Individuals are socialized by their culture to accept certain norms, practices, and behaviors as normal. Normalization often functions invisibly except when what is normal is challenged. In this assignment you will choose a cultural practice or behavior and will, for a set period of time, act in a way that violates the normal practice. You will then write a paper reporting and reflecting on your experiences.

**Choosing your activity:**

Begin by brainstorming some subcultures you belong to (you did this in class in the second week, you can return to this list for ideas, or start a new one). Think about the norms and social codes that you are expected to follow within that subculture (remember that these are not often made explicit like laws are, they are typically unspoken rules or patterns of behavior that everyone in the group nonetheless follows).

Choose one of these behaviors that is “normal” for your subculture, and decide in which way you will break it. Ideally, you should not simply do something that is random or “crazy”, but something that someone in your subculture is not supposed to do, but that someone within an alternate subculture is supposed to do. In other words, choose to do something that is not normal for you, but may be normal for another person.

Once you have decided on how you will break your normal pattern, decide on a period of time to spend breaking it. For most of you, a day will be sufficient. For subtler behavior changes, a few days may be required.

During the period in which you are behaving abnormally, **you should not explain to people why you are behaving in this way.** This is very important. You should take on an attitude that what you are doing is perfectly acceptable. If people try to ask you why you are behaving strangely, do your best to shrug it off or avoid the conversation.

**Warning:** Do not choose to do something that would constitute racial or sexual harassment. Certainly do not choose to do something that is illegal, or will get you in serious trouble in any way.
Writing your paper:

The purpose of this paper is, first, to describe your project experience and, second, to reflect on it using the terms and ideas we have been using up to this point in the class. Consider the following sorts of possible questions:

- What social norms did I interrupt?
- How are these social norms related to social order?
- How are these social norms reinforced or internalized?
- How did others respond to my behavior? How did I respond in turn?
- What elements of formal or informal social control came into play in your experience?
- Would someone who did this every day experience discrimination in our society?
- Would you be able to explain to someone from another culture why these social norms exist? What is their function in our society?
- Who benefits and who does not benefit from this system of practices?

In your paper, you should utilize the terms and ideas we have been using in class (both in this past week on social control and in previous weeks on cultural concepts more generally. Part of the purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate your knowledge and analysis of why and how culture functions to regulate behavior.

**Turn in**: Your written paper on the activity. Your paper should be in essay format (proper sentence and paragraph structure, intro and conclusion), and around 3 pages long, preferably typed, standard margins, 12 point font, 1.5 spaced. Your grade will be based on both the content of your assignment (e.g. are you using and applying anthropological concepts correctly) and the presentation of it (e.g. structure, spelling, grammar).

**Due**: Thursday, February 21 at the beginning of class. Late assignments will not be accepted.