses differently based on their own pedagogical needs and individual health and safety measures. Unless you enroll in one of the online FYWS, you can expect to meet in person as a class, with your faculty weekly throughout the semester. You may meet your faculty and the whole class, the faculty and part of your class, just with the faculty, and just with classmates in small groups. Imagine your class discussing the novel you’re reading while sitting on the quad, or talking together about neuroscience in a classroom that allows social distancing. You may meet virtually in small groups to discuss writing on some days, or you could be outside with your faculty to discuss an upcoming assignment. Faculty will remain flexible, and will shift the class structure to fit changing needs throughout the semester.

What are the safety protocols for face-to-face teaching this Fall?

- Students and faculty will wear masks and/or other PPE
- We will follow six-foot spacing protocol by meeting in larger classrooms to insure social distancing and making use of our beautiful outdoor spaces
- Face-to-face time will be limited, based on up-to-date health and safety recommendations
- Classroom and instructional spaces will be cleaned by housekeepers daily.
- Students and faculty will be tested twice weekly for COVID-19 and participate in a contact-tracing program. For more information, see President Rose’s letter which outlines safety measures.