

Social Meaning of Money Assignment

A [breaching experiment](#) is when a researcher purposely disrupts the interaction order so as to make visible the unwritten social rules guiding much of our behavior.

Over the Thanksgiving Break, your assignment is to conduct a breaching experiment regarding the social meaning of money. You should offer a sacred good/service in exchange for a profane one - or vice-versa, along the lines of the cases we mentioned in section and class today (e.g. money in exchange for an organ). For instance, consider offering to pay your family for your Thanksgiving dinner ([unless this is something your family already does!](#)) or leave them a tip after the meal. Or you could try to haggle or barter for your groceries at the store with the cashier. Get creative (but not illegal)!

Observe their reaction. What does this reveal about the social meaning of this particular exchange? What does it tell us about what we can and cannot buy, give, or exchange? Why do you think this is?

In about one double-spaced page, write up your breaching experiment and what happened. Then interpret your observations by considering the questions above and relying on the concepts from Zelizer (and other relevant readings).