

Sociology Program Moderation

What to Expect and How to Prepare

Moderation is the process by which you, as an intended sociology major, move into the upper college and establish yourself officially as a sociology major. Put another way, it is the process by which we, as sociology faculty, accept you into the major. It usually happens in the 2nd semester of the sophomore year, and it should happen by the end of the 1st semester of the junior year. Moderation is not something to be nervous about, but it is something to prepare for. The program is not interested in rejecting potential majors. Instead moderation is the key time to get advice on your future studies. It is your opportunity to tell us why you want to study sociology, to think about what you have learned so far, to consider what you need to work on, and to discuss plans for the remainder of your time at Bard. Moderation culminates in a “board” (formal meeting) with 3 faculty members. The more prepared you are for the conversation, the more productive the conversation will be.

Requirements To Be Eligible: You need to pass the following 3 courses by the end of the semester in which you moderate: 100-level SOC course, SOC 213 Sociological Theory, and SOC 205 Introduction to Research Methods.

The Moderation Exercises: To moderate, there are Bard College expectations and Sociology Program expectations.

- ***For Bard:*** Like all Bard students, you must write two short papers to moderate (see the [Student Handbook](#) and <https://www.bard.edu/registrar/moderation/>). These are submitted to the Registrar at the end of the add/drop period early in the semester.
 - *Paper 1: Critical Evaluation of College Work to Date* – Describe the work that has been most interesting to you so far at Bard. Evaluate your strengths and weaknesses. Describe your original objectives when you entered college, and what they are at present.
 - *Paper 2: Plans for the Future* – Describe your plans for the upper college, and explain how these are connected to the objectives you described in Paper 1. Indicate subjects and topics you would like to study during the remainder of your time at Bard. Describe plans that you have for intersessional and summer periods. Explain any plans for study abroad and how you can still meet program and college expectations. Describe 1-2 ideas for your Senior Project and explain the research method you might use.
- ***For Sociology:*** You must submit a sample of sociological writing (about 10 pages). These are submitted to your Board. Pick one 10-page paper or two 5-page papers that you have written for a sociology class, and polish the paper(s). Select papers that represent your best work and that showcase your understanding of particular areas of sociological research, sociological theory, and/or methodology. You must ALSO submit to your board the two past/future papers you wrote for Bard. Send all these 3 weeks before the moderation.

Joint Majors and Concentrations: You should moderate into sociology at the same time as you moderate into a concentration and/or joint major. This means you must fulfill the Sociology Program requirements AND those of the joint major/concentration. You must also discuss all majors/concentrations in the past/future moderation papers. Usually 1-2 of your board members must be from the concentration/joint major. Please consult their respective requirements to ensure you are following them too. (Double majors moderate separately.)

The Moderation Board: Your moderation will take place during Advising Day or Boards Week at the end of the semester. The board consists of your advisor plus two other faculty members. Two of the three should be sociology faculty. You will suggest board members, but the final determination is made by the Sociology Program. The board lasts 45-60 minutes. Think of it as an intensive advising session.

The Process and Timeline

visit: <https://socialstudies.bard.edu/students/>

Step 1: Write and submit your Moderation Papers for Bard. [Due at the end of the add/drop period, in the beginning of each semester.] Submit to the Registrar's Office as in hard copy or to registrar@bard.edu.

Step 2: Fill out the Social Studies moderation form. [October/February] Scheduling boards happens through a centralized process for the whole Social Studies Division. In this form you inform the program and division of your intent to moderate that semester, indicate available times, and suggest board members. See: <https://socialstudies.bard.edu/students/>

Step 3: Select and revise your paper(s) for the Sociology Program. [Mid-semester]

Step 4: Submit all papers to you Moderation Board members. [3 weeks before moderation] Include your sociology writing sample *and* your past/future moderation papers.

Step 5: Prepare for your Board.

Think about why you want to moderate into sociology. What drew you to sociology, and why this major, as opposed to another? Re-read your papers, and anticipate questions that we might ask. Generate a few questions that you want to ask your board. Keep in mind that this is one of the few times when you will have the undivided attention of three Bard faculty members. Take advantage of this opportunity! We always enjoy these discussions because they give us a chance to get to know you better, and to talk with you about topics we find fascinating.