

## Fellows



**William Bowman**  
IFK\_Senior Fellow

Duration of fellowship  
01. March 2002 bis 30. June 2002

**William Bowman**

## **PROJECT TITLE**

A cultural and intellectual history of suicide in Central Europe (1780-1950)

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

William Bowman proposes to complete research for and begin to draft a book-length study of a cultural and intellectual history of suicide in German-speaking Central Europe from the 1780s to the 1950s. Medical doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists, and other professionals debated and wrote extensively about the causes and prevention of suicide in Central Europe. In Austria, in particular, where the rate of suicide was quite high in the modern period, the discussions about the taking of one's own life were extremely vigorous. These debates among professionals allow one to analyze a number of crucial and interlocking modern developments. First, opinion about suicide increasingly related it to industrialization, urbanization, and the quickening pace of life. Second, medical doctors, psychologists, and others used the issue of suicide, and especially its possible prevention, as a way to expand their claims to professional expertise and authority within a modern society. Finally, in analyzing suicide, experts often proposed modern psychological and physiological explanations. The new thinking on suicide in turn affected public policy and medical practice. By the mid-twentieth century, however, modern medical experts still did not have remedies to prevent suicide, the modern illness.

## **CV**

### **Publications**

U. a. Priest and Parish in Vienna, 1780 to 1880 (Boston 1999)