Syllabus-Fall Term 2003 Preliminary version as of 8/13/03

School of Public Policy
George Mason University

PUBP 501.006 : Policy and Organizational Analysis

Mondays 4:30--7:00, Arlington Campus Room 253

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URL for instructor: http://www.icasit.org/ruth/index.htm

Please read this syllabus and utilize the course handouts carefully. The course requires the completion of many exercises, cases, discovery projects and other tasks, and the attached CDROM explains everything in detail. The CDROM also contains several audio and video lectures, plus HDR 2002 and *AHDR 2002*, major class resources that can be used immediately.

Course description

Professionals are routinely confronted by the need to assess the credibility, accuracy, balance, and completeness of studies, research reports and policy advocacy documents. The professional world is also inundated with data and information through the Worldwide Web and other electronic and print media.

This course prepares students systematically to analyze research information, both qualitative and quantitative. It also provides a basis for more advanced analytic research techniques. The course will emphasize information acquisition, application of data analysis techniques, and presentation, including writing for professional and lay audiences.

Topics will include methods of collecting data and information and ways of assessing the reliability and validity of information, as well as the formulation and testing of hypotheses, qualitative and quantitative approaches to data analysis, visualizing and presenting information, and presenting logical, clear arguments based on the analysis of information.

Students attend library sessions on electronic retrieval of information, complete a series of assignments using spreadsheets and other applications software, make presentations, assess research, and provide written analyses of technical research made in the Washington Capital Region and beyond. The course emphasizes writing reports for professional and lay audiences and the importance of intellectual honesty in analytic work. It aims to provide basic competencies that enable students to master advanced courses in methodology and to be intelligent users and presenters of research.

Framing issues

- Students' primary interest is to use or apply the learning, so the course is oriented towards students' needs as analysts of policy and organizational research. **The course, then, is hands-on**
- The course is a precursor to, not a substitute for, advanced statistics and advanced research course(s).
- Projects and assignments are designed to encourage students to apply ideas and techniques.

Students in this course will be required to make extensive use of Internet-based resources. If you are not a "techie" or "geek" this does not put you at a disadvantage; nevertheless, it will be crucial that you get in the habit of using Internet daily from a high speed connection. GMU offers literally hundreds of terminals with this capability at the various campuses including several dozen at the Arlington Campus Original Building's 3rd floor. Daily use of Internet is not just a convenience—it is part of the behavior of today's researchers and analysts.

Course objectives

- Assisting students to become capable of readers, critics, users, and doers of research because they are better able to make meaning of the quality and suitability of research and to use research findings in an intelligent manner.
- Providing frameworks and tools that assist students to shape research, gather information, and present information for use by other people.

Learning goals

By the end of the course students should have an understanding of:

- why people want research done - what motivates research
- how and why research is created, compiled, and published
- ways in which research is used in policy and organizational work
- the variety of research that is done in policy and organizational work
- the importance of assessing the reliability and usefulness of research information
- ways of assessing the reliability and usefulness of research
- how people's interests, expectations, and beliefs influence the way research is done
- how research methods influence the things that people research and the conclusions they reach.

The course approach will be heavily weighted toward active, frequent use of the tools, techniques and habits of researchers. We will aim not so much to discuss research, but to *do research*.

A reminder: research is a discipline, a set of norms and habits just as demanding as those of athletes, ascetics and others who force themselves into a rigorous routine. Good research habits need to be practiced so frequently that they become routine.

Importance of good writing skills Research is useless unless it can be presented interestingly. Students in this course will be expected to do considerable writing, a normal requirement in graduate courses in public policy. From the outset, the highest standard of writing will be expected. Here are some of the requirements:

- Format: All work will be submitted in MS Word Times New Roman 14 format single-spaced.
- Structure: The normal breaks between paragraphs will be observed, using *Terabian* or any other style guide you choose. (A popular style guide in SPP is Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Manual of Style*, (New York, St, Martin's Press, latest edition). Work should be neatly arranged with clear demarcation of sub units.
- Grammar: Impeccable word usage and grammar will be expected in all submitted work. Students may wish to submit early work to someone else—a friend or colleague-- for a review of style, grammar and other details. Papers with more than a very small number of errors in grammar and usage will be returned without a grade.
- Method of submission: All papers will be submitted to the instructor by email as attachments using the GMU system with clear indication in the subject line of the message. For example: Julia Jones, Assignment 2-Part 3

Cases Examples of cases that will be presented, discussed, shared and studied:

- **International**: *United Nations Human Development Report 2002:* Covers a significant number of public policy issues from the perspective of all the countries in the world.

