**FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY**

**Graduate Programs—NEW COURSE PROPOSAL**

**DEPARTMENT:** SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION AND MULTIMEDIA STUDIES

**COLLEGE:** ARTS AND LETTERS

**RECOMMENDED COURSE IDENTIFICATION:**

**PREFIX** _______ SPC _______ **COURSE NUMBER** 6239 _______ **LAB CODE** (L or C) _______ (TO OBTAIN A COURSE NUMBER, CONTACT MJENNINGS@FAU.EDU)

**COMPLETE COURSE TITLE:** SEMINAR ON KENNETH BURKE

**CREDITS:** 3.0

**TEXTBOOK INFORMATION:** KENNETH BURKE, COUNTER-STATEMENT (1931); KENNETH BURKE, PHILOSOPHY OF LITERARY FORM (1940); KENNETH BURKE, A GRAMMAR OF MOTIVES (1945); KENNETH BURKE, A RHETORIC OF MOTIVES (1950); KENNETH BURKE, RHETORIC OF RELIGION (1961); KENNETH BURKE, LANGUAGE AS SYMBOLIC ACTION (1966)

**GRADING (SELECT ONLY ONE GRADING OPTION):** REGULAR X SATISFACTORY/UNSATISFACTORY

**COURSE DESCRIPTION,** NO MORE THAN THREE LINES:

This course examines the life and work of American rhetorical theorist and critic Kenneth Burke (1897-1993). It takes a developmental approach to studying Burke, with emphasis on his understanding of rhetoric and symbolic action as they are reflected in his theories of "dramatism" and "logology" as well as his approaches to critical practice.

**PREREQUISITES:**

**COREQUISITES:**

**REGISTRATION CONTROLS (MAJOR, COLLEGE, LEVEL):**

**GRADUATE STANDING OR PERMISSION OF INSTRUCTOR**

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*PREREQUISITES, COREQUISITES AND REGISTRATION CONTROLS WILL BE ENFORCED FOR ALL COURSE SECTIONS.*

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS NEEDED TO TEACH THIS COURSE:** PHD IN COMMUNICATION STUDIES, RHETORIC, OR RELATED AREAS

Faculty contact, email and complete phone number:
David Cratis Williams
dcwilliams@fau.edu
297-0045

Please consult and list departments that might be affected by the new course and attach comments.
Departments of English and Sociology

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**APPROVED BY:**

Department Chair:

College Curriculum Chair:

College Dean:

UGPC Chair:

Graduate College Dean:

UFS President:

Provost:

**DATE:** 10/18/13

**1. Syllabus** must be attached; see guidelines for requirements:


**2. Review Provost Memorandum:**

Definition of a Credit Hour

www.fau.edu/provost/files/Definition_Credit_Hour_Memo_2012.pdf

**3. Consent** from affected departments (attach if necessary)

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**FAUnewcourseGrad—Revised September 2013**
SPC 6239: Seminar in Kenneth Burke
3.0 Credit Hours

Time: TBA
Location: TBA
Term: TBA

Professor: David Cratis Williams
Office: 210 CU
Office telephone: 297-0045
Email: dcwill@fau.edu

Office Hours: 11:00 – 1:00 TTh; 4:00-5:00 M; by appointment

Course Description: This course examines the life and work of American rhetorical theorist and critic Kenneth Burke. Kenneth Burke was (1897-1993) an often renowned and sometimes reviled literary and rhetorical critic and theorist, a poet, novelist, writer of short fiction, erstwhile composer, book reviewer, music reviewer, occasional teacher, etc. He has been called, among other things, “the greatest literary critic since Coleridge,” the “greatest American critic since Emerson,” an “ideosyncratic crackpot of the first order,” and a “critical idiotsavant.” He has been interpreted as a “quintessential modernist,” yet also a “proto-postmodern” who “anticipates” not only postmodernism but also poststructuralism, deconstruction, reader-response theory, and cultural criticism. Some see him as a closet metaphysician, others as a text-bound New Critic, others as the inventor of dynamic methods of textual analysis, and still others as a relativistic nihilist huddled nervously in his unending conversation. S.I. Hayakawa—either praising Burke for his perspicacity or lamenting the blindness of his presumed nihilism—once rather ambiguously declared, “Mr. Burke touches nothing without illuminating it.” Kenneth Burke is thus both tremendously influential as a theorist and a critic, yet also frequently misunderstood, occasionally reviled, and frequently controversial. The course will take a developmental and historical approach to studying Burke, with emphasis on his understanding of rhetoric and symbolic action as they are reflected in his theories of “dramatism” and “logology.”

