ASA Resource Ideas for Domain 2

Social Structure: Culture, Institutions, and Society

"Your Honor, my client pleads not guilty by reason of cultural relativism."

NCSS Conference – New Orleans, Louisiana
American Sociological Association Symposium
November 13, 2015
Presenter – Hayley Lotspeich, Wheaton North High School, Wheaton, IL
Hayley.Lotspeich@cusd200.org
Norm Violation Video Presentation

Abstract:

Download this resource to see full details

Conducting a norm violation has been a traditional assignment in Introduction to Sociology courses for many years. This assignment puts a different spin on the project by having students complete the assignment in small groups (3-4 students) and by asking them to create a 6-8 minute video presentation of their project. It also asks students to collect their own data (of the social patterns in the responses) and reinforces the steps in the research process. There are many advantages to using video presentations, including that they allow students to be more organized, not run over in time, and to integrate video footage from their norm violations, which makes them very interesting. They also encourage students to learn and/or practice a new technical skill. For instructors they offer flexibility, as they can choose to show only some (or none) of the presentations during class time. Lastly, this type of project prevents students from engaging in plagiarism (or simply making up their work!) because the student is actually documenting their participation in the project as they do it.

Details:

Resource Type(s): Assignment
Author(s): Medora W. Barnes, John Carroll University
Date Published: 12/29/2011
Subject Area: Introduction to Sociology/Social Problems
Class Level: Any
Class Size: Any
Language: English

Usage Notes: This assignment should be done after covering textbook chapters on research methods, culture, and deviance. I usually give 1-2 weeks to choose partners and turn in their topics (strongly advised!), and two more weeks to complete the project. The project works best accompanied by traditional assessment methods.
Learning Goals and Assessments:

Goal 1:

1) To reinforce course concepts (such as norm, folkway, informal and formal sanctions, and deviance) and provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding.

Assessment 1:

Each student demonstrates their achievement of Goal #1 though the inclusion and correct usage of course concepts and terms within the video presentation.

Goal 2:

2) To allow for the application of the steps in the research process (including collection and analysis of primary data).

Assessment 2:

Goal #2 is achieved through students clearly describing within the video their research question and research methods, and then explaining the data they collected and the logical conclusions that they reached.

Goal 3:

3) To initiate personal growth though students developing a greater understanding of their comfort levels with conformity and deviance.

Assessment 3:

Goal #3 is demonstrated by each student taking a turn, as part of the conclusion of the video, to thoughtfully reflect on what the experience of breaking the norm was like for them personally and how the project affected their perspective on social norms.

Files for Download:
Norm Violation Video Presentation -TRAILS 2011.docx
citation.docx
Norm Violation Group Video Presentation

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The learning goals of this project include:

- Reinforcing concepts discussed in class (such as norm, folkway, informal and formal sanctions, and deviance) and proving students with an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of them.
- Applying the steps in the research process, including developing a research topic, gathering data, analyzing data, and drawing conclusions.
- Initiating personal growth though students developing a greater understanding of their comfort levels with conformity and deviance.
- Encouraging students to understand how the concepts discussed in class are applicable to each one of our daily lives.

