

### Class Project Paper

This paper is due: (**See class website: [web.pdx.edu/~matg](http://web.pdx.edu/~matg)**). Choose one of the following options below. Papers must be no shorter than three full pages and no longer than four. Please use 12-point font, one-inch margins on all sides, and double spacing.

**1. Personal/Social Observation:** You are to go to a social event and observe the interactions of all participants (including yourself). The purpose of this project is to have you focus on the implicit gender and sexual norms that heavily guide our behavior during such “outings.”

As discussed in class, this project is not about *naming the Other* or researching a “subculture.” Instead, you are exploring your own social location and its effect on your interactions. For example, if you were to go see a drag show at Darcelle XV your paper should focus on your reaction to the show: What jokes were funny to you? Was anything uncomfortable? If so, why?

**2. Breaching Experiment:** a breaching experiment, sometimes referred to as “Garfinkeling,” is a social experiment seeking to examine peoples’ reactions to the violation of commonly accepted social norms. Such an experiment can be a powerful way to explore how dogmatically we follow normative protocol.

You will need to find a social setting where you can subvert taken-for-granted norms about gender/sexuality. For example, “doing gender” goes on in every part of our daily life—even when buying shoes. So what would happen when a woman goes into the men’s section and asked to put on *their* shoes? How would the sales person react? How do you react? Would the same be true if a man went into the women’s section?

**3. Discourse Analysis:** Discourse is a specific type of practice through which we communicate messages to and about one another. These messages lay the foundation of what is normal and abnormal (Alavi, p. 157)

You are welcome to explore the discourse around gender/sexuality. To do this, read Alavi’s article, *Little White Lies: Race, Dildos and American Culture*, and think about a setting where there’s a strong/loud discourse about gender/sexuality. For example, go to an erotica store and look at where, what, and how everything in the store is displayed. Are the “sex toys” in the front of the store or in the back? Whose sexuality is on sale? Whose sexuality is being focused on?

#### To all students

I am looking for a paper in which you explore the concepts covered in the class. Using the example above of a drag show, you might write about why you reacted to the drag performance in the way you did. Explore the attitudes, norms, values and beliefs that you think shaped your experience. It is important to define the concepts you apply in the paper and their significances. Utilizing a constructionist’s perspective, ask questions like: How is gender/sexuality constructed in this context? What are the historical connections?

**Note:** Before embarking on your adventure, you need to email me a quick description of your project: what is the setting, how and why you chose the setting you did, and what you expect to get out of doing this particular project. I want to approve projects to avoid breaching any ethical boundaries and to make sure you do not put yourself in harms way.