Learning Objectives: As a graduate level seminar, the objectives of this course relate more to knowledge and understanding than to specific behavioral outcomes (and if Burke were alive to see his ideas and insights reduced to behavioral outcomes, he would castigate us all). The objectives are 1) for students to attain broad understanding of Burke’s theories of dramatism and logology and to see how the theories can be cast methodologically toward the critical analysis of rhetoric, and 2) for students to understand connections among Burke’s life, his cultural and political milieu, and his work in ways that enrich their understanding of his work.
**Required Texts** (there are multiple editions of each of the following; the more recent editions have additional prefaces and retrospectives. Otherwise, the editions are the same, with the exception of a combined GOM and ROM edition, which has different page numbering):


Additional articles, books, and essays will be assigned during the course of the term. Some of these will be individual assignments; others will be class assignments. Each student is responsible for finding these assigned texts, although some will be distributed in class and some of the others will be posted in Blackboard. Additional supplemental readings will be added as the semester progresses.

**Texts for Book Reviews (each student will report on one book):**


**Supplemental Texts:**

**Primary:**


**Secondary:**


**Bibliographies, Journals, and Web Resources:** There are dozens of websites that offer essays, information, bibliographies about Burke; some are (much) better than others. Below are some of the most useful—and accurate—of the websites:

- *KB Journal* (online) and current website of the Kenneth Burke Society (contains lots of useful information including the most complete bibliographies of both primary and secondary works by/about Burke): [http://kbjournal.org/kbs](http://kbjournal.org/kbs) (note: membership in the Kenneth Burke Society is available for a nominal fee, and membership gains you access to searchable features of the bibliography as well as other benefits).

- Resources on Kenneth Burke Website: [http://www.comm.umn.edu/burke/](http://www.comm.umn.edu/burke/)


**Assignments and Expectations:**

Class participation: Class participation is expected (and you cannot participate if you are not present). The course will be taught as a reading-based seminar; as
such, your thorough preparation for class, active participation in class activities, and insightful discussion of ideas and issues are essential. Please consult with the instructor in advance should you require religious or other university approved accommodation for any specific class.

Weekly reading questions: Based on the assigned readings for a given class session, prepare a list of 10 questions for class discussion. The questions should probe the meanings of key concepts and ideas in the texts, and they should be designed to stimulate relevant and productive class discussion. The questions must be submitted as MS Word attachments to dcwill@fau.edu no later than 10:30 a.m. on Monday morning before the evening class session on those readings. Be certain to include both the date and your name in the text of the attachment. Questions are due each week from September 9 through November 28.

Readings-based position papers: Each student will prepare and present to the class one position paper during the course of the semester. The position paper should: 1) key off of a question, concern, or issue raised in the required reading for that week, and 2) extend that question, concern, or issue through consideration of at least two supplemental readings (which may include supplemental readings listed on the syllabus but your choices are not restricted to that listing). Each position paper should take a clear position relative to the question, concern, or issue; that is, your paper should advance a cogent interpretive argument relative to it. Each paper should be between 7 and 10 pages in length (space-and-a-half; 12-pt. font) and must include appropriate documentation and references. Each presentation should be 15 minutes long. The presentation should not be a reading or simple repetition of the paper but rather should contextualize or further the paper. Each position paper must be distributed as an email attachment to all members of the class and to the professor at least 24 hours ahead of the class session in which the paper will be discussed. Class members are expected to read positions papers in advance of class and to be prepared to discuss the papers and presentations.

Book Report: Each student will select (or be assigned) one of the “Book Review Texts” listed above to read and about which to prepare both a written and oral report (if additional texts are needed for this assignment, we will turn to the “Supplemental Texts” list). The reports should be thorough and complete encapsulations of the major points advanced in the books; they should be of sufficient depth that they can serve as a sort of “Cliff Notes” on the book for the others in the class. These are intended as extended annotated summaries of the texts, not as formal reviews or evaluations. The written reports should be 10-15 pages, with complete documentation (including page number citations). The written report format may reflect more of an ‘outline’ style (while still being fully explanatory) than a formal paper style. The oral reports should be 15-20 minutes. You should bring hardcopies of the written report (one for each student and two
for the professor) to distribute when you present your report, and you should also
send the report as an email attachment to everyone in the class.

Term Projects: Each student will undertake a major term project that will
culminate in a paper (15-25 pp) of publishable quality. The paper must concern
itself with the major themes of the class (e.g., Burkean theory, applications of
Burkean critical approaches); however, there is great latitude within that. You
must propose your project in a 2-4 page project prospectus, due no later than
October 7. The projects may be either theoretical or critical in their orientation.
The final project is due on December 2. Each student will also present a summary
of the project to the class on December 9 (during the final examination period);
each student will be allotted between 15 and 20 minutes for the presentation. It is
an objective of this class that your papers be of sufficient quality to submit for
presentation at a regional or national conference and/or for publication.

