



# Nonverbal Communication

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Beyond Words...

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- Outline for Part 2
- II. Body Language
  - B. Proxemics
  - C. Haptics
  - D. Chronemics

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- B. Proxemics
- The study of social space or how people position themselves in relation to others reveals a vast amount of information.
- **Proxemics** is “the cross-cultural study of humankind’s perception and use of space...”
  - Haviland et al. (2010:176)

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- The pioneer of proxemic science is anthropologist, Edward T. Hall.
- In his seminal work, *The Hidden Dimension* (1966), Hall discusses space as a system of communication, “a specialized elaboration of culture.”
  - Hall (1966:1).



Photo courtesy of Kathryn Sorrells, 1998

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- Proxemic space is culturally-specific since we learn how to use space.
- Hall argued that differing cultural frameworks exist for defining and organizing space, which are internalized in all people at an unconscious level.
- Hall defined 4 categories of proxemic space.
  - The following categories and corresponding distances apply to most Americans.

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- 1. Intimate space (0-1.5')—the closest "bubble" of space surrounding a person. Entry into this space is acceptable only for the closest friends and intimates.



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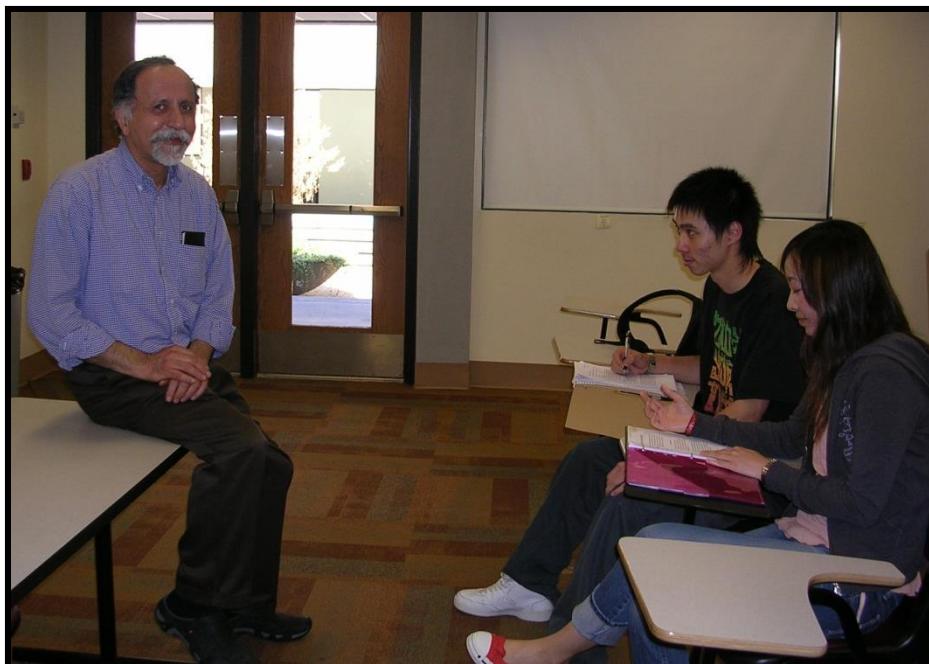
- 2. Personal-casual space (1.5-4') – at this distance, friends and colleagues comfortably converse.



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- 3. Social-consultative spaces (4-12') —the spaces in which people feel comfortable conducting routine social interactions with acquaintances as well as strangers.



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- 4. Public space (>12')—the area of space beyond which people will perceive interactions as impersonal and relatively anonymous.



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- What is the category(ies) of proxemic space in each of the photos?