NORM VIOLATION INSTRUCTIONS

- Find 2-3 other students from this class to work with, and think about a folkway that interests you and that you would be willing to break. [DO NOT break any laws or mores!!] If you are having difficulty finding partners, please come and talk to me. Please, be aware that students will get a group grade for this project. Think about any problems that you might encounter in your norm violation and be sure there are no ethnical issues with your choice (when in doubt discuss it with me first!).
- Together go to the scene of the planned violation and observe the normal behavior. At this point do nothing to disrupt normal processes. Your goal is to understand the normal behavior, so you can clearly identify behaviors occurring in response to your violation.
  - Think of your project as a Research Question—ask yourself: how will these people who usually act in this manner, act when I violate the folkway? Come up with a Hypothesis.
- Next, one partner will violate the social norm while the other partners observe the responses. The person violating the norm MUST complete the norm violation enough times to have reactions from several (5-10) people.
- The observing partners should attempt to remain inconspicuous (pretend not to know the person violating the norm) and take notes on violation itself and the responses of everyone in the vicinity.
  - Collect Data—The notes being taken should record the social characteristics of the observers (gender, race, age, etc.), their response to the violation in as much detail as possible, and anything else relevant (for example, if they were alone or with friends). These notes are the foundation for the conclusions that you will be able to draw about how people react to the norm violation.
- After enough data has been collected, switch positions so that the partner observing now takes a turn as the violator. (If working in groups of three, then switch positions again, so that everyone has broken the folkway. If working in groups of four, switch positions a final time.) When you are done, each of you MUST have participated in the norm violation from two vantage points—once as violator and once as observer.
- Draw Conclusions—Discuss what each of you observed. What conclusions can be made? How did people react to the norm violation? What social patterns exist in the reactions?

Examples of Folkway Violations:

- Violating someone’s personal space by standing too near or sitting too near.
- Facing people while standing in an elevator.
- Dressing inappropriately (ex. formally for a casual event or location, or not appropriate for the weather or setting)

NOTE: If at any point your norm violation appears to be upsetting a bystander, you are welcome to explain to the people affected that your behavior is for a class assignment and the details.
VIDEO PRESENTATION INFORMATION & INSTRUCTIONS

• Each group’s video presentation should be 6-8 minutes long and will be uploaded to the appropriate folder on Blackboard with its own unique name—not “norm violation project” (details on how to do this will be passed out on a separate “technical” handout)

• In your video you need to:
  o Explain what folkway you choose to violate and what you thought people’s reaction were going to be (your “research question” and “hypothesis”).
  o Explain and demonstrate how you went about carrying out the violation (your “methods”).
    ▪ Use video footage to show details of the location/setting, how you are dressed, and demonstrate the norm violation.
    ▪ Make sure you do not videotape most of the actual norm violations occurring because you do NOT have permission to record the responses of people around you who do not realize they are part of a class project (this would be an ethical violation!)
  o Describe what your “findings” are—the social patterns that existed in the data you collected. (For example, did men behave differently than women? Did age affect responses? How about if the people responding were by themselves or in groups?)
    ▪ If you do your norm violation among people you know and you decide to explain to them that this was for a class project (after the violation is over) and they are willing to do a short interview “on record” about their experience, that is fine to include.
  o Throughout the video make sure you briefly explain all the class terms and concepts that you are using (i.e. norm, folkway, deviance, sanction).
    ▪ You can include the definitions of the terms by directly explaining the terms (traditional oral presentation style), by including written definitions of the terms within the video footage, or a combination.
  o At the end of the video, each of you should address what the experience of violating a social norm was like for you. Was it difficult for you to break the social norm? (Why or why not?) How does this connect to the power of social norms?