- **Sectoral**: *Arab Human Development Report 2002:* Provides a focused review of policy issues in a region of with population of close to 300 million inhabitants

- **Domestic:** *AIDS research and policies: what do different people want to know?* A case that covers a broad range of social issues including policy, international, and organizational ones. (a) Quantitative: infection rates, life expectancies of people who are HIV positive, the relationships between HIV infection rates and demographics, social conditions. Assessing effects of anti-retroviral drugs. (b) Qualitative: lifestyles and transmission, cultural issues, 'images' of AIDS and how this affects people's behavior, attitudes of policy-makers to speaking about AIDS, ways of communicating 'safe sex' messages, people's responsiveness to the messages.

- **Local**: Several state and county cases will be suggested

- **Millennium Challenge Account**—ongoing legislation

- **Distance learning :** For students who are interested in this issue, a group of questions and hypotheses will be offered

Purpose of the cases:

- Serving as common threads through the course that link the different sections and topics.

- Providing examples of policy and organizational research from which the students can draw

- Setting a context for asking and answering questions about policy and organizational research.

Using Spread Sheet Skills: It is crucial for all researchers in public policy to have a working competence in leveraging spread sheet software, specifically MS Excel. During the second month of the course students will be given several exercises that require basic capabilities in the use of Excel. No class time will be dedicated to learning how to use Excel—GMU has extensive online resources to assist in gaining competence and there are countless "how-to" manuals in bookstores everywhere. Students will be given spread sheet exercises several weeks ahead of time so they can learn to apply the course requirements as they learn MS Excel.

Note: Learning to have intermediate level skills in Excel is an individual responsibility. The university provides extensive help as described below (**in several places marked with an ampersand, "&"**) but if you have no Excel skills you may need to invest as many as a dozen or more hours to be up to speed by the end of September. This is crucial so please plan ahead.

This class will have a unique advantage in that Ph.D. student Patrick Hummel has developed a significant spread sheet resource for researchers. It's a table of 200 countries (rows) and 87 characteristics (columns). Because this table so directly corresponds with the purposes of this course, the main spreadsheet case in the course will involve using Mr. Hummel's data base. More on that in mid September.

& Four 'Smartforce' Excel self-instruction courses are available on the web http://smartforce.doit.gmu.edu/

These include 'beginning', 'intermediate', 'advanced', and 'power users' modules. See appendix for outline of 'Smartforce' Excel course contents

Students are required to bring themselves "up to speed", completing the beginning and intermediate Excel courses by the end of September or earlier. (See more below at the next &)

Assignment 1. Having Knowledge: Practical applications and discovery (30% of grade, 20-35 hours outside class) This assignment consists of four segments, each constituting a group of questions designed to test and extend research skills. These segments are due at approximately 3-week intervals. Students are urged to stay ahead of these assignments and to use them as part of a continuous process of sharpening research competency. See the section "Importance of good Writing Skills" above for guidelines on submitting Assignment 1 segments. Assignment 1 exercises require discovering and documenting many information sources. A crucial element in each Assignment 1 segment is a clear, replicable path to data.

Note: Assignment 1 Segment 1 questions are at the end of this syllabus, and are also discussed and explained in the accompanying audio/Powerpoint presentation, Lecture 1. Please complete Lecture 1 before starting Assignment 1.

Assignment 2. Sources and Uses of Quantitative Data: Examination and evaluation of case studies. (15 % of grade; 15-20 hours outside class) We will be examining at least five cases during the course. Student participation in these cases will take the form of individual and team discussions and presentations, individual essays, class presentations and other activities. Individual grades for teamwork exercises will be assigned based on instructor's evaluation of team performance plus scores on team peer evaluation forms.

&Assignment 3. Working with quantitative information: Spread sheet exercises (15 % of grade; 10-20 hours outside class) Students will work on a series of progressively more challenging public policy questions in the context of the new global data base developed by Patrick Hummel. Deliverables will combine research questions with spread sheet analyses, a synthesis of analysis and computation. At the end of the syllabus there is a summary of the first Assignment 3 segment as well as a description of the

&What will the Assignment 3 Excel Exercises be like? Here's a preview. This work will require a lot of diligence but the payoff will be obvious. We'll begin with a data base that includes the countries of South America and about a dozen columns of data concerning technology, health and education. That data base will be used in segment 1 of the 4 Assignment 3 segments. In segment 1 you will be asked to do various sorts, merges, descriptive statistics and other manipulations as a practice exercise. Then you will be asked to use the graph function of Excel to predict the future of some country characteristics based on three data points: 2000, 2001, 2002.

