**Media Observer Exercise**

100 points

**Instructions:**

For this assignment, you will spend time as a critical media observer - namely, your own use of media in a 72 hour period. In order to complete the assignment, you **MUST** record each time you use/engage with media for a complete 72 hour (3 day) period in a **LOG**, recording your exposure to, uses of, and interaction with mediated communication (e.g., cell phone, social media, TV, radio, etc.) During this time, you will also be required to make detailed autoethnographic “**field**” **notes** of your experience and you were personally (socially, culturally) effected by the media- what interfaces/platforms/sources did you interact with, which were intentional and which were not, the effects (if any) on your mood, time management, body, further use of media, etc.

Your exposure to, and with, certain media will surely be influenced by your own identity, perceptions, and biases/preferences. For example, someone with a Facebook account is sure to have a different experience than someone who does not have one; a republican may search/read different news than a liberal, etc. Other identity and cultural considerations include how you use/engage/are subject to media based on your: gender/sex, age, social-economic status, political preference, ethnicity, etc. As you reflect on these, write it all down- even the boring and mundane stuff tells us important information about the ways we engage with media.

After writing and reviewing your log and field notes, you will next write a 2-3 page paper that responds to **all** the following questions:

1. What was the total length of time you recorded with media? Was it all purposeful/intentional, what was the context? Were you surprised, or was this what you expected? What mediated sources did you engage with? How did your media usage affect your face-to-face communication, in your opinion?
2. What, if anything, did you notice about others’ uses of media?
3. What stood out and grabbed your attention? In other words, what were the most significant, startling, explicit mediated messages you observed? Choose 2-3 examples from field notes to use, and describe them in detail for the reader.
4. How did you interpret these 2-3 messages? Here are some questions to get you thinking (you do not need to answer them all):
   1. What meanings did you make of them?
   2. Were you *comfortable* or *uncomfortable*? Why?
   3. What stood out about these encounters?
5. What do you think affected your uses, perceptions, engagement with media? For example, your Age, race, nationality, class, gender, sex, occupation, relationship status? Do some self-reflection here.
6. Choose at least 1 concept you have learned about in the lectures or textbook and apply it to the exercise. How does the concept help explain your experience? For example, do your observations support or contradict the concept that you are using? Explain.

**Format:**

Your paper must be 2 full pages, at minimum, not including your name/date and other heading information. Your paper should be written in first person (using “I”) and you must provide proper citation of sources (the textbook) when quoting, paraphrasing, or borrowing course terms and ideas.

**Suggestions:**

Be open-minded and curious as you begin to observe and record your world.

Use as many senses as possible in order to enhance your observations.

Be mindful of *who, what, when, where, why* as you are observing and taking notes.