GUIDELINES, SUGGESTIONS & FORMAT
FOR
FIELD STUDY IN NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

In this field study, you are to explore an aspect of human communication behavior for the purpose of discovering causes of types of communicative behaviors. Although this project is entitled a "Field Study in Nonverbal Communication," this does not mean that you cannot talk or interact with your subjects. In fact, if you would like to investigate any area of communication that we have discussed in class, please feel free to do so (e.g. Perception, Listening, and Nonverbal).

I want you to have fun with your study. After all, what is more entertaining than "people watching?" However, please keep in mind that the purpose of this study is to:

1. Develop a meaningful hypothesis
2. Construct a controlled and appropriate method for testing your hypothesis.
3. Conscientiously collect and accurately record data
4. Analyze and evaluate your feelings
5. Draw some substantial and insightful conclusions about the varied ways in which people communicate (or fail to communicate) with each other

Creativity counts, but mere frivolity without a thoughtful purpose does little to increase our awareness or understanding of the way we relate and communicate with each other.

PLEASE TAKE THIS STUDY SERIOUSLY! I expect it to contribute to a new awareness for you, me, the class, and perhaps even to the people you encounter.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TOPIC SELECTION

1. Choose any of the areas of communication we have discussed in class--physical appearance, proxemics, adaptors, regulators, territoriality, touch, etc.

2. Are there any "peculiarities" about human behavior that you have noticed and would like to study and observe in a more formal and controlled way? Inventory your life to choose an environment for your study which will enable you to explore your hypothesis while you go through your daily or weekly routine. This will benefit you in several ways:

A) You will be able to collect your data as you fulfill your work, home, or school responsibilities and be freed from the need to set aside major time allotments for the field study alone.

B) By collecting data on a daily basis for three or four weeks, you will have a substantial data base from which to draw a more relevant and significant conclusion.

C) By developing your field study around your daily life, you will learn more about dealing with people in your environment. Any insights you gain from this study may help you improve the communication problems that actually concern you and affect your life.

3. To inventory your life, consider elements such as: Do you work in a shopping mall? Do you ride a bus? Do you work with children? Do you wear a uniform? Do you spend time at the library? Do you go to parties or restaurants on a regular basis? Do you rollerblade in Golden Gate Park on weekends? Are you ever stereotyped because of the way you look?

4. Are you shy or withdrawn? Choose a study where you can simply observe if you prefer, but why not try taking on a new identity and overcome your shyness?

5. Are you outgoing? A risk--taker? Go for it and choose a study where you can make that work for you.

6. Good places to conduct field studies are:

School	Restaurants	Church	Casinos
Beaches	Ski Lodges	Elevators	Parties
Buses, Trains	Gas Stations	Libraries	Clubs
Dr. /Dentist office	Jogging Routes	Stores	Work
Movie Theatres	Fitness Centers	Courtrooms	

REQUIREMENTS

Your field study must fulfill the following format requirements:

1. **MINIMUM LENGTH**: Four typed pages, 12 point font, double-spaced with one inch margins on all sides.
   A total of three people may work together, but you will need to add two additional pages to the paper for each additional person. Your paper should not total more than eight pages.

FORMAT

I. HYPOTHESIS: Educated guess about peoples' communicative behavior. Your hypothesis is the informal observation or "hunch" you are going to test in your field study.

Generally, a hypothesis is clearly stated in an opening sentence, however background information explaining what led you to your interest in exploring your topic may be explained.

Example: Male auto mechanics discriminate against female customers, since stereotypically, women in our society are perceived to have little, if any, mechanical knowledge about automobiles.

II. METHOD: Detailed description of how you will test your hypothesis. Included in your description of your method, should be an explanation of any controls that you considered as important to the consistency of your study and the quality of the results.

Although controls are more difficult to maintain in "people studies" than they are in scientific laboratory studies, there are controls that must be considered and planned in advance to "going out into the field."

This is your "planning stage." Keep situations as "constant" as you can so that you know that your results reflect data that has been influenced only by the communicative behavior you are testing.

Some Factors to Consider in Maintaining Controls:

1) Age
2) Race
5) Day of Week
6) Time of Day

3) Dress
4) Behavior
7) Weather
8) Seasonal Moods

III. RESULTS: Detailed description of all that you have observed. If applicable, please include a brief summary of each subject observed, including any information you used to obtain your results.

Examples:

Subject #1: Male Caucasian, approximately 25 years old. Dressed in black leather jacket, torn-at-the-knees levis, tattoo of "mother" enclosed in a Cupid heart on the forearm.

Subject #2: Asian female, approximately 60 years old. Spoke little English but her six year old granddaughter translated for her.

Graphs and charts are extremely useful in recording your data and may be set up in advance for easy tabulation of results if you are doing your study on the job where you cannot take the time to elaborate on descriptions. Examples of this type of data keeping will be explained in class.

Important: Include any material that you collect during the course of your study such as estimates, business cards, photographs, children's art, etc.

CONCLUSION: YOUR evaluation of the results. Explain what the results of your study to **prove** or **disprove** your hypothesis.