***Social Psychology: Research Project* - *Social Norms Violations***

**Purpose**

**W**hen we violate the unwritten rules for appropriate social behavior, we quickly learn the surprising power of even relatively minor and usually invisible social norms. The purpose of this assignment is to make you conscious of how these subtle norms shape our everyday behavior and the consequences of violating norms, and to give you an idea of how psychological research on norm violations is conducted.

**Violating Norms** **C**hoose any of the following behaviors or do one you come up with after you consult with Mr. Burak:

* + Ask a stranger if you can cut into the middle of a line; if asked say you just don’t feel like waiting
  + Ask someone you don't know for his/her seat in a public place (e.g., in the cafeteria, on the bus, in the Mall food court, in the library); stay in the seat for at least 2 minutes. Do this with different genders.
  + Acting otherwise completely normally, hold hands with a same-sex friend (who is "in" on the project) while you walk around school or in a public place
  + Applaud at the end of a class after the teacher is done lecturing. Encourage others to participate. Clear it with the teacher first.
  + Wear unusual clothing to class or another public place (e.g., your bunny slippers to Math class; your hooded sweatshirt on backwards, full snorkel gear to History etc.)
  + In a public place, start singing and dancing as if you are in a musical. Encourage others to join in.
  + In a crowded area, stop what you are doing and stare upwards intently for a couple minutes. If people join you or ask what you’re doing/looking at have a prearranged response like, “I can’t figure it out” or “Shhhh. Don’t make it mad” or “I don’t know – what do you think I should be looking at?” or “Satellites” etc.
  + When people say/ask “What’s up?”, “How you doing?”, What’s going on?” etc. tell them in excessive detail what you did today, how you are feeling, you thoughts, fears, concerns etc. Continue talking for several minutes if possible or until they leave you alone.
  + Violate people’s personal space. Sit next to them when there are lots of empty seats. Stand very close to them when you are in line behind them etc.
  + Get into an animated discussion/argument with yourself in a public crowded place.
  + Never break eye contact with whomever you are talking. If they look away keep staring at them. This is particularly effective with teachers as well.
  + This one only works if you are a frequent phone talker, but basically violate every rule of phone conversation – don’t say anything when you answer the phone, wait for the caller to speak first. Don’t fill any uncomfortable pauses. Don’t say goodbye when the call is over, jus disconnect.

**B**efore, during, and after your norm violations, mentally observe:

* + Your own reactions (thoughts, feelings, physical responses, behavior)
  + The reactions of the people around you (your friends may help you observe others' reactions -- and your friends might have reactions of their own that are interesting!)

**A**fter violating the social norms, you may tell the people around you WHY you were acting this way.

**Writing Your PaperI**n about 3 double-spaced typed pages, do the following, one per group:

* State the title of your research and list all group members
* Describe what social norm you violated and how you went about doing so
* What is your aim, what is your hypothesis?
* Identify the ethical considerations you made in this study
* Clearly identify what factors made it particularly easy or difficult for you to violate the norms (e.g., you picked on a freshman instead of a senior)
* Identify the research method you used – be specific
* Identify your subjects using all relevant characteristics – age, race, gender, etc.
* List any materials you used
* State your results narratively and list the Median or Mean and an IQR or Standard Deviation
* Discuss your results including your own and subjects’ reactions before, during, and after each violation.
* Describe how the fundamental attribution error played a role in your situations.
* Discuss the method and results of your own norm violation study relative to that of another psychology study.  Even though you may not have studied their particular topic, you can still relate your norm violations to what other psychologists have done.
* What do your results mean in relation to your aim/hypothesis?
* What limitations were there in your study?
* If you were to do this study again, what modifications could you make? Note – not the same as limitations – should be a follow up study, different conditions examined etc.
* What are the implications of your findings (i.e. what can we do with the information now that we know what we know)?
* State your conclusion(s) based on the results of this study

**Evaluation Criteria**

**Y**our paper will be evaluated on the above requirements according to the A, B, F scale in a manner similar to that of your IA. While these requirements do not cover every aspect of your IA, (notably stats are absent and it is NOT an experiment) it will give you some good practice addressing many of the crucial requirements of the IA.

Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_