RESOURCES for Technical Help

Digital Flip-cameras are available for students to borrow from the Center for Digital Media (on the main floor of the Library). The flip cameras contain basic video editing software that can be downloaded directly from them. A detailed handout containing additional technical information concerning how to use the cameras and basic video editing will be passed out to assist you with this project. The Center for Digital Media also maintains a computer lab with more advanced video editing software and staff members that can help you with any of the technical aspects of this project.
# Norm Violation Video Presentation: Instructor’s Grading Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content: Depth (35%)</strong></td>
<td>Research question, design, and methods are clearly stated. The data has been analyzed and the findings &amp; conclusions are explained in-depth. All terms &amp; concepts are briefly defined.</td>
<td>The description of the project is generally clear. There is some discussion of the findings &amp; conclusions, although these may be less clear. Most terms are defined.</td>
<td>Some components of project description are minimal or missing. Description of the projection findings &amp; conclusions is very brief and insufficient. Many terms go undefined.</td>
<td>Description of the project and the findings &amp; conclusions are very difficult to follow. Listeners learn little.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content: Accuracy (20%)</strong></td>
<td>All terms are defined accurately and are used correctly throughout the video. All calculations are correct. All ethical and project guidelines have been followed.</td>
<td>Most terms are defined and used correctly—or have minor errors. Any calculation errors are understandable or minor. There are no significant deviations from the ethical &amp; project guidelines.</td>
<td>Enough errors are made to be distracting, but some of the information is accurate. There were significant project guidelines and/or minor ethical guidelines that were not followed.</td>
<td>Information is so inaccurate that the listener cannot depend on the presentation. There were major ethical and project guidelines that were not followed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content: Discussion of Personal Experience (10%)</strong></td>
<td>Each partner takes a turn discussing what the experience was like for them at the end of the video, and thoughtfully answers why it may have been hard/easy to break the social norm.</td>
<td>One person’s perspective may be missing, or each partner talks but they do not fully address the question of why it may have been hard/easy to break the social norm.</td>
<td>The end of the video is missing multiple partners’ personal perspectives, or they all do a poor job of addressing the question of why it may have been hard/easy to break the social norm.</td>
<td>The partners do not answer the question at all about what the experience was like, or they do so in such a way that the listener is left not understanding their perspective at all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation: Style, Clarity, and Organization (20%)</strong></td>
<td>Presentation is clear, logical, and organized. Listener can easily follow line of reasoning. It is not simply the reading of a paper. The presenters are paced well and easy to hear.</td>
<td>Presentation is generally clear. Most of the organization is logical. A few minor points may be confusing. Pacing may occasionally be too fast/slow or difficult to hear.</td>
<td>Listener can follow presentation with effort. Organization is not well thought out; may be too informal or much of the information is read. A noticeable amount of pacing is too fast/slow.</td>
<td>Presentation is very confusing and unclear; it is noticeably too long or too short. The speakers are hard to hear or understand; they consistently talk to fast or slow. Information is read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation: Use of “On-site” Video Footage (15%)</strong></td>
<td>Use of “on-site” footage is organized, and highly effective in explaining your research methods and supporting all major points of emphasis.</td>
<td>Use of “on-site” footage is good and contributes to the overall understanding of methods, but not all other main points are supported by visual aids.</td>
<td>Footage is poorly shot or used inappropriately or inadequately.</td>
<td>No “onsite” footage is used or it is used so poorly that it detracts from the overall presentation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Content: Depth
- Includes an introduction of topic and description of research question/hypothesis.
- Methods involved in the norm violation are clearly described.
- The data has been analyzed and the main findings/conclusions are explained.
- All terms and concepts are briefly defined.

Content: Accuracy
- All terms are defined accurately.
- Throughout the presentation, all research terms are used correctly.
- Any calculations are correct.
- All ethical and project guidelines have been followed.

Content: Discussion of Personal Experience
- At the end of the video, each partner takes a turn discussing what the experience was like for them.
- Each person thoughtfully answers why it may have been hard/easy for them to break the social norm.

Presentation: Style, Clarity, & Organization
- Presentation is clear, logical, and organized.
- Listener can easily follow all lines of reasoning.
- Presentation is not simply the reading of a paper.
- The presenters speech is paced well (not too slow/fast) and is easy to hear (not too quiet).

Presentation: Use of “On-site” Video Footage
- Use of “on-site” footage is organized.
- Use is highly effective in explaining your research methods.
- Use supports all major points of emphasis.

Total Score

Comments:
QUALITATIVE METHODS - Cross Cultural Images (Beginner Level)

Abstract:
The purpose of this exercise is to make you more aware and observant about aspects of your own culture, which you may take for granted. This exercise will ask you to compare three different contemporary conceptions of appropriate attire. You will be asked to describe and then compare and contrast the values that underlie the fashion style. This exercise will help you to become more observant of the social underpinnings of cultural norms and values.

