

POLICY WORLDS

ANT 4930/ANG 6930
SECTION MO69
FALL 2025

I. General Information

Class Meetings

- Meeting: Thursday Period 8-10 (3:00 – 6:00 PM)
- Location: MAT 0011

Instructor

- Dr. Marit Tolo Østebø
- **Office location:** Grinter Hall 488
- **Office hours:** Tuesday 1:30 – 4:30 pm
- Contact: Marit.ostebo@ufl.edu; (352)328-7591

Course Description

Prerequisites: Consent of professor

What is this thing we call “policy”? How do policies come into being and what kind of effects – both intended and unintended – do they generate? How and why do policies travel and what happens when a policy is translated into a new context? And how anthropologists study the actors, institutions, and processes, that constitute the policy world?

This course has **two overarching aims**: 1) to examine policy as a cultural construction, a technology of governance and an object of anthropological enquiry and 2) to ethnographically investigate specific policies, their genealogies, institutional frameworks, problem assumptions and social effects. Readings will offer insights into the workings of policy across diverse geographical and institutional context – both national and transnational – and will draw from multiple sub-fields within anthropology, including (but not limited to) medical, political, organizational and development anthropology.

Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to interrogate all assigned readings and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint, or belief.

General Course Objectives

The following are the general objectives I have for this course:

- Ensure that students master the course subject matter.
- Ensure that students engage in discussions in a respectful way.
- Develop students' ability to use course concepts in thinking and problem solving.
- Prepare students to be life-long learners.
- Develop students' interpersonal and team interaction skills.
- Help students think outside the box and broaden their horizon.
- Have students enjoy the course and make new friends.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes:

- **Content:** Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used in anthropology of policy
 - Identify, describe, and explain anthropological perspectives and contributions to policy studies
 - Summarize and explain anthropological and theoretical discussions associated with concepts relevant to the course
 - Describe key features of anthropological methods and practices particularly relevant to the anthropology of policy, such as studying-up, studying through, nonlocal ethnography, etc.
 - Employ competing anthropological and social theories to critically discuss the policy field
 - Provide an overview of ethical challenges associated with conducting anthropological studies in policy worlds
 - Search for and identify literature relevant to specific research questions relevant to the course and to students' own research, using resources available through UF libraries
- **Critical Thinking:** Students carefully and logically analyze information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within anthropology of policy.
 - Critically reflect on the interplay between policy and practice
 - Use anthropological and theoretical concepts relevant to the course to analyze policy processes and phenomena
 - Use relevant research to explore and test ideas and to support or refute generalization.
 - Critically analyze arguments, theories and data presented in course readings.
 - Critically adopt and reflect on the use of AI as a tool for learning, writing and research.
- **Communication:** Students communicate knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline(s).
 - Synthesize, and discuss research findings in written and oral forms.
 - Convey anthropological concepts, knowledge, and research findings to others in an everyday language – in both oral and written form – using popular, creative and/or visual formats such as a video, digital storytelling, flash-presentation or a “one-pager”.

- Identify problem areas, and propose potential policy solutions
- **Connection:** Students connect course content with meaningful critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.
 - Learn how to work and collaborate with others.
 - Reflect on the relevance of anthropological concepts and knowledge to real-world, every-day problems
 - Be mindful of how you can incorporate perspectives and tools from anthropology in ways that makes the world a better and more inclusive place.
 - Reflect on your own learning processes and on how the course has changed the way you think and engage in and with the world.

Required Books

Appel, Hannah. (2019) *The licit life of capitalism: US oil in Equatorial Guinea*. Duke University Press, 2019.

De Leon, Jason (2015) *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*

Greenhalgh, Susan. (2008) *Just One Child : Science and Policy in Deng's China* (Available as e-book through UF)

Gupta, Akhil (2012) *Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence, and Poverty in India*. Duke University Press.

II. CLASS SCHEDULE

(Note: The course schedule may change).

Week 1 (August 21): Course Introduction and Expectations

NO READINGS

MODULE ONE: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDINGS

Week 2 (August 28)

Cochrane, Glynn, et al. "Policy studies and anthropology [and comments and reply]." *Current Anthropology* 21.4 (1980): 445-458.

Gruenbaum, E. (1981). Medical Anthropology Health Policy and the State: A Case Study of Sudan. *Review of Policy Research*, 1(1), 47-65.

Shore, C., and S. Wright, 1997, "Policy: a new field of anthropology": 3--39. in C. Shore and S. Wright (eds), *Anthropology of Policy: Critical Perspectives on Governance and Power*.

