**Lesson Plan**

**W. Fox**

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*Sometimes it’s not about what you say, but what you do.*

**Class walk-in music:**

# Luke Combs - *Six Feet Apart*

[**https://youtu.be/6d9XjnV2iKA**](https://youtu.be/6d9XjnV2iKA)

**Examining Personal Space (Proxemics)** – For use in a Non-Verbal Communication course.

**Theory:** We live in a COVID world where the norms of our culture regarding personal space have been obliterated in the name of safety. When we return to normal, students require a reminder of the research-based impact of personal space. Individuals will need to make decisions, regardless of political or social pressures, on how to practice personal space in relationships.

**Previously Covered Material:** Normally this lesson would be part of a larger exploration of the 9 different types/aspects of non-verbal communication.

**Readings:**

1. Richmond, V. P., McCroskey, J. C., & Hickson, III, M.L. (2012). *Nonverbal behavior in interpersonal relations* (6th or 7th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
2. [Burgoon](https://smile.amazon.com/Judee-K-Burgoon/e/B001H6PV78/ref%3Ddp_byline_cont_book_1), K., [Guerrero](https://smile.amazon.com/s/ref%3Ddp_byline_sr_book_2?ie=UTF8&field-author=Laura+K.+Guerrero&text=Laura+K.+Guerrero&sort=relevancerank&search-alias=books)., & [Floyd](https://smile.amazon.com/Kory-Floyd/e/B001H6V5KU/ref%3Ddp_byline_cont_book_3). (2009). *Nonverbal Communication*.1st Edition. Routledge.

**Learning Outcomes (Goals & Objectives):**

1. The Student will be able to describe and identify examples of Hall’s 4 zones of personal space (Proxemics.)
2. The student will be able to discuss the impact of Proxemics in society
3. The student will be able to articulate how Personal Space will influence their non-verbal communication strategies in a post-COVID world.

**Out of Class Work:**

1. Complete assigned textbook chapters
2. Read: Kreuz, R. &. (2015). *Proxemics 101: Understanding Personal Space Across Cultures.* Retrieved from The MIT Press: https://thereader.mitpress.mit.edu/understanding-personal-space-proxemics/

Whitbourne, S. (2019). *5 Things You Need to Know About Personal Space.* Retrieved from Psychology Today: https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/fulfillment-any-age/201904/5-things-you-need-know-about-personal-space

**Time Frame:** 50 minutes

**Key Concept:** The amount of space that we maintain between each other is not random. Different social situations call for appropriate amounts of personal space. We explore Hall’s 4 zones of personal space.

**Resource Materials:** Smart phone or laptop with internet access web-based assessment tool.

**Class Activity(s):**

1. 2 min. Watch Seinfeld video (Personal Space) <https://youtu.be/12ngQixZ4II>.
2. 10 min. Lecture, PPT deck focusing on 4 zones of personal space.
3. 10 min. Discussion: As you walk down a flight of stairs, which side do you choose? We may choose the right side because we’ve learned that is what is expected. This choice insures that personal space is not compromised. But what happens when someone comes up the wrong side?
4. 5 min. Watch BBC Personal Space Experiment <https://youtu.be/sgJ24hknbHs>
5. 5 min. Reflection discussion
6. 10 min. Take handshake and hug survey on Padlet. Post-COVID, do you still do give handshakes in Social Distance situations. Do you give hugs in Personal Distance situations.
7. 5 min. Reflection discussion

Summary: Proxemics can be used to make a much more profound statement in a post-COVID world. Communicating non-verbally with personal space will strongly indicate intentions, while at the same time risking interpersonal conflict. Understanding the implications of non-verbal messaging when utilizing personal space will help students navigate a new set of evolving norms.