Details:
Resource Type(s): Class Activity
Author(s) Susan Goodrich Lehmann and Norah P. Schultz
Date Published: 4/26/2010
Subject Area: Research Methods

Files for Download:
Research Methods in Cyberspace - Module 11.pdf
citation.docx
QUALITATIVE METHODS

Overview
The purpose of this exercise is to make you more aware and observant about aspects of your own culture, which you may take for granted. This exercise will ask you to compare three different contemporary conceptions of appropriate attire. You will be asked to describe and then compare and contrast the values that underlie the fashion style. This exercise will help you to become more observant of the social underpinnings of cultural norms and values.

Background
Many Americans who have not traveled to another country, particularly one in which people do not speak English, are not aware of the large differences in cultural customs regarding dress, food, art, and music. They often take for granted that the behavior and customs, which they have been taught to respect, are “normal.” They take for granted that their manner of behavior is obviously the most advanced or “civilized.” It can be very difficult to analyze your own customs, cultural norms and values because they are an unconscious part of what you do. It is usually easier to understand your own behavior if you can compare and contrast it to behavior of someone from another culture. Then you can more obviously see what elements are common to both cultures and what elements are culturally determined.

Assignment
Select one magazine that you think reflects mainstream American culture. Select something that your parents, grandparents, and your classmates would see as typically American. Some possible examples might be Time Magazine, People Magazine, Newsweek Magazine, Sports Illustrated, etc. Below are some web sites you might use in steps 1 and 2. You can also Google your favorite magazine to find its website.

http://www.style.com/vogue.com

Search the magazine for an article on fashion. This should be an article that is several pages long and discusses a style at length. You may substitute several shorter articles from the same source in lieu of one long one. Copy the covers and table of contents of issues of your magazine. You will need this information in steps 3 and 5.

Select two additional magazines that do not reflect European American culture. They should be magazines that appeal to other sub-populations within American society. Some possible examples would be Asian Week, Ebony, Urban Latino, etc. Just make sure that the two non-European American magazines reflect different cultures from each other. When you have finished steps 1 and 2 you should have articles that cover fashion in three different cultures. Search each magazine for an article on fashion. Again, this should be an article that is several pages long and discusses a style at length. You may substitute several shorter articles from the same source in lieu of one long one. Copy the covers and table of contents of 3 issues each of your two additional magazines. You will need this information in steps 3 and 5.

In one to two paragraphs per magazine, describe who the target audience is for each magazine. You should be sure to include mention of the age group, gender, ethnic group, social class, life stage – e.g. singles or young parents or seniors, etc. that this magazine is designed to appeal to. If you have difficulty answering this question, look at the table of contents of several issues. The topics will give you some indication of the target readership. Hint: Occasionally the editors will provide you with a statement of their aims such as this one found in Hinduism Today. Hinduism Today was founded ... for the following purposes: 1. To foster Hindu solidarity as a unity in diversity among all sects and lineages; 2. To inform and inspire Hindus worldwide and people interested in Hinduism; 3. To dispel myths, illusions and misinformation about Hinduism; 4. To protect, preserve and promote the sacred Vedas and the Hindu religion; 5. To nurture and monitor the ongoing spiritual Hindu renaissance. (Hinduism Today, June 30, 1998: 70-71).
Now carefully read the articles that you selected from each magazine. For each of your 3 different magazines write a 2-3 page analysis of the cultural values that each magazine supports. For example, does one magazine emphasize modesty while another encourages bold and daring fashions? Does one emphasize clear gender differences in apparel while another emphasizes a unisex look? Does one magazine emphasize that if you have wealth you should look rich, and another emphasize that you should play down economic assets? (The grunge look, for example would belong to the latter category). Does one magazine emphasize a break with tradition and another emphasizes a cultural legacy to be respected? Hint: When writing this section, use short quotations to support your statements. For example, in an article on the evolution of the sari, French anthropologist Chantal Boulanger “applauds the modern Nivi drape, calling it the egalitarian sari because, “It crosses boundaries of class and caste, making all women equal in the eyes of the others” (Hinduism Today, June 30, 1998: 31). Later on in the article we learn that “In Sri Lanka [the Nivi drape] has become the compulsory sari of government employees, rather than the more typical Ceylonese sari” (Hinduism Today, June 30, 1998: 41).