Østebø M.T. & Henderson. R. (under review) Models Are Political Technologies: Thinking With and About Them Across Disparate Domains

Assignment: Perusal assignment

Class Activity: Applications

Recommended Readings:

Hinshaw, R. E., 1980, "Anthropology, administration, and public policy", *Annual Review of Anthropology* 9:497--522.

Shore, C. and S. Wright (2011) *Conceptualizing Policy: Technologies of Governance and the Politics of Visibility*

Tate, W. (2020). Anthropology of policy: Tensions, temporalities, possibilities. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 49(1), 83-99.

Wedel, Janine, Cris Shore, Gregory Feldman, Stacy Lathrop. 2005. "Towards an Anthropology of Public Policy." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences* 600: 30-51
Cochrane, G., 1980, "Policy studies and anthropology", *Current Anthropology* 21:445--458.

Week 3 (September 4): Studying Policy Worlds

Read:

Besteman, Catherine. 2010, "In and Out of the Academy: Policy and the Case of a Strategic Anthropology," *Human Organization* 69:407-417.

Feldman, Gregory. 2011. *Illuminating the Apparatus: Steps toward a Nonlocal Ethnography of Global Governance*

Nader, L. 1972. *Up the anthropologist: perspectives gained from studying up* In *Reinventing Anthropology*, ed. D Hymes, pp. 284--311. New York, NY: Pantheon Books

Thedvall, Renita (2013) "Punctuated Entries: Doing Fieldwork in Policy Meetings in the European Union." *Organizational Anthropology: Doing Ethnography in and Among Complex Organizations*, edited by Christina Garsten and Anette Nyqvist, Pluto Press.

Assignment: Perusal Assignment

Class Activities: Applications

Recommended Readings:

Ball, Stephen J. 2016. 'Following policy: Networks, network ethnography and education policy mobilities.'

Bear, L. & Mathur, N. (2015) Introduction. *Remaking the Public Good: A New Anthropology of Bureaucracy*

Kendall, Nancy, and Rachel Silver. "Mapping International Development Relations Through Meeting Ethnography." *Meeting Ethnography*. Routledge, 2017.

Marshall, Catherine. 1984. "Elites, Bureaucrats, Ostriches, and Pussycats: Managing Research in Policy Settings." *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 15(3): 235-251

Mosse, David (2011) *Politics and Ethics: Ethnographies of Expert Knowledge and Professional Identities*

Mulligan, J & Brugnoli-Ensin, I. (2019) *Anthropology of Health Policy*.

<https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780199766567/obo-9780199766567-0210.xml>

Nagelhus Schia, N. (2013) *Being Part of the Parade – “Going Native” in the United Nations Security Council*

Schwegler, T., & Powell, M. G. (2008). Unruly Experts: Methods and Forms of Collaboration in the Anthropology of Public Policy. *Anthropology in Action*, 15(2), 1-9. Retrieved Jul 29, 2025, from <https://doi.org/10.3167/aia.2008.150201>

Schwegler, Tara. 2008. "Trading Up: Reflections on 'Trading Up: Reflections on Power, Collaboration, and Ethnography in the Anthropology of Policy'." *Anthropology in Action: Journal for Applied Anthropology in Policy and Practice*. Vol. 15, No. 2: 10-25.

Shore, C. & Wright, S. (2015) *Audit Culture Revisited. Rankings, Ratings, and the Reassembling of Society*.

Wright, S. & Reinhold, R. (2011) 'Studying Through': A Strategy for Studying Political Transformation. Or Sex, Lies and British Politics

Week 4 (September 11): Reading Ethnography I

Gupta, Akhil (2012) Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence, and Poverty in India. Duke University Press. Part 1 & 2

Assignment: Make applications

Class Activities: Applications

Week 5 (September 18): Reading Ethnography I

Gupta, Akhil (2012) Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence, and Poverty in India. Duke University Press. Part 3 & 4

Assignment: Make applications

Class Activities: Applications

MODULE TWO: TRAVELING POLICY MODELS

Week 6 (September 25)

Clarke, J., Bainton, D., Lendvai, N., & Stubbs, P. (2015). Translation, assemblage and beyond: towards a conceptual repertoire. In *Making Policy Move* (pp. 33-64). Policy Press.

Olivier de Sardan, J. P., Diarra, A., & Moha, M. (2017). Travelling models and the challenge of pragmatic contexts and practical norms: the case of maternal health. *Health research policy and systems*, 15(Suppl 1), 60.

