

Chinese Language Program FAQ

Q: What courses does the Chinese Language Program at Bowdoin offer?

A: You can find the basic structure of our course offerings on our website. It provides an overview of the different levels and how students typically progress through the program.

<https://www.bowdoin.edu/chinese/requirements/curriculum.html>

Q: What's the difference between CHIN1101 and CHIN1103? Both are labeled 'Elementary.'

A: CHIN1101 is designed for absolute beginners with no prior experience in Chinese. CHIN1103 is for students who have some background in Chinese. For example, those who studied Chinese in middle or high school but may have forgotten much of it, or those who grew up hearing Chinese at home but never formally learned to read or write. CHIN1103 is a great way to jump-start your Chinese learning if you have some exposure but are not ready for intermediate-level courses.

Q: I studied Chinese for x years before coming to Bowdoin, but my placement result put me in a level that feels too high (or too low). I am worried it might be too challenging or not challenging enough. What should I do?

A: We understand your concerns. Every school structures its language courses a little differently, and college-level Chinese language classes are often different from those in high school. Sometimes, students may feel rusty when taking the placement test because they haven't used Chinese in a while, but once they start studying again, their language skills come back quickly. That's completely normal and expected. The best approach is to attend a few classes in the level you were placed into, get a sense of the pace and content, and communicate openly with your instructor. If it turns out that a different level would be a better fit, you can switch courses during the Add/Drop period based on the instructor's approval.

Q: I'm interested in studying abroad in China or other Chinese-speaking regions. Are there opportunities for that at Bowdoin?

A: Absolutely! We have strong connections with a number of well-established study abroad programs, and each year, Bowdoin students choose to continue their Chinese language and cultural studies abroad. Some popular options include:

CET Academic Programs (Beijing, Shanghai and Taiwan)

Middlebury in Beijing

Princeton in Beijing

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If you're thinking about studying abroad, we encourage you to reach out to one of our faculty members to set up a time to talk. We'd be happy to help you explore options and design a study abroad plan that fits your academic goals and interests.

Q: Can I major or minor in Chinese at Bowdoin?

A: Students may minor in Chinese at Bowdoin. For details about the minor requirements, please refer to Asian Studies website.

<https://www.bowdoin.edu/chinese/requirements/index.html#requirementstext>

If you're interested in more in-depth study, you can also choose to pursue an Asian Studies major with a concentration on China. This is a great option for students who want to combine Chinese language study with courses in history, literature, politics, and more.

Q: What if I've completed the highest-level Chinese language course at Bowdoin but still want to continue studying Chinese?

A: If you've completed the highest-level Chinese course, you may have the opportunity to pursue an independent study in Chinese. This allows you to explore a topic of personal interest that is not already covered by existing Chinese courses at Bowdoin. Opportunities for independent study are subject to faculty availability.

Q: Besides regular language classes, are there other types of Chinese-related courses offered at Bowdoin?

A: Depending on faculty availability, the Chinese Language Program may also offer courses such as Chinese calligraphy or literature. Additionally, professors in the Asian Studies Program offer many English-taught courses on China-related topics, covering areas such as history, art history, film, and politics. You can choose courses based on your personal interests.