Segment 2 of the 4 Assignment 3 segments will use a data base of selected European nations. A group of sorts, merges and revisions of the data base will be required, followed by answers to a cluster of analytical questions based on the Europe data

Segment 3 of Assignment 3 uses a data base of Asian nations. You will be required to develop several variables that result in new columns, based on existing columns. There will also be some required analysis of trends, significant differences in technology deployment between, for example, India and China, plus other questions.

Segment 4 will use the first three data bases and add a US/Canada data base—students will be asked to synthesize their experience in the other segments by responding to several questions involving global comparisons.

&Sample data base for immediate use Any student wanting to practice Exel in the context of the Assignment 3 assigned exercises will find a sample of the segment 1 South America data base in the course CDROM. It is recommended that everyone in the course begin immediately to practice with this data base.

Assignment 4. Working with Qualitative Information: Obtaining and Evaluating "Squishy" Data (15% of grade; 20 hours outside class) The class will develop a number of methodologies for determining qualitative information using the case team groups. Deliverable will be a viable methodology to assess several key variables associated with the assigned cases.

Assignment 5. Synthesis: Putting it all together (20% of grade; 15-30 hours outside class) The culminating activity of the course will be a highly focused "proof of concept" paper. Each student will produce a short, but meticulously researched, analysis of an area of interest agreed upon with the instructor. A highly detailed outline of the report with all expected references, diagrams and charts clearly described, will be required earlier. This miniature report will utilize the highest standards of research possible. The instructor will give more details in late September.

Class participation : The grades above total 100 % , but a ten percent segment of each one is for class participation. To get the full 10% quality counts more than quantity, so participate frequently but not incessantly.

Instructor / office hours: The instructor, Dr. Steve Ruth, is available on email (ruth&gmu.edu) and in his office, room 203 B, Finley Hall or at the Arlington campus. Dr. Ruth's office phone is 993 1789. Office hours are available by appointment Monday afternoons 3:00-4:30 on days when the class meets as well as other days by arrangement.

Using the WWW and email daily This course depends heavily on the use of the Internet and email as a normal mode of linking the students to the instructor, to Web-based resources and to each other. All members of the class will be expected to review their email and use the Web every day as many analysts and researchers do. It is highly desirable to have a high speed connection, either through a half dozen GMU centers or through your home or office.

How should you use the course packet? The course packet contains many of the materials that will be of immediate assistance. First, there is latest version of the course syllabus. Be sure to look for changes to the syllabus on the class web site over the semester. Second, the syllabus contains a CDROM developed especially for this course. The CDROM has the following components:

1. A full copy of the *Arab Human Development Report 2002*, one of the case studies that will be used in class. UNDP has given us permission to copy the report for this class.
2. A full copy of the *Human Development Report 2002*, another of the case studies that will be used in class. This will be a backup in case the book is late arriving at the book store.
3. Powerpoint slides for the first autodidact audio lecture. These slides need to be used concurrent with the lecture.
4. The first audio lecture , about 45 minutes, which accompanies the Powerpoint slides.
5. Video lectures 1 and 2 which are assigned during the course (see syllabus)

Third, there are several handouts which will be assigned as class readings for the coming weeks

Exchanging some class time for technology and other interventions This course takes advantage of new findings about university teaching. Many students, especially those who have full time jobs, appear to be quite willing to exchange some class hours on campus for assignments that can be completed in other locations through the use of technology available to them. Studies indicate that it is possible for a student to learn as much or more in many courses if the traditional 40 hours per semester of "face time" in class with a teacher (contact hours) are partially replaced with special assignments that do not require face-to-face meeting. This work can be more independent, discovery-oriented and difficult, but if planned properly, can replace some contact hours. By experimenting with this concept in close to a dozen courses, we have found that students enthusiastically support the approach --as long as close contact with the instructor is maintained and the content is challenging and in the mainstream of the subject involved. For more on this approach see Professor Ruth's articles at http://horizon.unc.edu/ts/cases/1999-09.asp and http://www.educom.edu/web/pubs/review/reviewArticles/ 32532.html)

Is the class more difficult than traditional graduate courses? No. About the same hours of preparation are required for this course as for others in the SPP program. The class only meets nine or ten times, less than the normal number, so students will be able to accomplish the required work by doing a lot on their own, as well as in teams and groups.