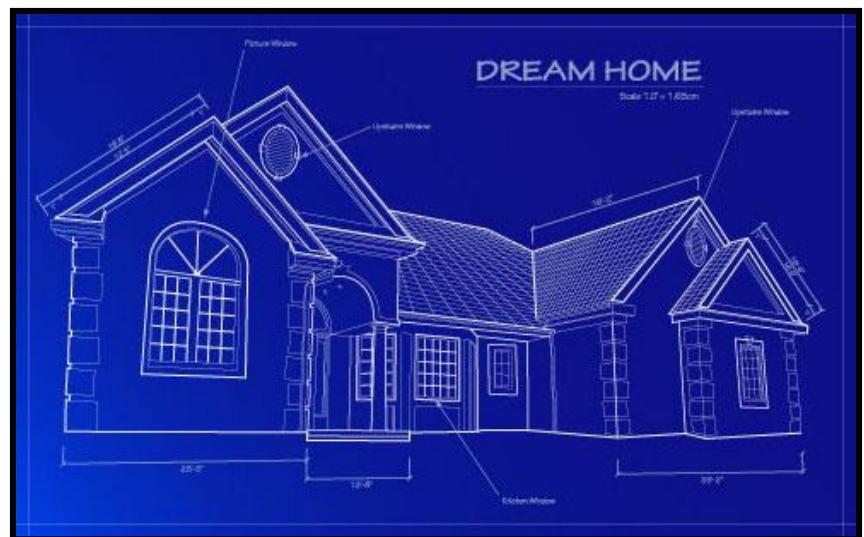
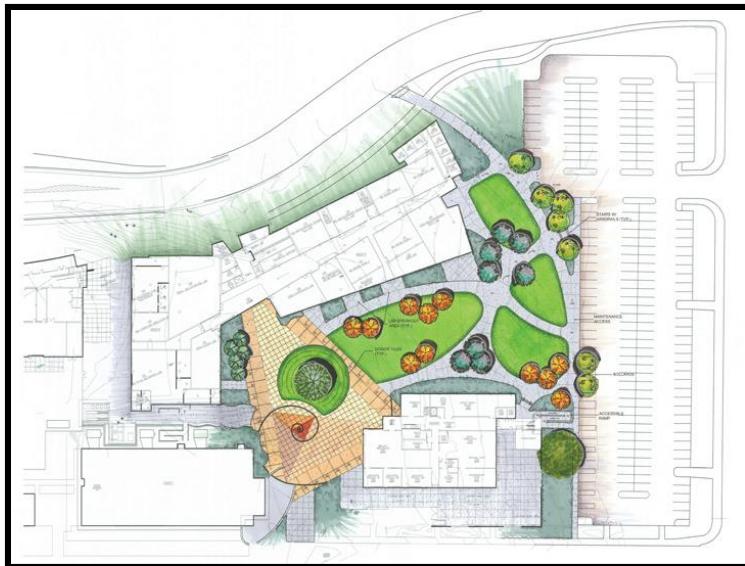
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- Hall's work has influenced many areas of study –
  - Intercultural Communication
  - Geography and the use of space
  - Urban Planning
  - Architecture
  - Anthropology of Space
    - A robust area of research pursued by anthropologists interested in how the built environment expresses culturally shared ideas and sustains relations of inequality between people (Lawrence and Low 1990).

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- Urban Planners and Architects must take into account the culture and individual for which space is being designed.
  - Example: Someone's idea of a "dream house" may differ significantly from another's idea.



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- C. Haptics → Touch
- Touching is an element of communication
- The type of touch, its frequency and intensity are a function of culture.
- “High-contact” cultures contrast with “low-contact” cultures.
  - In high-contact cultures, there is a lot of social touching, such as embracing and hand-holding.
  - In low-contact cultures, social touching is rarely used at all.
  - In between are moderate-contact cultures where touching is used only occasionally, such as in handshakes, sporadic shoulder touching, or backslapping.

○ <http://faculty.buffalostate.edu/smithrd/UAE%20Communication/Unit2.pdf>

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- Provide examples of high-contact, moderate-contact, and low-contact cultures.
- Does haptics, or the amount of social touching, vary *within* a culture?
  - Absolutely!
- Haptics can be used to express status
  - It is more likely for one's boss in the USA to touch one on the shoulder than for the underling to touch the boss's shoulder.
- Haptics also vary according to the individual and how much social touching one prefers or is comfortable with.

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- The Handshake
- “Handshakes vary in the length and strength of grip, depending on the actual (or hoped for) degree of intimacy between the two people shaking hands.”



- <http://faculty.buffalostate.edu/smithrd/UAE%20Communication/Unit2.pdf>

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- D. Chronemics
- Time can be used as an element of communication.
- Formal time is measured in units (seconds, minutes, hours, days, etc.)
- Informal time is measured relative to seasons, social customs, lunar cycles, etc.

○ <http://faculty.buffalostate.edu/smithrd/UAE%20Communication/Unit2.pdf>



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- Chronemics also involves the concept of punctuality.
- For what types of events in the USA is it acceptable to arrive either exactly on time or a little early?
  - Monochronic or M-time
- For what types of events in the USA is it acceptable to arrive at variable times?
  - Polychronic or P-time