Upcoming opportunities for submission include the triennial meeting of the
Kenneth Burke Society (slated for July 17-20, 2014 at St. Louis University;
submission due date January 31, 2014), the annual meeting of the National
Communication Association (submission due date February), the annual Southern
States Communication Association conference (submission due date is typically
September), and the Florida Communication Association annual conference
(submission due date is in the spring), among others.

Grade Weights of Assignments:

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<td>Position Paper</td>
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<td>Book Report</td>
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<td>Project Prospectus</td>
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Grading Scale:

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Key Dates:

Reading Questions are due each week from September 9 through November 28.
The Project Prospectus is due October 7
The Semester Project is due Dec. 2
The Project presentations will be Dec. 9

Disability policy statement: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students who require reasonable accommodations due to a disability to properly execute coursework must register with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) -- in Boca Raton, SU 133 (561-297-3880); in Davie, LA 240 (954-236-1222); in Jupiter, SR 110 (561-799-8010); or at the Treasure Coast, CO 117 (772-873-3441) -- and follow all OSD procedures. http://osd.fau.edu/

Code of Academic Integrity policy statement: Students at Florida Atlantic University are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards. Academic dishonesty is considered a serious breach of these ethical standards, because it interferes with the university mission to provide a high quality education in which no student enjoys an unfair advantage over any other. Academic dishonesty is also destructive of the university community, which is grounded in a system of mutual trust and places high value on personal integrity and individual responsibility. Harsh penalties are associated with academic dishonesty. For more information, see http://wise.fau.edu/regulations/chapter4/Reg_4.001_5-26-10_FINAL.pdf
SPC 6239: Seminar in Kenneth Burke

Proposed Weekly Schedule

Week 1:

Introduction to the course and distribution of the syllabus

Read: “Know Thyself” (poem posted on Blackboard); “On a Photo of Himself When Young” (poem posted on Blackboard); “Old Nursery Jingle Brought Up to Date” (poem posted on Blackboard); “Dialectician’s Hymn” (poem reprinted in PLF, 447-450; aka “Dialectician’s Prayer” in Collected Poems; a copy will be posted on Blackboard).

Film (in-class): A Conversation with Kenneth Burke

Discussion of book review sign-up/assignment process

Week 2

Beginning with the ending

Read: “Definition of Man” (LASA); “Poetics in Particular, Language in General” (LASA); “Terministic Screens” (LASA); “Rhetoric and Poetics” (LASA).

Discussion Questions due by 10:30 a.m.

Week 3

Young Burke: Literary Trajectories...


Discussion Questions due by 10:30 a.m.


Week 4

... and Rhetorical Turns

Read: “Psychology and Form,” “Program,” “Applications of the Terminology,” and “Curriculum Criticum” (all in CS).
Discussion Questions due by 10:30 a.m.

Book Report 1:


Week 5
Burke and the 1930s


Discussion Questions due by 10:30 a.m.

Book Report 2:


Book Report 3:


Position Paper 1:


Week 6

Toward the Motivorum Trilogy


Discussion Questions due by 10:30 a.m.

Book Report 4:


Book Report 5:


Position Paper 2:


Project prospectus due

Week 7

A Grammar of Motives, Part 1


Discussion Questions due by 10:30 a.m.
Position Paper 3:


Week 8

A Grammar of Motives, Parts 2 & 3


Discussion Questions due by 10:30 a.m.

Book Report 6:


Book Report 7:


Position Paper 4:


Week 9

A Rhetoric of Motives


Discussion Questions due by 10:30 a.m.

Book Report 8:

Position Paper 5:

Position Paper 6:


Week 10

*A Symbolic of Motives?*


*Discussion Questions due by 10:30 a.m.*

Book Report 9:


Position Paper 7:

Position Paper 8:

**Week 11**

**Educational Implications of the Burkean Perspective**


*Discussion Questions due by 10:30 a.m.*

**Supplemental Readings:** Peter M. Smudde, Ed. *Humanistic Critique of Education: Teaching and Learning As Symbolic Action*. West Lafayette, IN: Parlor Press, 2010

**Week 12**

**Critical Applications of the Burkean Perspective**


*Discussion Questions due by 10:30 a.m.*

*Position Paper 9:*

Week 13  
*The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology*


*Discussion Questions due by 10:30 a.m.*


Week 14  
Ending with the Beginning

Reread: “Definition of Man” (LASA); “Poetics in Particular, Language in General” (LASA); “Terministic Screens” (LASA); “Rhetoric and Poetics” (LASA); “Dialectician’s Hymn”

*Final Papers Due*

*Course evaluations*

Week 15  
Presentations of Papers/Final Reports