

## **The Behavioral Change Essay**

For your final essay this semester, you are invited to choose a personal habit that you wish to change (e.g. I want to try to be off my phone from 4pm-7pm every day for the next four weeks) or a new habit that you wish to adopt for yourself (e.g. I want to try to eat one vegan meal a day for the next four weeks).

Whatever you choose, it should be specific, concrete, and personally valuable to you. It should be challenging enough that you will learn something about yourself and the social forces at work in your life. It should not be something so challenging that you are doomed to fail before you even begin (e.g. I will stop using my phone for four weeks). It should also not be so easy to adopt that there is no friction at all (as you will not have much to write about!). Choose something reasonable, meaningful, and fun for you to challenge yourself with!

The purpose for this final assignment is for you to narrate your own experiment/experience and position what you've observed within fields of study via research. How does your own firsthand experience of attempting this habit-challenge face outward? What advice do you have for your reader after engaging in this experiment? What realizations or insights into your own experience resonate universally? What social theory are you realizing that your own experience serves as evidence for?

The final draft should be **4-5 pages in length**, have a clear logical flow of thinking on the page, include **at least 2 academically verified sources** that help contextualize your experience, and offer insightful lenses to support your reflection on your own experience. As always, please follow MLA formatting and citations.

### *Skills Practiced and Assessed*

- Attempts to represent and analyze concrete personal experience for deeper layers of personal meaning and significance.
- Attempts to search for and identify a cluster of sources **via NYU Library databases and other reputable databases**, in relation to the sites of tension identified in the Observation Log.
- Attempts to develop a *conceptual conversation* between first-hand experience and at least 2 conceptually-related texts via reflective lens work to help uncover and articulate deeper meaning and larger sociocultural resonance.
- Attempts to provide conceptual transitions that smoothly guide your reader through your flow of thinking, resulting in a clearly--organized essay that develops a compelling insight of larger significance you leave your reader with.