

# Dave Tell

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## **Employment**

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Summer 2007 – Present: The University of Kansas, Assistant Professor  
Fall 2006 – Spring 2007: University of Maryland, Visiting Assistant Professor  
Fall 2000 – Summer 2006: The Pennsylvania State University, Graduate Assistant

## **Education**

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Ph.D. in Communication Arts and Sciences, The Pennsylvania State University (August 2006)  
Dissertation advisor: Dr. Rosa Eberly  
Dissertation: “The Politics of Public Confession: Expressivism and American Democracy”

This study clarifies the political consequences of public confession by tracing its evolution through the works of Augustine, Rousseau, and Foucault. I argue that among the consequences of the Enlightenment's redefinition of the human self was a new understanding of the social and political function of the public confession. Once a means of submitting one's self to the judgment of a wider community, the public confession became in the Enlightenment a means of self-expression. So understood, public confession became a privatizing and anti-political rhetorical form. Then, through a series of three case studies, I examine the influence of confession-as-self-expression, or expressivism, on American democracy.

**Recipient of the *National Communication Association's* “Gerald R. Miller Outstanding Doctoral Dissertation Award, 2007.** See pg. 3 below.

**Recipient of the *Rhetoric Society of America's* Dissertation Award, 2007.** See pg. 3 below.

M.A. in Speech Communication (August 2002)  
The Pennsylvania State University  
Thesis advisor: Dr. Stephen H. Browne

B.A. in Religious Studies, *Cum Laude* (May 1998)

Minor in Communication Studies  
Westmont College, Santa Barbara, California

## **Books**

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*Confessional Crises: The Secular Roots of the Modern Public Confession*. Manuscript in preparation.

## **Articles**

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Tell, Dave. "Rhetoric and Power: An Inquiry Into Foucault's Critique of Confession." *Philosophy & Rhetoric* (2010): Forthcoming.

Tell, Dave. "Augustine and the 'Chair of Lies': Rhetoric in *The Confessions*." *Rhetorica* 28.2 (2010): Forthcoming.

Tell, David. "Rousseau, Rhetoric, and the Promise of Contractual Politics." In *The Responsibilities of Rhetoric*, eds. Michelle Smith and Barbara Warnick (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2010), 25-36.

Tell, Dave. "Jimmy Swaggart's Secular Confession." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 39.2 (Spring 2009): 124-146.

Tell, Dave. "James McGreevey, The State-House Resignation Speech (12 August, 2004)." *Voices of Democracy: The U.S. Oratory Project* 3 (2008): 83-102.  
<http://www.voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/VODJournalVolume3.htm>

Tell, Dave. "The 'Shocking Story' of Emmett Till and the Politics of Public Confession." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 94.2 (May 2008): 156-178.

Tell, Dave. "Augustinian Political Theory and Religious Discourse in Public Life." *Journal of Communication and Religion* 30.2 (November 2007): 213-35.

Tell, Dave. "Beyond Mnemotechnics: Confession and Memory in Augustine." *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 39.3 (2006): 233-53.

Hogan, J. Michael and Dave Tell. "Demagoguery and Democratic Deliberation: The Search for Rules of Discursive Engagement." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 9.3 (2006): 479-87.

Tell, Dave. "Burke's Encounter with Ransom: Rhetoric and Epistemology in 'Four Master Tropes.'" *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 34.4 (2004): 33-54.

Tell, Dave. "The Man and the Message: Timothy Dwight and Homiletic Authority." *Journal of Communication and Religion* 26.1 (2003): 83-108.

## **Book Reviews**

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Review of *Hellfire Nation: The Politics of Sin in American History*, by James A. Morone. *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 9.2 (2006): 347-352.

Review of *Gorgias: Sophist and Artist*, by Scott Consigny. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 35.3 (2005): 137-141.

Review of *The Confession of Augustine*, by Jean-François Lyotard. *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90.2 (2004): 255-256.

Review of *On Belief*, by Slavoj Žižek. *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 37.1 (2004): 96-99.

## **Grants, Fellowships, Residencies**

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General Research Fund. The University of Kansas. \$2,775. 2009.

New Faculty General Research Fund. The University of Kansas, \$8,000, 2008.

Dissertation Support Grant. The College of the Liberal Arts, The Pennsylvania State University, \$4000, 2006.

Summer Residency. The Institute for the Arts and Humanities, The Pennsylvania State University, \$3000, 2005.

Research Award. The Department of Communication Arts & Sciences. The Pennsylvania State University, \$625, 2004.