Mosse, David. 2004. Is Good Policy Unimplementable? Reflections on the Ethnography of Aid Policy and Practice

Østebø, M.T. (forthcoming) Affective Virality: On Policy Mobility and Traveling Models

Assignment: Perusal Assignment

Class Activities: Applications

Week 7 (October 2): Reading Ethnography II

Greenhalgh, Susan. (2008) Just One Child : Science and Policy in Deng's China (Available as e-book through UF) Chapters 1-5

Assignment: Make applications

Class Activities: Applications

Week 8 (October 9): Reading Ethnography II

Greenhalgh, Susan. (2008) Just One Child : Science and Policy in Deng's China (Available as e-book through UF) Chapters 6-end

Assignment: Make applications

Class Activities: Applications

MODULE THREE: ACCOUNTABILITY AND METRICS

Week 9 (October 16)

Adams, V. (2016). Metrics of the global sovereign: numbers and stories in global health. *Metrics: What counts in global health*, 19-54.

Merry, S. E. (2011). Measuring the world: Indicators, human rights, and global governance. *Current anthropology*, 52(S3)

Saluk, S. (2022). Datafied pregnancies: Health information technologies and reproductive governance in Turkey. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 36(1), 101-118.

Shore, C., & Wright, S. (2015). Audit culture revisited: Rankings, ratings, and the reassembling of society. *Current Anthropology*, 56(3), 421-444.

Assignment: Make applications

Class Activities: Applications

Week 10 (October 23): Reading Ethnography III

Appel, Hannah. (2019) *The licit life of capitalism: US oil in Equatorial Guinea*. Duke University Press, 2019.

Assignment: Make applications

Class Activities: Applications

Week 11 (October 30): Reading Ethnography III

Appel, Hannah. (2019) *The licit life of capitalism: US oil in Equatorial Guinea*. Duke University Press, 2019.

Assignment: Make applications

Class Activities: Applications

MODULE FOUR: SECURITY AND BIOPOLITICS

Week 12 (November 6): Reading ethnography IV

De Leon, Jason (2015) *The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail*

Recommended Readings:

Goldstein, D. M. (2010). Toward a critical anthropology of security. *Current anthropology*, 51(4), 487-517.

Glück, Z., & Low, S. (2017). A sociospatial framework for the anthropology of security. *Anthropological Theory*, 17(3), 281-296.

Week 13 (November 13) LAST DAY OF CLASS

Read the first half of an ethnography of your choice that you believe is of relevance for this course. Present and talk about the book in class.

Week 14 (November 21): NO CLASS, American Anthropological Annual Meeting

Week 15 (November 28): THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week 16 (December 4): READING DAY

FINAL PROJECT AND FINAL REFLECTION ARE DUE DECEMBER 11

III. Class Requirements and Assignments

Attendance (100 points)

Since the course only meets once a week, full attendance in all classes is essential. More than one absence may lower your grade. If you have an excusable absence (see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>) let me know in advance and I will consider whether you have to make up for the absence in one or another way.

Participation in Class (100 points)

You are expected to keep up with the readings and to come to class well prepared and engage in small group and larger class discussions. I also expect you to show that you are focused and present while in class; e.g. if I observe you being on your computer or on your phone during class discussions, I will deduct points from your participation grade.

Perusall assignment / Preparing applications for class discussions (40 points each)

Each week you will, as part of preparation for class, do an individual assignment linked to the readings. Some weeks, your assignment will be to post reflections and responses to the readings on Perusall. Other weeks, you will be asked to prepare applications that we will use in class. More instructions on how to prepare the applications will be given in class. The applications are modeled after the Team-Based-Learning methodology and preparing the applications and doing them in class will give you a pedagogical tool that you can use in your current or future teaching.

Individual Reading and Presentation of an Anthropology of Policy Ethnography (100 points)

Select and read one of the ethnographies below, or one you have identified as relevant to this class (has to be approved by me). Create a flash presentation (more information about these formats will be given in class) that you will present to the class towards the end of the semester.

