

**Statement of Rationale
SOC 151 GE Certification for
Understanding Society**

Certification Criteria

Students will be able to:

1. Identify foundational theories that offer explanations of social, political, economic, and/or cultural phenomena

- Readings: Pellow & Brehm “An Environmental Sociology for the Twenty-First Century”; Cronon “The Trouble with Wilderness”; Crist “Against the Social Construction of Nature”; Myers “Theories in Environmental Sociology”; Gould et al. “Interrogating the Treadmill of Production”; Bell & Ashwood “The Ideology of Environmental Domination” & “The Ideology of Environmental Concern”; Veldman *The Gospel of Climate Skepticism*; Shove & Ward “Inconspicuous Consumption”
- Daily reading responses: Students will respond to every class reading helping them identify and interact with key theories in assigned readings.

2. Apply foundational theories to analyze contemporary problems or controversies

- Readings: This course will interact with theory in almost all class sessions, referring back to, further interrogating, and more deeply refining critical appreciation of theories discussed (e.g., ecological modernization theory, treadmill of production theory, world systems theory, ecological feminism, ecological Marxism, etc.). These are applied via discussion and journal entries on topics such as markets, nature & society, technology, consumption, food systems, health, religion, and governance.
- Semester long project: Students will produce a class presentation and 3,500-4,000 word research paper on an environmental problem of their choosing, grounding it in appropriate theory and scientific evidence. The paper requires students to interact with key theories as they analyze their issue of choice.
- Peer review: Students will be responsible to peer review an early draft of another student’s paper, providing critical feedback on the success with which environmental theory has been incorporated.

3. Make personal and social application of various theories—informed by a biblical perspective.

- Readings: Student’s will read Robin Veldman’s monograph *The Gospel of Climate Skepticism* in its entirety, in addition to interacting in a special class session with the book’s author. Students will read selections from Jim Antal’s monograph *Climate Church, Climate World: How People of Faith Must Work for Change*. Finally, Bell & Ashwood’s “Ideology of Environmental Domination” and “Ideology of Environmental Concern”, as well as Shellenberger’s “False Gods for Lost Souls”, address religious and

theological issues. Lorenzen's "Going Green" and Bell & Ashwood's "Living in the Ecological Society" allow a practical opportunity to reflect upon the degree to which Christian faith and environmentalism are harmonious or at odds with one another.

- Sermon: Students will view and collectively reflect upon John MacArthur's sermon "The End of the Universe."
- Daily reading responses: Students will respond to each of the eight chapters in *The Gospel of Climate Skepticism* in a reflective exercise on the issue of contemporary evangelicalism and climate change.
- Environment & Ideology Reflection Paper: Students will examine their own relationship to the natural world and the religious worlds in which they were raised.

Student Learning Outcome

Students will apply appropriate foundational theories to analyze social, political, economic, and/or cultural phenomena.

- Daily reading responses; Students will apply theoretical perspectives to a variety of issues (e.g., nature & society, markets, science, consumption, health, religion, governance, etc.).
- Semester long paper: Students will apply key theoretical frameworks in environmental sociology to analyze and discuss a contemporary environmental problem using a sociological (i.e., structural, political, economic, religious, cultural, etc.) perspective.
- Class presentation: Students will communicate their theoretical insight and scientific findings via a 20 minute class presentation.