These comments tell us a great deal. They tell us that there are many ways to wear a sari. Some ways indicate class or caste or regional distinctions, and some do not. According to the article, a more egalitarian manner of wearing this centuries’ old garment is currently fashionable. This may reflect a social evolution into political and economic systems that are less class or caste-based. Finally we learn that in Sri Lanka the government has felt that uniformity, and perhaps egalitarianism, is important enough that they regulate the manner in which government employees may drape the sari while at work.

Now look at the 9 covers you have, 3 for each magazine. In what way do the people on the covers convey visually the values that the articles espoused? If someone who couldn’t read saw these magazine covers, what would he or she conclude about the cultures they reflect?

Examine the demographic characteristics of the model (age, gender, race, ethnicity, etc.) as well as their clothes and their activity. Does the model tell you anything about the target audience for the magazine? This section should be approximately half a page for each magazine, or a total of one and a half pages.

In this final section describe, in one to two pages, how the values advocated in the two non-mainstream publications agree with, or are in conflict with the values presented in the mainstream publication. Do you think the cultures influence each other? How? Can you find any examples of a trend that either started in the non-mainstream publications and then several months later was adopted by the mainstream publications, or the reverse? Caution: Be careful not to assert that two cultures are in value conflict simply because you think that, in general, their target audiences are in conflict. Be sure to use examples from each magazine to support your points.

How to assemble your final assignment
Section 1. Copies of three covers, tables of contents, and all relevant articles that you used from each of the three magazines. Assemble so that the material from each magazine is together in one section rather than assembling all the covers together, etc.

Section 2. In one to two paragraphs per magazine describe the target audience for each magazine.

Section 3. In two to three pages per magazine analyze the cultural values that the magazine articles support. Use quotations or even pictures from the articles you read as evidence in your analysis. Be sure to use quotations wisely and sparingly.

Section 4. In half a page per magazine analyze the cultural values that the magazine covers advocate. Approach this part of the analysis as if you were unable to read the text on the cover of the magazine. What does the picture tell you?

Section 5. In one to two pages compare and contrast the values presented in the mainstream and other publications.

Section 6. Create a bibliography of the magazine issues you used. Include the web addresses for the home page for each magazine.
Sport and American Culture: It’s Just a Game, Isn’t It?

Abstract:
Download this resource to see full details
This mini-lecture and in class activity are to be used in conjunction with the study of culture in an introduction to sociology course in order to 1) reinforce the understanding of key concepts: mainstream culture, subculture, norms, folkways, mores, values, beliefs and 2) highlight the importance of sport within American culture. Before class begins, write the following quote on the board for students to think about: “Sport is a religion for growing numbers of Americans. The yearly Super Bowl is no less a religious holiday than Easter.” - Charles Prebish, 1984

Details:
Resource Type(s): Lecture
Author(s): Jamie L. Gusrang, University of Connecticut
Date Published: 4/26/2010
Subject Area: Socialization
Class Level: College 400

Files for Download: The Sociology of Sport- - Module 8.doc
citation.docx
Sport and American Culture: It’s Just a Game, Isn’t It?
Jamie L. Gusrans
The University of Connecticut

This mini-lecture and in class activity are to be used in conjunction with the study of culture in an introduction to sociology course in order to 1) reinforce the understanding of key concepts: mainstream culture, subculture, norms, folkways, mores, values, beliefs and 2) highlight the importance of sport within American culture.