Do you need any technical preparation to succeed in this course? No. A person with deep technology skills will be able to spend a few hours less on the course overall, but in general there is no indication among the hundreds of grad students who have been through this type of course that being powerful technically gives any edge whatever.

If you already do extensive, focused research in your job, will you have an edge in this course? Yes. The course is as much about developing the research habit and disciplines as about acquiring new knowledge, so someone who already is in that sort of job may need to spend less time in developing good results in this course.

Predicting success There are several factors that predict success in this course:

Keeping up with the assignments It is impossible to succeed in this course if you get behind. The material is presented through books, lectures, television, World Wide Web, Internet, CDROM's and videocassettes--the sequence is definitely time-dependent. Students who finish this type of course get good grades , but their experience indicates that it is crucial to stay on top of the assignments. This is a tough course.

Attending and participating in classes A major segment of the course grade involves integrating the lectures, in class, on audiocassette and on television, into assigned projects--so it is vital that you plan to attend the classes and to participate actively in the email-based dialog. And when you cannot attend please have a friend or colleague take notes for you. Class participation is a 10% component of the final grade

How Much of Your Time is Required for This Course? Depending on your previous background, the course will require between five and eight hours per week outside of class,

about average for a 4 credit graduate course, especially since the number of class lectures is reduced in exchange for independent study. For some students, even more time may be required. For a few, less. Surprisingly, the students who are already proficient in information technology are frequently not as successful in this type of course as those who are approaching it with less technical background. The key is mastering all facets of the course and studying each in its appropriate context.

GMU Honor Code GMU shares in the tradition of an honor system that has existed in Virginia colleges since 1842. The Honor Code is an integral part of university life. Students are responsible for understanding the provisions of the code. In the spirit of the code, a student's word is a declaration of good faith acceptable as truth in all academic matters. Therefore, attempted cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing of academic work and related work constitute Honor Code violations. All work must be your own. Inappropriate use of the work of others without attribution is plagiarism and a George Mason University Honor Code violation punishable by expulsion from the University. All students should familiarize themselves with this honor code provision (http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html). To guard against plagiarism and to treat students equitably, written work may be checked against existing published materials or digital data bases available through various plagiarism detection services. Accordingly materials submitted to all courses must be available in electronic format.

Recommended Work Sequence for PUBP 501 Fall Term 2003

	8/27												12/8
Assignment 1	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Assignment 2			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Assignment 3			x	x	x	x	x	x					
Assignment 4								x	x	x	x	x	x
Assignment 5									x	x	x	x	x

Class Schedule with Assignments for PUBP 501

DATE	Study Assignments	Topics	Tools and Methodologies	Due Dates for Assignments
8/25		Characteristics of good research and analysis	Library; Elementary statistics: homogeneity of populations	
9/1 (Holiday)	TV 1 (First 35 minutes); MW Introduction and Chapter 1; Audio/ Powerpoint lecture (on CDROM)	Reading research: *AHDR 2002*	Google; spread sheets; elementary statistics; aggregates, averages and descriptive data; teamwork in cyberspace	
9/8	MW Chapter 2:	Reading research: *AHDR*	SPP special sites:	Assignment 1

	Tufte handout	*2002*	Hummel and Bennett data bases; elementary statistics: measures of dispersion ; teamwork in cyberspace	Segment 1 due
9/15	MW Chapter 3; Guest lecturer:Dr. Thys Van Schalk: Optimizing Your Research Strategy	Criticizing research: *HDR 2002;* State and Local government studies; others	GMU Facilities and Capabilities: elementary statistics: testing for differences between populations	
9/22	MW Chapter 4; ICASIT data base handout	Criticizing Research: AIDS report	Unobtrusive observations; elementary statistics: regression	
9/29 (no class meeting)	B Chapter 1; TV2	Using research: Global Data Base; examples in social policy	Audio/Video resources; elementary statistics: hypothesis testing	Assignment 1 Segment 2 due
10/6	B Chapter 2; MW Chapters 5-6	Using Research: Global Data Base; Bennett data base; examples in tax and education policy	Designing questionnaires: elementary statistics: distributions	Assignment 3 completed (two week extension possible)
10/20	B Chapter 3; TV3	Using Research: policy examples in defense and education	Spread sheets (Excel); elementary statistics: coefficients of correlation determination	Assignment 1 – segment 3 due
10/27	B Chapter 4; MW Chapter 7	Doing research: The payoff for distance learning	Elementary statistics: time series data	Assignment 4 completed
11/3 (no class meeting)	MW Chapter 8	Presenting research: briefings, lectures, "selling" ideas	Elementary statistics: sign test and other shortcuts Hawthorne effect	Outline for Assignment 5 due
11/10	B Chapter 5; MW Chapter 9	Presenting ideas: Preparing winning grant proposals	Elementary statistics: determining "drivers"	Team presentations (End of Assignment 2); Assignment 1 Segment 4 due
11/17	B Chapter 6	Review	Elementary statistics:	Team presentations

