Political Economy and Public Policy: A Scalar Perspective
In recent decades, states around the world have devolved and decentralized important policy responsibilities to a range of local actors, urban networks, community organizations, and regional institutions. The result has been a complex array of policy and governance experiments across major public policy fields including economic, social, cultural, environmental, and health. In conceptualizing these dynamics, Political Economy research has creatively advanced a scalar approach to ‘new state spaces’. At the same time, leading approaches in Public Policy remain without a ‘spatial lens’, working through national-level models of the policy cycle from agenda setting to evaluation. This course explores the potential for constructive dialogue across Political Economy and Public Policy traditions for better understanding and assessment of localized modes of governance and inter-scalar policy making. Working with literature at the intersection of Political Economy and Public Policy, several key issue areas will provide focus: economic development (eg. technology clusters/social economy); social inclusion (eg. homelessness/child care); cultural diversity (eg. immigrant settlement/indigenous peoples); ecological sustainability (eg. resource stewardship/bioregionalism); population health (eg. social determinants/community care).