Travel Award. Research and Graduate Studies Office at Penn State. \$200, Fall 2005.

Travel Award. Research and Graduate Studies Office at Penn State. \$225, Spring 2005.

Travel Award. Research and Graduate Studies Office at Penn State. \$600, Fall 2004.

Travel Award. Research and Graduate Studies Office at Penn State. \$200, Fall 2003.

## **Honors, Awards**

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“Gerald R. Miller Doctoral Dissertation Award.” *The National Communication Association*, 2007.

Dissertation Award. *The Rhetoric Society of America*, 2007. Awarded for the “best dissertation in the field of rhetorical studies completed by a student member of the society.”

Graduate Student Award for Excellence in Research. Awarded by the College of the Liberal Arts at Penn State for “Burke’s Encounter with Ransom: Rhetoric and Epistemology in ‘Four Master Tropes,’” 2004-2005.

Kenneth Burke Prize in Rhetoric. Awarded by the Departments of English and Communication Arts & Sciences at Penn State for “Beyond Mnemotechnics: Confession and Memory in Augustine,” 2005.

Carroll C. Arnold Award for Academic Excellence. Awarded by the Department of Communication Arts & Sciences, 2004.

Graduate Student Award for Excellence in Research, “Honorable Mention.” Awarded by the College of the Liberal Arts at Penn State for “The Man and the Message: Timothy Dwight and Homiletic Authority,” 2003-2004.

### **Top Paper Awards**

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Top Paper Award. Awarded by the Kenneth Burke Society for “Kenneth Burke and the Politics of Pure Persuasion,” 2007.

Top Paper Panel. Awarded by the American Studies division of NCA for “The ‘Shocking Story’ of Emmett Till and the Politics of Public Confession,” 2006.

Outstanding Student Paper Award. Awarded by the American Society for the History of Rhetoric for “Confessing Rhetoric: Augustine and the Politics of Confession,” 2006.

Top Paper Award. Awarded by the Kenneth Burke Society for “Burke’s Encounter with Ransom: Rhetoric and Epistemology in ‘Four Master Tropes,’” 2004.

Top Paper Panel. Awarded by the Rhetorical and Communication Theory division of NCA for “The Individual and the Nature of Richard M. Weaver’s Rhetorical Theory,” 2003.

### **Conference Presentations (\*competitively selected)**

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\*“James McGreevey and the Modern Public Confession.” National Communication Association, San Diego, 2008.

\*“The Confession of Jimmy Swaggart: Expressivism, Speech, Politics.” National Communication Association, San Diego, 2008.

“The Poverty of Language and *The Social Contract*.” Rhetoric Society of America, Seattle, 2008.

\* “Michel Foucault and the Politics of Public Confession.” National Communication Association, Chicago, 2007.

“Rousseau and the Politics of Simplicity.” National Communication Association, Chicago, 2007.

\* “Kenneth Burke and the Politics of Pure Persuasion.” National Communication Association, Chicago, 2007. Top Paper in the Kenneth Burke Society.

“The Jeremiad, Manifesto, and Confession: A Typology of Protestant Protest.” American Society for the History of Rhetoric, Chicago, 2007. Co-authored with Ned O’Gorman.

\* “The ‘Shocking Story of Emmett Till and the Politics of Public Confession.” National Communication Association, San Antonio, 2006. Top Paper in the American Studies Division.

\* “Confessing Rhetoric: Augustine and the Politics of Confession.” National Communication Association, San Antonio, 2006. Outstanding Student Paper, American Society for the History of Rhetoric.

\* “The ‘Shocking Story of Emmett Till and the Politics of Public Confession.” The Graduate Exhibition at Penn State, March 2006.

\* “The Failure of the Pentad and the Emergence of the Self: Reading Stanton through Burke and Kant.” National Communication Association, Boston, 2005.

\* “How Power Evaded Publicity: The Promise and Peril of the Same-Sex Marriage Debate.” National Communication Association, Boston, 2005.

“The Politics of Confession and the Meaning of America.” Institute for the Arts and Humanities, The Pennsylvania State University, September 2005.

“Stories from the Kenneth Burke Archives.” Penn State Conference on Rhetoric and Composition and the Triennial Conference of the Kenneth Burke Society, 2005.

\* “How Power Evaded Publicity: The Promise and Peril of the Same-Sex Marriage Debate.” Rhetoric Society of America Institute, Kent State University, 2005.

\* “Play as Pataphysics: The Gorgianic Logismos and the Art of Possibility.” Eastern Communication Association, Pittsburgh, 2005

\* “Confession: Augustine’s Memory Beyond Mind.” National Communication Association, Chicago, 2004.

