Please complete this form and attach a copy of the syllabus for new courses. Forward it as an email attachment to the Secretary of the Graduate Council. A printed copy of the form with signatures should be brought to the Graduate Council Meeting. Complete the Coordinator Form on page 2, if changes in this course will affect other units.

Please indicate:  __X__ NEW     ___ MODIFY     ___ DELETE

Local Unit:  School of Public Policy

Graduate Council Approval Date:

Course Abbreviation: PUBP

Course Number: 793

Full Course Title: Large-Scale Database Construction and Management for Policy Research

Abbreviated Course Title (24 characters max.): Lg Database Constr/Policy

Credit hours: 4

Program of Record:

Repeatable for Credit?  ___ D=Yes, not within same term  Up to hours

___ T=Yes, within the same term  Up to  hours

__X_ N=Cannot be repeated for credit

Activity Code (please indicate):  ___ Lecture (LEC)  ___ Lab (LAB)  ___ Recitation (RCT)

___ Studio (STU)  ___ Internship (INT)  ___ Independent Study (IND)  __X__ Seminar (SEM)

Catalog Credit Format  4:3:0

Course Level:  GF(500-600)  ___ GA(700+)  __X__

Maximum Enrollment: 15

For NEW courses, first term to be offered: Spring 2006

Prerequisites or corequisites:

Catalog Description (35 words or less)  Please use catalog format and attach a copy of the syllabus for new courses.
Familiarizes students with data resources for macro-comparative policy research and how to use these to inform decision making and evaluate policy performance. Emphasis on how social science data is generated, coded, and managed; and on the methods for successful presentation of evidence in support of policy recommendations.

APPROVAL SIGNATURES:

Submitted by: ________________________________ email: __________________

Department/Program: ________________________________ Date: _________________

College Committee: ________________________________ Date: _________________

Graduate Council Representative: ________________________________ Date: _________________
**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
Course Coordination Form

**Approval from other units:**

Please list those units outside of your own who may be affected by this new, modified, or deleted course. Each of these units must approve this change prior to its being submitted to the Graduate Council for approval.

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Graduate Council approval: ____________________________ Date: __________

Graduate Council representative: ____________________________ Date: __________

Provost Office representative: ____________________________ Date: __________
The objective of this course is to familiarize students with the data resources available for macro-comparative policy research and how these resources can be used to inform decision making and evaluate policy performance. The focus of the course will be on cross-national data collection and analysis but the principles of this approach are easily adaptable to social systems analysis at any level of aggregation or typology. Emphasis will be placed on how social science data is generated, coded, and managed so that the policy researcher can better understand the analytic capacity and peculiarities of data resources and avoid the pitfalls of misperception and misinterpretation of results. Equal emphasis will be placed on the tools and methods for successful presentation of evidence in support of policy recommendations. Students will be introduced to some simple techniques for descriptive, exploratory, and causal analysis.

Students will work “hands-on” with major databases, such as the World Development Indicators, Polity IV and Minorities at Risk databases, and the World Values Survey, and learn to manipulate data structure to suit their research needs and improve their confidence in their findings, including reformulation, merging, reconciling, cleaning, indexing, and corroboration of evidence. A working knowledge of standard statistical techniques will be helpful but is not required. The course will be taught using SPSS statistical software for both database management and analysis. Coursework will involve a research project of the student’s choice and design which will build on an existing policy report in student’s area of interest. The project will have three parts: a 10-15 page paper situating the chosen research in the research literature (i.e., a literature review), a reconstruction of the original research findings, and an “improvement” on the original findings that strengthens, alters, or rebuts the policy application of the original work. Each student will prepare a 10-15 minute presentation designed to “sell” their research findings to a policy audience.

Topics and materials covered will include the following:

**Section 1 – Basic Principles of Social Science Research**


**Section 2 – Coding, Collection, Compilation, and Archiving Data Resources**


Section 3 – Applied Data Research

Political Instability Task Force:


Integrated Network for Societal Conflict Research:

Minorities at Risk Project:

World Values Survey:


Reference Works (reserve):