			the search for the perfect predictor variable	(End of Assignment 2)
11/24 (no class meeting)		Review		
12/1				Assignment 5 due
12/8				

Required texts:

(MW) MacRae, Duncan Jr and Whittington, Dale (1997), *Expert Advice for Policy Choice: Analysis and Discourse*, Georgetown University Press. (from GMU bookstore or Amazon)

(B) Best, Joel (2001), *Damned Lies and Statistics: Untangling Numbers from the Media, Politicians, and Activists*, University of California Press. (from GMU bookstore or Amazon)

(U) UNDP (2002) *Human Development Report 2002*; New York, UNDP. (from bookstore or Amazon)

(A) (2002) *Arab Human Development Report 2002*; New York, UNDP. (on class CDROM)

Highly recommended texts :

Pippa Norris, *Digital Divide and E-Government? Civic Engagement, Information Poverty & the Internet in Democratic Societies*; Oxford University Press Author's web site with information about the book is at
http://ksghome.harvard.edu/~.pnorris.shorenstein.ksg/book1.htm#CONTENTS%20LIST

Harman, Willis (1998), *Global Mindchange: The Promise of the 21st Century*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers

Schwartzmann, Helen B. (1993), Ethnography in Organizations, Qualitative Research Methods Series 27, Sage Publications,

Other resources:

George Bennett SPP research site:
http://mywebpages.comcast.net/georgebennett/GMU/adv_data_portal_ns.htm

ICASIT site http://www.icasit.org/ecommerce/index.html for technology topics

ICASIT site http://www.icasit.org/ecommerce/resources.html for other on line resources

Other recommended texts:

Clough, P. and Nutbrown, C. (2002), *A student's Guide to Methodology: Justifying Enquiry*, London, SAGE Publications.

Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989), 'Building Theories from Case Study Research', *Academy of Management Review*, 14, 4, 532-550.

Flick, U. (2002), *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, 2nd. edn., London, SAGE Publications

Gupta, D.K. (2001), *Analyzing Public Policy: Concepts, Tools, and Techniques*, Washington D.C., CQ Press.

Haas, P.J. and Springer, J. F. (1998), *Applied Policy Research: Concepts and Cases*, NY: Garland Publishing.

King, G, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba, (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

King, N. (1994), 'The Qualitative Research Interview', Cassell, C. and Symon, G. (Eds.), *Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*, London, SAGE Publications, 118-134.

Macrae, D, Jr., and D. Whittington (1997), *Expert Advice for Policy Choice*, Washington D.C., Georgetown University Press.

Mishler, E.G. (1991), *Research Interviewing*, Cambridge: MA, Harvard University Press.

Nagel, S and M. Neef (1979) *Policy Analysis in Social Science Research*, SAGE library of Social Research #72, Beverly Hills, SAGE Publications

Salkind, N.J. (2003) *Exploring Research*, Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey.

Schwartzman, H.B. (1993), *Ethnography in Organizations*, Qualitative Research Methods Series #27, SAGE Publications.

Silverman, D. (1998), *Interpreting Qualitative Data* (reprinted ed.), London, SAGE Publications.

Strauss, A., and Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Weimer, D.L. and A.R. Vining (1999), Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice, Saddle Brook; N.J., Prentice Hall.

