

**COLGATE UNIVERSITY**  
13 Oak Drive  
Hamilton, NY 13346-1385

**Institutional Review Board Proposal Cover Sheet**

Title of Project: How are the Definitions of Rape and Sexual Assault Transformed on Colgate's Campus?

Anticipated number of participants: females: 75 males: 75 Approximate ages: 18-22

Submission date: XX/XX/XXX Anticipated start date: XX/XX/XXXX

**Expedited Review:** for research that does **not** manipulate participants' behavior, use deception, threaten privacy, or cause stress to participants (e.g. observational studies, studies of archival data, some questionnaire and interview studies). Review takes approximately 5 days.

**Full Review:** for all research that is not eligible for expedited review. Reviews occur once each semester.

Investigator(s): Investigator Name Here \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Supervisor: Supervisor Name Here (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information for Principal Investigator:

Name: Investigator Name Here \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx \_\_\_\_\_

Email: Investigator @colgate.edu \_\_\_\_\_

*I have read and agree to uphold the ethical principles and guidelines for the protection of human research participants as they are described in the Belmont Report issued by the Federal Office of Health, Education & Welfare. This proposal and the attached materials meet the guidelines described by the APA Code of Ethics.*

A copy of the Belmont Report is available at <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.htm>

IRB #:	_____
Reviewer:	_____
Decision:	_____
Date:	____/____/____
<i>For Office Use Only</i>	

## **Purpose of Investigation & Procedures:**

I will be examining how the definitions of rape and sexual assault change depending on the characteristics of the perpetrator, the setting, or the victims own behavior. Furthermore, I will examine if these factors define rape and sexual assault in a way that deviates from the legal definition. At Colgate in particular, I believe that rape and sexual assault occur more frequently but are disproportionately under-reported because of the factors described above. Sociologically it is imperative that we understand how rapes and sexual assaults on this campus are not just isolated events but they contribute to a pattern that affects the entire Colgate and Hamilton community. To better understand how characteristics of the perpetrator affect how one categorizes a rape, I will need to examine how stranger rape is viewed in contrast to acquaintance rape. When examining settings in which rape or sexual assault occur on Colgate's campus, I would like to see the effect that the fraternity rape culture has on men and women. Finally, in order to understand how rape and sexual assault are defined on Colgate's campus it is imperative that I learn about how the victim's own behavior in terms of alcohol consumption and appearance might alter that definition.

Through existing literature I have found that there are several studies or books that discuss the definition of rape or risk factors of rape on college campuses, however, there is little that connects risk factors and how they transform the definition of rape on college campus's. For example, Peter Njorge Memiah in his dissertation, realizes the risk factors that are associated with the college experience such as the prevalence of fraternity parties or the rampant alcohol use. Furthermore, defining rape is another sociological problem that has been revisited over and over again and as Linda Brookover Bourque says in her book *Defining Rape*, "As the number and diversity of reported sexual assaults increase and the array of persons involved in defining and responding broadens, so do definitions and scarce resources" (Brookover, Bourque, 3). However, my question is why is college different? Why are risk factors heightened and how do these risk factors on Colgate's campus transform the definition of rape so radically?

I would like to use several theoretical frameworks for analyzing the rape culture and how it is defined on Colgate's campus. First, I will be using Howard S. Becker's labeling theory where individuals fulfill the role society expects them to fill and eventually an individual internalizes that role. Secondly, I would like to base my research on Erving Goffman's symbolic interactionist theory where he explains that life is a stage and we are all actors and utilize a "backstage" and "front stage" approach when acting out our lives. Finally, I would like to use a gender or feminist lens in order to see how gender roles, social construction, and social context matters when looking at how rape is defined.

In order to research my topic adequately, I will use several methods. First, I will use the 2005 Sexual Climate Survey existing data as a general way to assess the safety and comfort, resources, curriculum, social life, attitudes, and identity in relation to sexuality on the Colgate campus. From reading this survey I understand how 94% of student respondents believe that "hooking up" is accepted within Colgate's campus culture, where "hooking up" is generally understood by students to mean short-term sexual interactions based on physical attraction, which I believe might transform the definition of rape and sexual assault.

Secondly, I will use the recent existing data collected from the 2009 Colgate Campus Life Study (CCLS) to address the multidimensional aspects of my topic. More specifically, I will operationalize my variables by using questions from the social, gender, sexual, and health climate sections to assess my three factors described above. Analyzing how questions like "how often one participates in fraternity parties" and "how often you consumed alcohol prior to sex", address many factors on the transformative nature of the definition of rape and sexual assault on this campus.