Before class begins, write the following quote on the board for students to think about:

“Sport is a religion for growing numbers of Americans. The yearly Super Bowl is no less a religious holiday than Easter.”-Charles Prebish, 1984

Introductory Discussion:

• Note that there are two different ways to view sport
  o Participant- e.g., little league, college team, even professionally
  o Consumer- e.g., fans or “fanatics”
    ▪ Will focus mainly on the later

• Depending on the time of year, ask students, “Who watched X (Super Bowl, World Series, key in state rivalry, etc)?”
  o For those who did not watch the event, ask: “If you did not watch X, did you know it was on?”

• Point out that a large number of students participated in the consumption of sport. Ask students, “Is sport a part of the mainstream culture or is it a subculture?”
  o Have students explore and discuss the place of sport in our culture (approximately 5-10 minutes)
    ▪ Points to consider:
      • What factors determine whether something is considered “mainstream?”
        o Number of people involved?
        o Ability to create an identity among fans?
        o Impact on other institutions (e.g., economy)?
      • Who has the power to decide whether something is mainstream?

An Example of a Fan (or Fanatic):

After the discussion of sport and culture, show selected scenes from the movie Fever Pitch (2005), to visually illustrate the power of sport in our culture. Note: Fever Pitch follows a year in the life of diehard Red Sox fan, Ben, and examines the Sox’s impact on Ben’s romantic relationship with girlfriend, Lindsay. Select scenes show: a fully decorated Red Sox themed apartment, delivery of Ben’s season tickets, a trip to Spring Training, pre-season “draft day” to distribute tickets, and various happenings at Fenway Park.

• Post-movie questions:
  o Sport plays a huge part in Ben’s life. Could we say the Red Sox are part of Ben’s identity, who he is as a person? Examples?
  o Could we say Ben worshipped the Sox?
  o Is sport a religion to Ben and to other Americans?
Group Activity:

- In groups (4-6 students, depending on class size), have the class explore the parallels between sport and religion.

- Provide handout [see handout below] with questions for the groups to consider (15-20 minutes of group discussion).
  - Helpful to visit each group and prompt discussion if there are difficulties
    - Local rivalries (e.g., Yankees/Red Sox) are a great way to get groups talking about passion, identity of fans, etc...
    - Students also respond well to “it’s just a game…”

- Once groups are finished discussing among themselves, reconvene as a class and explore the response the groups generated.
  - Helpful to have groups support or refute another’s argument

This activity is well received by students and is especially useful in an introduction course. Because the topic of culture is typically covered towards the beginning of the semester, some students are more reserved and tentative about the study of sociology and class participation in general. I found that using sports to reinforce the key concepts (mainstream vs. subculture, norms, folkways, mores, values, and beliefs) is a great way to get the entire class involved in discussion. Many students have strong opinions about sport, and it is fairly easy to start a debate about the importance of sport in our culture. Not only do students come away from this activity with a better understanding of the concepts used to describe culture, but they also are able to see the utility in studying sociology. By comparing sport and religion students are able to 1) apply sociological concepts to an area with which they are already familiar, 2) think about both sport and religion in a different context, and 3) make connections between the course material and “real life” situations.
Is Sport a Religion in American Culture?
Handout for Students

Group members:

Directions: As a group, please answer the following questions to explore the parallels between sport and religion within the United States. You may draw upon your own experiences, examples from Fever Pitch or other types of media, and material from the text and our class discussions. You will have approximately 15-20 minutes to complete this activity. Be prepared to discuss your responses with the class.

1) What is the definition of sport (i.e., what area the defining characteristics of sport)? Religion?

2) What are some examples of the norms, folkways, mores, values, and beliefs that relate to sport? Religion?