&Microsoft Excel Learning Resources

Mason students seeking knowledge about using Excel for basic statistical functions have a variety of available learning resources. Students can take online SmartForce modules and work at their own pace, and can also sign up for a series of Training in Office and Productivity Skills (TOPS) workshops for face-to-face learning. STAR*Works provides an individual support lab available for queries and problem-solving in all of the office suite applications (including Excel). Training media (videos and CDs) are available for checkout at the Media Resource Center for additional self-paced learning. Microsoft also has a library of learning materials and answers to frequently asked questions and common technical problems in their knowledge base. TOPS staff can be accessed for questions at 703-993-3426; TOPS information is available online at http://tops.doit.gmu.edu/.

Online Learning
The University has an agreement with SmartForce and all members of the GMU community can take modules online. Browse to http://smartforce.doit.gmu.edu/login.html and new users can login with your Mason user name and the last four digits of your student ID number. Students have the option of downloading the SmartForce player and specific modules to their base computer to reduce internet delays. The following modules may be useful for your learning needs: Microsoft Office 2000: Advanced Excel; Microsoft Office 2000: Intermediate Excel; Microsoft Office 2000: Beginning Excel; Microsoft Office 2000: Excel for Power Users; Microsoft Office XP: Advanced Excel 2002; Microsoft Office XP: Beginning Excel 2002. Please note that as of now there is no "intermediate" level module for Excel XP. Smartforce support telephone: 703-993-3807. E-mail queries to smartforce&gmu.edu.

One-on-One Support
STAR*Works lab is available for help with student projects to the best of their ability. It is located in 311 Johnson Center, and is staffed 10:00 am to 10:00 pm M-R, 10:00 am to 6:00 pm Friday, and 12:00 noon to 6:00 pm on Sunday. Lab telephone: 703-993-3597.

Media Resource Center
Located in the STAR Center in 229 Johnson Center, the MRC provides books, training videos and resource CDs for student IT learning. Students can check out materials and/or use a learning station to grasp either very basic or more advanced concepts and skills. For more information, check out http://mediaresource.gmu.edu/. MRC telephone: 703-993-3438.

Microsoft Tutorials and Knowledge Base
Individuals can also receive support using Microsoft's Support Page, the URL is: http://microsoft.com/office/support/default.asp. **C**lick on the link "Search the Knowledge Base" and search for particular problems or issues. There is also a brief overview tour of Excel XP, with a section on Mastering Formulas and Functions, available for your information at http://www.microsoft.com/office/excel/evaluation/tour/default.asp. A tutorial on Analyzing Data

Using Excel is available at
http://www.microsoft.com/education/default.asp?id=excel2002tutorial

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Assignment 1 Segment 1

For all these questions please take sufficient time to do reflective inquiry; that is, be sure you can trace your steps and in all cases show your sources so that the instructor can use them just as you did. Audio/PP lecture 1 includes comments on all these questions. This exercise will probably require at least ten hours outside of class.

1. How are "gini" coefficients used in Public Policy research? Use examples of financial divide and digital divide in the United States. (Include diagrams, if necessary)

2. In TV lecture 1, there is a discussion of "thin democracy". Find the reference and, using the GMU library resources, print yourself a copy of the article. (Article is in the *Communications of the ACM*). Briefly describe the process you followed.

3. Use the new SPP research site and comment briefly on each of the major categories. Site is at http://mywebpages.comcast.net/georgebennett/GMU/adv_data_portal_ns.htm This task will require considerable time but will yield excellent practice and a continuously available rich source of data. There are several dozen sites.

4. What are some of the key indices used to characterize transportation activity in the United States? Briefly discuss about five of them, and be sure to give links and references for each.

5. What are the nations that come under the following classifications: Muslim nations; Middle East nations; Arab nations; European Community nations; sub-Saharan African nations; SEATO nations ; NATO nations; ECOWAS nations. Show your sources clearly so that instructor can replicate the task.

6. Find at least three international indices maintained by *Foreign Policy Magazine* and describe each one briefly.

7. Using the concepts described in Mc Rae and Withington in Figures 2.1 and 2.2, formulate two ends/means /measurement designs using either *AHDR 2002* or *HDR 2002*. Explain each one briefly.

8. One of the most significant indicators of a nation's progress is the ranking on the United Nations *Human Development Index*. The index has about a half dozen components. Describe these components briefly and show your sources.

9. How many angstrom units in a parsec? Explain.

10. US public policy on Africa includes a new proposal by the administration for giving assistance to poor countries. The legislation is called the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) and is moving through the Congress. Examine the criteria that will be used to select nations to receive this aid and comment specifically on several of them.