Psychology Class
Naturalistic Observation Assignment

For this assignment you are to perform and write up a brief naturalistic observation. Follow the guidelines below. You may work with one partner.

1) Decide what you will observe and develop a hypothesis – What do you THINK you will see during your observation. For example, “It is hypothesized 60% of women will look in the mirror while only 25% of men will look in the mirror while passing by.”

2) Choose a setting and time for the observation. You are to spend approximately fifteen to twenty minutes watching and making a detailed record of the subject(s), gathering data which will "begin" to test your hypothesis. Plan your observational "method" to be sure you are not "discovered" (so that the "naturalistic" quality of the observation is not lost). Take notes on everything you can observe about the subject(s). Attach the notes to your write up. (The notes do not need to be typed.)

After you have finished with the observation,

3) Write a one page typed (12 pt. font, double spaced) report of your observations. Try to be as objective as possible, but feel free to make well-reasoned inferences about what you have seen. Your report should include the following:

   An introduction which tells what the observation is about. You should explain how you came up with your hypothesis and why you chose the particular setting and subject(s) to test.

   A detailed account of the subject(s) and of the behaviors you observed is needed (Data either in the form of percentages or raw numbers is needed).

   Also, a discussion of any conclusions you can draw from the observation should be included. Finally, an evaluation (or critique) of your observation, mentioning any problem areas where you feel you could have improved your results is also required. You could, for example, explain any flaws in your "method" which led to inaccurate data.

Attach your notes (step 2 above) to the back of your report (step 3) and turn your completed observation in! See me if you have any questions or need help developing an idea or presenting your findings.

Possible ideas (but please BE CREATIVE!)

- Observe a homeless person asking for money, how many people help?
- Observe students leaving school, walking in the mall, or sitting in a restaurant, how many are on their cell phone?
- How many people driving are on a cell phone?
- How many people go through a yellow light?
- Observe parenting behavior. How may raise their voice?
- Observe children interacting at a playground. What types of behavior do they show?
- Observe a particular ‘social group’. What similarities do they show? What differences do they show?
- How many people wipe down the gym equipment after they use it?
- How many people return their shopping carts to the cart area?
- What percentage of people order water rather than soft drinks? Is there a correlation in body size?

REMEMBER – YOU ARE NOT TO SPY ON ANYONE! THERE IS A DIFFERENCE. YOU MAY ONLY WATCH PEOPLE IN PUBLIC PLACES. DO NOT INTERFERE WITH ANYONE OR LET THEM KNOW YOU ARE WATCHING THEM… ALL YOU DO IS OBSERVE & TAKE NOTE.

You must include a photograph as proof you completed this assignment.