3) Is sport a religion in the United States? What are the similarities and differences between sports and religion? Consider norms, values, and beliefs. Is sport a good metaphor for religion?
Lesson Plan: Breaking a Social Norm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I Learning Objective(s)</th>
<th>Learning to understand what social norms are and how they affect us.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II Rationale for Objectives</td>
<td>Hands-on experience with social norms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III Materials</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>IV Procedures</td>
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<tr>
<td>(1) Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Activity</td>
<td>(1) Break a social norm of dress/attire. (Caution: do not wear anything illegal, dangerous, or extremely disruptive.) Try dressing in female clothes if you are male. Wear formal attire to a casual get together. Wear a winter jacket in the summer. Wear sandals in the snow. Wear stripes with polka dots. Wear an unstylish or outdated outfit. (2) Next, interact with others and observe their responses while wearing your norm-breaking outfit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Discussion</td>
<td>Did you experience sanctions? Were there subtle punishments for breaking social norms? How does conforming to and violating social norms fit into the lifelong process of socialization?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Summary</td>
<td>Takes 30 minutes in class, about an hour outside of class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V Evaluation/Assignment</td>
<td>Write a short report of your experiences and interpretations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI Supplementary Readings</td>
<td>Any introductory textbook will have relevant readings on social norms, deviance and labeling.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Guidelines for Write-up of Breaking a Social Norm Assignment

(With thanks to Eells and Unnithan in Kain and Neas, 1993, pp. 55-56.)

The following format is to be followed as you write up this exercise. Please note that this is a skeletal outline and is intended to help you decide what information to include in your report. Be sure to cover all of these points, but don’t feel that you are limited to them. Elaborate and be creative where you can. Incorporate as much as you can from your learning about sociology in everyday settings.

This report should be 2-5 pages in length, typed and double-spaced. Good grammar and sentence structure are expected.

The format to use:

1. Statement of the Problem
   A. Define the norm you will violate.
   B. Describe briefly how this norm acts as a mechanism of social control.
   C. Describe what you will do to violate the norm.

2. Hypothesis
   A. Describe the range of possible reactions others will have to the violation of this norm.
   B. What do you predict the major reaction will be?

3. Describe the setting
   A. Physical—where is the norm violation taking place?
   B. Social—How many and what types of persons are observing?

4. Describe the incident—tell what happened.

5. Summary and Interpretation
   A. How did you feel as you were violating the norm?
   B. Why did you feel the way you did?
   C. Did people react the way you expected? Explain.
   D. Did you encounter any difficulties in carrying out your assignment?
   E. What, if anything, did you learn about how norms exercise social control?
   F. Any other pertinent observations
Core American Values

In 1970 Robin Williams identified core American Values. They were:

- Equal Opportunity
- Achievement and Success
- Material Comfort
- Activity and Work
- Practicality and Efficiency
- Progress
- Science
- Democracy and Enterprise
- Freedom

Unit III. Culture

Exercise

TV Media and Reality: An Observation

**Description** - This assignment asks students to observe television programs, and real life settings. It then asks students to compare the observations to see how accurate TV’s portrayal of reality is.

**Learning Goals** - To understand how television accurately mirrors reality or inaccurately portrays reality.

**Things Needed** - *Instruction sheet* for each student. Television access for 4 hours, and access to public settings where real behavior can be observed for 2 hours.


Each student will be expected to observe four hours of TV in the next week. Any show is appropriate but emphasis should be placed on human behavior. Do not watch sporting events, news or documentaries. Take detailed notes as you go about the characters. How are they dressed? What are their bodies like? Their faces? What do they do for a living? Are they rich, poor, or middle class? What race or ethnicity are they? How do they refer to themselves? What is their age? Etc. Do this for **two hours**.

Then take two hours to do real-life observation, pick two spots in quite different settings (neighborhoods) and pick an ideal location for observing human behavior. Laundromats are ideal as well as public parks, malls, bus terminals, airports, etc. Pick out several people to watch and make the same observations as you did for the media characters.

Now go back and watch two more hours of TV. You may add new categories for observation if they occur. Look over your notes, and draw comparisons between the media characters and the real people that you observed.

a. Does the media distort images of real people?
b. Does the media influence us with our sense of reality?

You may select a group of people (teens, elderly, 20 somethings) for observation but only if it corresponds with your TV viewing observation.

This assignment is due on_____________. It must be typed.