

Gender Roles: Violating a Norm **GWS 294**

Purpose: This exercise requires you to violate a norm associated with your gender role and evaluate the impact of this normative violation on yourself and others. **This assignment is due Thursday Feb 3rd.**

Instructions: Gender roles are comprised of a set of norms or expectations about behaviors that are appropriate for women and men. Norms may be *prescriptive* and specify what men or women should do in social situations. Norms also may be *descriptive* and indicate how women or men customarily behave in social situations.

In this exercise, you will identify some of the norms associated with your gender role and then violate a norm by behaving in a manner that deviates from the norm. Then, you will evaluate the results of this exercise through the series of question that follow. A word caution: Do not engage in any illegal or dangerous behavior or do anything that might cause you or others harm or acute embarrassment.

Write up the results in response to the questions or prompts enclosed (2 page minimum). Again, provide a personal analyses at the end that includes a response to the reflective template of: "What," "So What," and "Now What."

1. First brainstorm. Generate a list of behaviors that are more or less acceptable for each sex. This might include behaviors such as opening a door for another person, wearing cosmetics, paying the check at a restaurant, carrying a purse, comforting a crying child, wearing a football uniform and carrying a football helmet, etc.
2. What is the norm associated with your gender role that you chose to violate? Why do you feel that this is strongly tied to gender?
3. What exactly did you do to violate the norm?
4. How did violating this norm make you feel?
5. How did other people react to your behavior? Did they try to restore gender role "normalcy"? If so, how?
6. How did you respond to these reactions from other people?
7. How strong of an influence do you think gender roles have on behavior? Do you think this influence might vary across time situations? If so, how?

Source: Rickabaugh, C. A. (1998). *Sex and Gender: Student Projects and Exercises*. University of Redlands: New York.

