The social world we live in is composed of, among other things, thousands of rules, norms, and laws. Some of these are perfectly explicit (in America we drive on the right hand side of the street by custom and law), others are so implicit that we rarely articulate them (we shake hands with the right hand). Some norms are explicitly taught (various rules of politeness) whereas others are probably not taught explicitly at all but are simply passed along through observation (generally applauding at the end of a musical piece, except that we do not applaud hymns in church services). Some norms apply almost universally (say hello -- or something equivalent -- when you answer the phone), while others may apply only to individual social groups (Jane washes dishes on the nights she doesn’t cook).

Norms can be defined in at least two ways. The first is the pressure we feel to behave in certain ways; you know, for example, that you would be criticized if you spit on someone at dinner. Second, however, even when there is no such explicit knowledge of pressures, norms may exist when there are regularities of behavior; for example, students tend to sit in the same seats in a given class even though they may not feel any particular social pressure to do so.

For this project, you must break a social norm and write about your experience. Try to be clever in your observations by looking for the non-obvious.

Rules for norm violating.

1) Be safe. This rule trumps all other rules. ****
2) You must violate the norm alone (no one else can be violating it with you). However, you can have a friend watch you and make observations.
3) The behavior you choose may be non-normative across our culture or a small group (like your family)
4) You may not harm anyone, including yourself. This includes getting yourself in trouble. It also includes intentionally humiliating someone else. ****
5) You may NOT intentionally disrupt your classes. ****
6) You may NOT break any laws. ****
7) Only break one norm at a time. While violating the norm, act totally normally in every other way.
   Violating many norms at once simply makes you look like a crazy teenager, thus you aren't really breaking a norm (people expect teens to act crazy sometimes).
8) Do something you wouldn't normally do.

**** Violation of these rules will result in a failing grade (and possible disciplinary consequences)

Ideas for norms:

1) Break rules of social distance: sit down with a stranger at a restaurant even if other tables are clearly available, speak to an acquaintance at an unusually small distance, stand right next to another person in an elevator when only two of you are there, hold hands with a friend of the same sex, surprise a same-sex friend with a kiss on the cheek, stand too close to someone in line in front of you, ask someone to help you with something you can do for yourself
2) Be unusually helpful: offer to help people at Best Buy, buy a small present and give it to a barely known acquaintance, pass out nickels to strangers on the street
3) Break rules for eye contact: Make too much eye contact (stare) or too little, talk to others while looking at their forehead or ear, stare at strangers walking past on the sidewalk, blink excessively.
4) Dress inappropriately: dress for a different season, dress too fancy or too casual
5) Break norms of social etiquette: cut into the middle of a line, ask someone you don’t know for his/her seat in a public place, applaud at the end of a class, randomly greet people as they walk into school with a handshake and a “good morning”
6) Follow the norms of another culture: try bargaining for the price of something, bow to people or kiss them on the cheek to greet hem, hand people things with two hands, look at the floor when shaking hands with someone.
Your project will have several parts:

**Part I: List of norms you follow**
Select one day of your life and record at least 25 norms that you followed that day. Part I of your paper will be a list of these norms. Try to limit your list mostly to things you DO (I look people in the eye when they talk to me), rather than things you don’t do (I don’t look at people’s knees when they talk to me). (25 points, one point per norm)

**Part II: Anticipated consequences of breaking norms**
Choose five norms from your list in Part I and describe the anticipated consequences of breaking these norms. One of the five you choose should be the norm you actually violate. (5 points, one point per norm)

**Part III: Discuss the norms of another culture.**
Choose a foreign culture that you have personally visited and identify at least three specific norms of that culture that differ from your typical norms. Your “foreign” culture may be another country, another city or region of the county, or even a different subgroup within Raleigh (college dorms, a black church or a mosque, the opera). (15 points, 5 points per norm)

**Part IV: Breaking a norm**
Pick a social norm to break. Break the norm around at least three different groups of people. The groups should differ in some identifiable way; they may differ in age, how well you know them, status, gender, whatever. In your paper, describe the social norm you violated and how you went about doing so. Clearly identify the three groups you broke your norm in front of. (10 points)

**Part V: Reactions**
1) Describe your own and others’ reactions before, during, and after each violation. (15 points)
2) How did the reactions compare to what you had anticipated? (5 points)
2) Note any differences between the groups’ reactions and discuss possible reasons for them. (5 points)

**Part VI: Opinions**
1) Look up the “spotlight effect” (not the kind that relates to photography or photoshop). Define it (in your own words) and describe how it relates to your experience. (5 points)
2) What did this exercise teach you about the experiences of people who don’t “fit in” because they are new to our culture or are handicapped in some way? (5 points)
3) Some people regularly choose to break social norms and act as social deviants. Name 2-3 famous people who you consider to be social deviants. Why do you think some people choose to be social deviants? (5 points)

**Mechanics:** Paper (all parts) should be typed and double-spaced (or 1 ½-spaced). You should divide it into sections with headings for each section and it should be limited to 2-3 pages. I reserve the right to deduct points for papers that do not follow these guidelines.

**Grading Rubric**

Parts I and II ___________ / 30 points

Part III (15 points) ___________ / 15 points

Parts IV-VI (55 points) ___________ / 55 points

Total: ___________ /100 points