

ENG 691
Topics in Composition Theory: Kenneth Burke
Spring 2014 CRN 38853
Thursday 9:00 – 11:50
253 PLC

John Gage
Office Hours: MW 10:00- 11:30
and by appointment
205 PLC 346-3922
jgage@uoregon.edu

We will read and discuss works by Kenneth Burke, whose philosophy of language makes rhetoric an architectonic principle for the study of how ideology and symbolism permeate all forms of appeal. Burke is often thought of as a precursor to post-modern theories of language, but the ways in which his ideas connect to such theories derive from his attempt to define a core of principles about human motives as accounted for by the use of language, methodologically associated with the history of rhetoric.

Texts by Kenneth Burke:

(*Required selections from these books will be announced.)

Counter-Statement

Permanence and Change

*Philosophy of Literary Form**

*A Grammar of Motives**

*A Rhetoric of Motives**

*Language as Symbolic Action**

Rhetoric of Religion

And selected essays to be made available on Blackboard

Learning Objectives

Students in this seminar will...

- read Burke's writings with the intention of understanding his particular purposes in individual texts and his overall theory of language, symbolic action, and rhetorical identification;
- demonstrate that understanding in weekly writings that identify and reflect meaningfully on issues in these texts;
- discuss that understanding orally and engage in mutual inquiry with peers;
- define a research issue and develop a critical hypothesis based on further exploration of relevant primary and secondary texts;
- write a seminar paper in which that hypothesis is argued effectively, clearly, and correctly for an academic audience (i.e. with potential for publication).

Requirements:

Attendance, preparation, discussion.

Nine weekly posts to the Blackboard discussion forum; at least three weekly responses to others' posts.

A research question, hypothesis, and complete draft of a seminar essay.

Forum posts:

By 2:00 on Tuesdays:

Starting in week 2, students will write a brief (one page maximum) response to the reading they have done for the course. Topics are open and may include understandings, observations, reservations, confusions, speculations, questions, applications, connections.... Try, however, to sustain and develop your thinking rather than move from idea to idea serially. This will require you to choose ideas you find significant enough to write about and express them succinctly.

By 5:00 on Wednesdays:

Read others' posts and reply briefly and civilly to at least three.

Glossary:

As you read, take note of any terms or phrases that Burke seems to use in a unique or significant way. Post these terms to the Glossary as a new entry, define what Burke means by them, and cite the text and page where they occur (at least once). Add your initials to each glossary entry. Occasionally review the terms posted by others and comment on the definitions or significance of the terms, or add citations. Add your initials to each comment.

Websites of interest:

Kenneth Burke Society and Journal: <http://www.kbjournal.org/kbs>

Bibliography of Burke's Writings: <http://www.kbjournal.org/bibliographies>

Resources on Kenneth Burke: <http://www.comm.umn.edu/burke/>

Kenneth Burke, road-map of terms: <http://users.wfu.edu/zulick/454/roadmap.html>

HRHETOR: discussion forum on rhetoric: <https://networks.h-net.org/h-rhetor>

Rhetoric Society of America: http://www.rhetoricsociety.org/aws/RSA/pt/sp/home_page

International Society for the History of Rhetoric: http://ishr-web.org/aws/ISHR/pt/sp/home_page



“‘Time’ is to ‘eternity’ as the particulars in the unfolding of a sentence are to the sentence’s unitary meaning.” (Analogy # 5 – *The Rhetoric of Religion*, 33)

Library Reserve List:

The following books are on 2 hour reserve in the Knight Library for this course:

- Kenneth Burke. *On Human Nature: A Gathering While Everything Flows, 1967-1984*
 - B945.B771 R84 2003
- Kenneth Burke. *Unending Conversations: New Writings by and about Kenneth Burke*
 - P301.U54 2001
- Jack Selzer. *Kenneth Burke in Greenwich Village: Conversing with the Moderns, 1915-1931*
 - PS3503.U6134 Z87 1996
- Jack Selzer and Anne George. *Kenneth Burke in the 1930's*
 - PS3503.U6134 Z667 2007
- Jack Selzer and Sharon Crowley. *Rhetorical Bodies*
 - P301.5.S63 R49 1999

Not on reserve:

- Assigned texts (listed above)
- Burke's fiction and poetry
- Collections of Burke's correspondence
- Secondary criticism

Significant commentators on Kenneth Burke include: Lloyd Bitzer, Wayne C. Booth, Gregory Clark, Sharon Crowley, Timothy Crusius, Beth Eddy, Sonya Foss, Clifford Geerts, Deborah Hawhee, Laura Holland, Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Howard Nemerov, William Rueckert, Samuel Southwell, Elizabeth Weiser, Robert Wess, Hayden White, Ross Wolin ... See bibliographies for others.

Students are strongly urged to submit a conference proposal based on their research. See information about the following conferences:

- Rhetoric Society of America
- International Society for the History of Rhetoric
- CCCC (College Composition and Communication)
- American Society for the History of Rhetoric Conference
- The Gorgias Society National Conference
- The Modern Language Association
- National Council of Teachers of English conferences
- Western States Communication Association Conference
- Western States Rhetoric & Literacy Conference
- National Communication Association