Thirdly, I will be administering confidential surveys electronically to all freshmen and all seniors. I have obtained the list of all freshmen and seniors from the Registrar and will simply use the Google Documents “Form” model to e-mail my survey out. I will not track the emails of participants that complete the survey. In my surveys I will be testing out all three factors- the perpetrators identity, the setting of a rape or sexual assault, and the victims own behavior. Within each scenario there will be three variables describing each factor that will be manipulated. For the setting- the scenario will either take place at a Fraternity party, a local bar, or in the general downtown area. For the victims own behavior, the victim will be drunk at night, sober at night, or socially drinking. For the identity of the perpetrator, he will be a Colgate student a student from another university, or a local Hamilton male. With all of these variables combined there are twenty-seven possible scenarios. However, when administering my survey, each participant will get six of the twenty-seven randomly shuffled scenarios. I plan on following up by e-mail several times so that I can get a high enough response rate (I am aiming for 30% of the freshman class at 30% of the senior class. I will also be asking the Link Staff for help in getting the word out about my survey to all freshmen.

### **Anticipated Risks and Potential Benefits:**

There are no potential benefits for the participants. There are no direct risks to a person’s physical health or well-being. Since my survey research is conducted as a scenario or “what would you do” theme there are no questions that will be personally directed. However, since rape and sexual assault are subjects that might bring feelings to the surface, I will also provide a list of services (Conant House, the COVE group the Network, or Campus Safety) for the participants if the survey for some reason makes the participant emotionally distressed. Also, my survey will be completely confidential and voluntary thus ensuring the safety and well-being of each participant. The surveys will be numbered and shuffled so that there would be no way to link a survey with someone in a First Year Seminar or Senior Seminar. I will also ask my participants sign a consent form before they complete the survey, which will describe the survey and my research question in detail so that the participant understands the sociological importance of my survey and its greater implications for the greater Colgate community.

### **Steps Taken to Protect Participants:**

I will protect the privacy of my participants by ensuring that the survey is voluntary, confidential, and that the participant’s can withdraw from the survey at any time. I will use every method possible to ensure that the participant’s confidentiality is protected. By labeling the completed surveys with numbers instead of names and storing data under lock & key the surveys will be completely confidential. More specifically, I will ensure that my participants have fully informed consent in which they are informed of my planned research in detail. In case the participants wants to have them, I will have extra copies of my consent form which fully describes the study as well as relevant contact information for the Conant House for Psychological Services, Campus Safety, and e-mail information for the rape and sexual assault COVE group on campus called “The Network”.

### **Manner of Obtaining Participants:**

I will obtain participants by going through the entire list from the registrar of all registered students at Colgate and e-mailing all freshmen and all seniors. Also, I will be asking the links to help with getting the word out to all freshmen about my survey- however, I will make it extremely evident

to the links that this survey is voluntary so the subjects do not have to take the survey. Since the issues of rape and sexual assault are interesting and worthwhile topics discussing and researching, I feel that many people will want to respond to my survey. Since I am aiming to get 30% of both the freshmen class and the senior class, I plan on sending out follow up emails to get the response rate that I would like. By administering my survey to two different age groups, I will be able to get a well-rounded view of how both male and female freshman view rape and sexual assault as well as how male and female seniors view rape and sexual assault. There will be no form of monetary compensation for the participants. In order to get consent I will explain why I am conducting my survey in my detailed consent form which outlines my study.

## Certificate of Informed Consent

**Purpose and Procedures:** The purpose of this research is to understand how rape and sexual assault are categorized on Colgate’s campus. By granting consent to be part of this research, you agree to voluntarily participate in a 20 minute survey asking you questions about hypothetical sexual interactions. You will be asked to read six scenarios and answer questions about these scenarios in specific ways.

**Benefits/Risks:** There is only minimal risk associated with this study. You may feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions in the survey. There is no personal benefit in participating in the current study.

**Confidentiality:** You understand that all information collected in this study will be kept strictly confidential and used only for the purposes of this study. Your responses will not be linked to your name.

**Compensation:** Your participation is completely voluntary.

**Subject Rights:** You can withdraw from the project at any time and can decline to answer any questions without prejudice.

**Contact Information:** If you wish further information regarding this study, or your rights as a research subject, you may contact the principal investigator of this project, XXX, her faculty supervisor, XXX, or the Chair of the IRB committee at Colgate University, [IRB\\_chair@psych.colgate.edu](mailto:IRB_chair@psych.colgate.edu).

You have read and understand the consent form. You agree to participate in this research study. Upon signing below, you will receive a copy of this consent form.

Name of Participant	Signature of Participant	Date	Time

Name of Investigator	Signature of Investigator	Date	Time

Survey Questions (removed from example)