Antoniello, Patricia (2020) For the Public Good: Women, Health, and Equity in Rural India

Bear, L. (2015) Navigating Austerity. Currents of Debt Along a South Asian River

Biruk, C. (2018) Cooking Data Culture and Politics in an African Research World

Bregnbæk, Susanne (2017) Fragile Elite: The Dilemmas of China's Top University Students

Davis, S. (2020) The uncoun ted: Politics of data in global health

Ferguson, J. (2006) The anti-politics machine

Lea, Tess (2020) Wild Policy: Indigeneity and the Unruly Logics of Intervention

Miller, James Casey (2016) Dying for Money: The Effects of Global Health Initiatives on NGOs Working with Gay Men and HIV/AIDS in Northwest China

Murphy, M. (2017) The Economization of Life

Tate, Winifred (2015) Drugs, Thugs and Diplomats. U.S. Policy Making in Colombia

Powers, Ted (2020) Sustaining Life: AIDS Activism in South Africa

Peters, Rebecca (2020) Implementing Inequality: The Invisible Labor of International Development

Schwartz, Jessica (2021) Radiation Sounds: Marshallese Music and Nuclear Silences

Yamada, Naomi C.F. (2021) Preferential Education Policies in Multi-ethnic China: National Rhetoric, Local Realities

White, Daniel (2022) Administering Affect: Pop-Culture Japan and the Politics of Anxiety

Østebø, Marit T. (2021) Village Gone Viral. Understanding the Spread of Policy Models in a Digital Age

Final Project (300 points)

It is up to you to decide what you would like to submit for your final project. It should be in a format that is important for your progress and career as a graduate or undergraduate student in anthropology (or other relevant fields). Your final project should incorporate theoretical or methodological perspectives from anthropology of policy. It consists of two parts.

1. A detailed description of your end-of-the course assignment (100 points). It should include the following
 - a. A description of the project. Be specific. For example, if you would like to develop a research proposal for NSF or Wennergren, highlight key components of those templates. If you want your final project to be a journal article, identify a potential journal and highlight key points from the journal's author guidelines, including word limits.
 - b. An AI policy for your final project that shows that you have explored and considered available resources on how to integrate AI in research and teaching (see links below).
 - c. A grading rubric (I will use this rubric when I grade your final project). I have included a sample rubric for one of my courses below. Be aware that this is just a sample and that it is for a 100 points oral assignment. You should develop relevant criteria and a point-breakdown for a 200 point assignment.

2. PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH PROJECT IN CLASS						
Criteria	Ratings					Pts
PRESENTATION The presentation holds the attention and interest of the audience. The presentation has visual elements and is well organized	20 to >19.0 pts Exceptional	19 to >17.0 pts Exceeds expectations	17 to >13.0 pts Meet Expectations	13 to >6.0 pts Needs Improvement	6 to >0 pts Does not meet expectations	20 pts
TECHNICALITIES The presentation is submitted on time and is between 5-8 minutes long.	20 to >19.0 pts Exceptional	19 to >17.0 pts Exceeds expectations	17 to >13.0 pts Meet Expectations	13 to >6.0 pts Needs Improvement	6 to >0 pts Does not meet expectations	20 pts
CREATIVITY The team presents key/major findings in a compelling and creative way. The presentation reflect enthusiasm about topic.	20 to >19.0 pts Exceptional	19 to >17.0 pts Exceeds expectations	17 to >13.0 pts Meet Expectations	13 to >6.0 pts Needs Improvement	6 to >0 pts Does not meet expectations	20 pts
KNOWLEDGE AND CONTENT Demonstrates knowledge of the subject area by answering class questions with explanations and elaboration. The presentation contains narrative elements	20 to >19.0 pts Exceptional	19 to >17.0 pts Exceeds expectations	17 to >13.0 pts Meet Expectations	13 to >6.0 pts Needs Improvement	6 to >0 pts Does not meet expectations	20 pts
DYNAMICS Demonstrates that this has been a collaborative project. Presentation reflects a coordinated effort in bringing the works of individuals together in a coherent presentation. The presentation includes a discussion of research experience	20 to >19.0 pts Exceptional	19 to >17.0 pts Exceeds expectations	17 to >13.0 pts Meet Expectations	13 to >6.0 pts Needs Improvement	6 to >0 pts Does not meet expectations	20 pts

3. Your final project (200 points)
 - a. The assignment you proposed earlier in the semester
 - b. A description of how you used AI and a critical reflection about that experience (minimum 400 words)

Below is a list of potential projects/formats:

- Research proposal
- Dissertation chapter
- Journal article
- Literature review related to a specific research topic/question. If you choose this option you must include screenshots of relevant passages you reference in your paper, or annotated version of the sources you are using in your submission.
- Syllabus for an anthropological course that includes a clear focus on policy
- An essay that potentially could be submitted as part of your application to a graduate program in anthropology
- A pod-cast, piece of art, or other creative projects that address a question relevant to the course and reflect anthropological perspectives

Final Reflection (200 points)

For this assignment I ask you to reflect on your own learning processes and on how the course has changed how you think about policy and the way you engage with the world. Your reflection should include references to and discussion of key theoretical and/or methodological concepts from the course. It should be 800 words long.

