

Paper Assignment 1

To complete this assignment, you first must break a norm--i.e., not conform to some social rule. It is up to you what norm you break--you can do a behavior that is non-normative across our culture, e.g., facing the back rather than front of an elevator when riding it, or something that is non-normative among some smaller group of which you are a member, e.g., sitting on your dorm roommate's bed, if that is not normative for you and your roommate(s). [You may not use either of these examples.]

If you pick an illegal or unethical behavior as part of breaking your norm, you must live with the legal and moral consequences (I accept NO responsibility, and will not come bail you out of jail!). There are plenty of norms you can break that will **NOT cause legal repercussions or harm to others**. Try your best to avoid discomfort to other people in performing this assignment. Remember, researchers must take ethics into account when conducting research. You may find it helpful to explain to anyone involved what you were doing after you are finished breaking the norm (i.e., you might want to "debrief" those who saw you do the assignment), both to reassure them, and so that you don't lose their friendship when they decide you are crazy.

In your paper, you should cover (at least generally) all of the major issues from each of the four points listed below. However, you do not need to address all of the questions below; these are listed to help write the paper. Finally, although the 1-2 page limit is constraining, try to incorporate a few relevant points from the readings and lecture when applicable (**The points are numbered, but your paper should not include these numbers or necessarily be broken up according to the points--it should flow as an integrated whole**):

1) Describe what you did to break the norm. Describe the situation, and what is normally expected, and what you did that was not consistent with those expectations. If your norm is one that people outside a particular group would be unfamiliar with (for example, you are a member of a sports team that has a certain pre-game ritual that you broke), you may have to go into some detail to set the stage so that people outside the group can comprehend how what you did constituted breaking a norm.

2) Describe other people's reactions to what you did. Did you think they behaved the same way they would have if you had not broken the norm? Or did they respond differently? Did they ignore you? Did they sanction you, and if so, how--verbally? Non-verbally?

3) Describe how you felt. Did you "chicken out?" at some point? Start laughing? Blush? Was it fun? Exhilarating? Mortifying? Did you feel like your behavior looked natural or staged and deliberate as you were breaking the norm?

4) Describe anything else of note that occurred. Is it possible that your perceptions of what other people were thinking were biased by the fact that you were embarrassed? Did anyone else follow your lead (i.e., did you set a NEW norm, by breaking an old one)?

Paper Format and Organization

- 1.) The paper should be **about 2 pages** long using 12 point font.
- 2.) Double space your paper and leave 1 inch margins all the way around. Remember, your editor has to have room to write his or her comments. You may write in the first person (e.g., I observed...).
- 3.) You do not need a title page. Center your title in the middle of the first page. Put your name and the page number in the top right corner of each page.
- 4.) You do not need to do library research for this paper. I will assume that you will use the course readings and lectures, thus do not expect a “references cited” page or bibliography.