

“Proxemics” means “the perception and use of space,” including “the relative proximity of people to one another in various situations and in various societies.”¹ This assignment requires you to explore the way that people in your field site use space (mapping), and how they relate to others in the same space (proxemics).

Your Mapping assignment should be a drawing or set of drawings of your field site(s) that are focused on the organization of physical space (including built elements, natural elements, landscaped element, etc) and its connection with social relationships. It should not be just a generic cartography, but a detailed consideration of space, nested spaces, invisible spaces, and so on, that shape and influence the behaviors of people within the particular space(s) you are researching. The use of space is not merely about organization or building, but also about culturally constructed notions of boundaries; the significance attached to ways of dealing with environments; movement through environments; rules or norms regarding ownership, membership, and exclusion; issues of “social purity and pollution”; the units of measurement that are important in people’s daily lives; and so on. These kinds of observations and information should inform your mapping efforts. Obviously, this will require that you have visited your field site(s) at least once, and made some introductions of yourself and your project to appropriate persons, and perhaps spoken with participants regarding the site, and issues of space/use of space.

Your Proxemics assignment should focus on human interactions and the patterns that emerge from these interactions. You might focus on assumptions about the appropriateness of proximity to others (especially to others of particular categories of person); to issues of personal space; communication and how it is structured around issues of time, space, and proximity; the accomplishment of tasks; touching, crowding, and distance; and so on. You may use diagrams or other visual forms of representation to convey your observations and conclusions, or you may write up your observations in a descriptive narrative form, or you may use a combination of these. Creativity is encouraged for both the Mapping and Proxemics assignments!

Each research pair should submit jointly agreed Mapping and Proxemics assignments. Please include signature lines on cover pages. If you do not agree, do not sign, and bring your concerns to catey PRIOR to the due date. Each research team is to bring 6 hardcopies of their Mapping and Proxemics projects to class for peer evaluation and discussion on February 24th.

¹ Crane, Julia and Michael Angrosino. 1992. *Field Projects in Anthropology: A Student Handbook*. Waveland Press. P.23.