Grading Scale

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

A	94 – 100%		C	74 – 76%
A-	90 – 93%		C-	70 – 73%
B+	87 – 89%		D+	67 – 69%
B	84 – 86%		D	64 – 66%
B-	80 – 83%		D-	60 – 63%
C+	77 – 79%		E	<60

V. Course Policies

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see [this link](#).” (The direct link is <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>.)

Religious observances

Students seeking modification of due dates for class participation, assignments, and exams for religious reasons should contact me well in advance to request this modification, which will then be granted.

Procedure for conflict resolution

Any issues, disagreements or grade disputes should be discussed first with me. If the problem cannot be resolved, please contact Prof. John Krigbaum (krigbaum@ufl.edu, (352) 294-7540), Chair of Anthropology. Be prepared to provide documentation of the problem, as well as all graded materials for the semester. Issues that cannot be resolved departmentally will be referred to the University Ombuds Office (<http://www.ombuds.ufl.edu> [Links to an external site.](#); 352-392-1308) or the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu> [Links to an external site.](#); 352-392-1261).

Specific late policies and assignment extension policies for the course

- Late assignments without an excuse will be reduced 5% per day late.
- All unexcused late work will not be accepted a week after the due date without agreement with the instructor.

Communication practices for the course

- You are responsible for materials posted on E-Learning (Canvas) at <https://elearning.ufl.edu/>, including required readings, announcements, details on assignments, and other supplementary material. Canvas technical support is available at <https://elearning.ufl.edu/student-help-faqs/>.
- I will use email to make general class announcements or to contact you directly about your work. You are responsible for checking your official UF email regularly to be aware of communication from me. There are no allowances for students who fail to read their email announcements or whose inboxes are full at the time an announcement is sent.
- Canvas Notifications: In your Canvas “Account,” click on “Notifications.” Set the notification for “Submission Comment” to either “Notify Immediately” or “Daily Summary.” I will communicate with you regarding your assignments through Submission Comments more so than e-mail. I expect every student to read their submission comments within 24 hours. Some of them may require immediate action on your part.

Library Resources

- **Library Resources (General Courses):** The [UF Libraries](#) provide access to numerous resources and services that will help you succeed in this course. Access thousands of [online databases, books, and articles](#) or visit one of the [branch locations](#) for additional [resources, services, and study spaces](#). Can't find what you are looking for? You can [Ask A Librarian](#) for help by email, chat, text, or phone.
- **Library Resources (Courses with Researching/Writing Component, Grad Courses):** The [UF Libraries](#) provide access to numerous resources and services that will help you succeed in this course. Access thousands of [online databases, books, and articles](#) or visit one of the [branch locations](#) for additional [resources, services, and study spaces](#). Further, as this class requires students to complete a bibliography, research paper, or project, both the [Anthropology Library Guide](#) and the [Anthropology Assignment Guide](#) may be of assistance. You can also contact the [Anthropology Librarian](#) directly for help with developing your research topic/question, searching for sources, and evaluating information. And you can also [Ask A Librarian](#) for help by email, chat, text, or phone.
- **Ginessa Mahar (Anthropology Librarian):** gimahar@ufl.edu, office: Library West Room 500

Useful Health and Wellness Resources:

- **[Health and Wellness](#)**
- *U Matter, We Care:* If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress. <http://www.umatter.ufl.edu/>
- *Counseling and Wellness Center:* Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services. <https://counseling.ufl.edu>
- *Student Health Care Center:* Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.
- *University Police Department:* Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- *UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center:* For immediate medical care call 352- 733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.
- *GatorWell Health Promotion Services:* For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352- 273-4450.

About Plagiarism and ChatGPT (AI) Use

Rather than reacting in fearful ways to new advances in artificial intelligence, I believe students and educators should critically think about innovative and ethical ways to use AI to support learning, research and writing. While AI tools have certain limitations, they also have potential benefits, such as providing new perspectives on a problem and generating content that can be analyzed or critiqued. In

this course we will explore and critically discuss how to integrate and use AI as a pedagogical and research tool.

Below are some resources:

- <https://teach.ufl.edu/resource-library/chatbots-and-artificial-intelligence-in-education/>
- <https://teach.ufl.edu/resource-library/academic-integrity-in-the-age-of-ai/#/>
- <https://teach.ufl.edu/resource-library/ai-in-the-classroom/>
- <https://ai.ufl.edu/teaching-with-ai/>

Best practices for students: <https://ai.ufl.edu/for-our-students/guidance-for-students/>