

Guide for Moderating into Sociology

We are thrilled you want to major in sociology! Moderation is the process by which you move into the upper college and establish yourself officially as a sociology 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, think about what you have learned so far, consider what you need to work on, and discuss plans for the remainder of your time at Bard. Moderation culminates in a “board” (a meeting) with 3 faculty members. The more prepared you are for the conversation, the more productive the conversation will be. Think of it as an extended advising session. 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.

Requirements: You must pass the following 3 courses by the end of the semester in which you moderate:

- SOC 101 Introduction to Sociology (Those starting Bard during or before 2023 can substitute another 100-level SOC course for SOC 101.)
- SOC 213 Sociological Theory
- SOC 205 Introduction to Research Methods.

Moderation Exercises: There are general ones and one specific to the Sociology Program.

- For Bard: Like all Bard students, you must write two 2-3 page papers to moderate (see <https://www.bard.edu/registrar/moderation/>). Submit them to the Registrar at the end of the add/drop period.
 - *Paper 1: Critical Evaluation of College Work to Date* – Describe the work that has been most interesting to you so far at Bard, and why you want to major in sociology. 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 to study it and why you chose this method.
- For Sociology: You must submit a sample of sociological writing. Pick one 10-page paper or two 5-page papers that you have written for a sociology class. Select papers that represent your best work or interests and that showcase your understanding of particular areas of sociological inquiry. We urge you to revise or polish the paper(s). *Email them PLUS your 2 above Bard papers to the faculty on your moderation board 3 weeks before the moderation.*

The Moderation Board: Your moderation will take place during Advising Day or Boards Week near 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.

Joint Majors: Joint majors are often not a good idea, and you should discuss this option with advisors in both programs. Ideally you should moderate into sociology *at the same time* as you moderate into another program for a joint major. This means you must fulfill the Sociology Program requirements AND those of the joint major. To be eligible to joint major, you must have a GPA of 3.0 or higher and apply to the Executive Committee for approval. You must also discuss all majors in the past/future moderation papers. Your moderation board must contain faculty members from each program.

- Form for Executive Committee: <https://www.bard.edu/deanofstudies/resources/>

Concentrations: These are interdisciplinary additions to your major. You moderate into a concentration at the same time as you moderate into sociology. Your past/future papers should address both your decision to major in sociology and any concentrations. One member of your moderation board should be a faculty member affiliated with the concentration. Your senior project must also substantially focus on the area of concentration.

Second Focus: The second focus is like a minor at other institutions. It does not have anything to do with your major in sociology, and is not part of moderation or senior project. You are responsible for making sure you fulfill all the requirements of the Second Focus. Usually you declare a second focus junior or senior year once you are close to completing the requirements.

Timeline for the Semester You Moderate

Step 1: Write and submit your Moderation Papers for Bard. [End of add/drop period]
Submit to the Registrar's Office in hard copy or via email to registrar@bard.edu.

Step 2: Fill out the Social Studies Moderation Form. [March or October]
This informs the program/division of your intent to moderate, allows you to suggest board members and list available times. See: <https://socialstudies.bard.edu/students/>

Step 3: Select and revise your sample sociology paper(s) for the Sociology Program.

Step 4: Submit ALL moderation exercises to your Moderation Board members: the sociology writing sample + the 2 short past/future papers [3 weeks before moderation]

Step 5: Prepare for your Board.

Be ready to discuss why you chose sociology and what you have learned about thinking sociologically. Think about senior project ideas. Generate questions to ask your board about your future plans. Keep in mind that this is one of the few times when you will have the undivided attention of three faculty members. Take advantage of this opportunity!