“The Conditions of Political Engagement: Ethical Action for Richard Rorty and Augustine.” National Communication Association, Chicago, 2004.

- \* “Grammar, Rhetoric, and Epistemology in Kenneth Burke’s ‘Four Maser Tropes.’” National Communication Association, Chicago, 2004. Top Student Paper in the Kenneth Burke Society.
- “Grammar, Rhetoric, and Epistemology in Kenneth Burke’s ‘Four Master Tropes.’” Rhetoric Society of America, Memphis, 2004.
- \* “The Man and the Message: Timothy Dwight and Homiletic Authorization.” National Communication Association, Miami, 2003.
- \* “The Individual and the Nature of Richard M. Weaver’s Rhetorical Theory.” National Communication Association, Miami, 2003. Top Paper in Rhetorical and Communication Theory.
- “Richard Rorty, Rhetoric, and the Possibility of Religion.” Rhetoric’s Roadtrips: The Penn State Conference on Rhetoric and Composition, State College, 2003.
- \* “Lyman Beecher’s Strategic Adaptations of Prophetic Rhetoric.” National Communication Association, New Orleans, 2002.
- “The Undoing of John F. Kennedy: An Analysis of the Religious Rhetoric of Joseph Lieberman and John Kennedy.” National Communication Association, Atlanta, 2001.
- \* “Tear Down the Walls: An Inquiry into Technology and Culture.” The Tenth Annual Conference on Communication Ethics, Los Angeles, 1997.

## **Guest Lectures**

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- “Michel Foucault.” Communication Studies 930 (KU), Guest Lecture for Donn Parson, December 2007.
- “Habermas and His Critics.” Communication Arts & Sciences 506 (PSU), Guest lecture for Rosa Eberly, February 2006.
- “Teaching Style in Public Speaking Courses.” Communication Arts & Sciences 602 (PSU), Guest lecture for Christopher L. Johnstone, February 2006.
- “Rhetoric and the Public Sphere: Habermas and Fraser.” Communication Arts & Sciences 201 (PSU), Two Guest lectures for Christopher L. Johnstone, November 2005.
- “Kenneth Burke’s *Permanence and Change*.” English 597A (PSU), Guest lecture for Jack Selzer, September 2005. With Stacey Sheriff and Rosalyn Collings-Eves.
- “Persuasion and Activism.” Communication Arts & Sciences 213 (PSU), Guest lecture for Rosa Eberly. April 2005.

“Richard Rorty, Rhetoric, and Religion in the Public Sphere.” Communication Arts & Sciences 201 (PSU), Two Guest lectures for Stephen H. Browne. December 2004.

“Legal Rhetoric.” Communication Arts & Sciences 201 (PSU), Guest Lecture for Ned O’Gorman. December 2003.

## Teaching Experience

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### Courses taught at The University of Kansas

Summer 2008	COMS 332: The Rhetorical Tradition
Spring 2008	COMS 930: Postmodern Theory and Rhetoric COMS 435: Forms and Styles of American Public Discourse
Fall 2007	COMS 332: The Rhetorical Tradition COMS 435: Forms and Styles of American Public Discourse
Summer 2007	COMS 332: The Rhetorical Tradition

### Courses taught at the University of Maryland

Spring 2007	COMM 401: Interpreting Strategic Discourse COMM 453: The Power of Discourse in American Life
Fall 2006	COMM 460: Public Life in American Communities, 1634-1900 COMM 401: Interpreting Strategic Discourse

### Courses taught at The Pennsylvania State University

CAS 201: Rhetorical Theory  
CAS 100: Effective Speech  
CAS 495: Studies in Public Address, Penn State World Campus (online)  
CAS 100, LEAP Program.  
LEAP is a special topics public speaking course. This course taught speaking and writing together, and was taught in collaboration with the English Department.

## Service

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### Disciplinary Service

Voices of Democracy, Editorial Board Member

Webmaster, American Society for the History of Rhetoric, 2008 -- Present

Steering Committee, American Society for the History of Rhetoric. 2006-2010.

Nominating Committee, Rhetoric & Communication Theory Division of NCA. 2006-2007.

Nominating Committee, Public Address Division of NCA. 2006-2007.

Research Assistant to the Membership Officer for the *Rhetoric Society of America*, 2004-2005.

External reviewer for *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*.

External reviewer for *The Western Journal of Communication*.

Reviewed papers for the Rhetorical & Communication Theory Division, NCA 2007.

Reviewed papers for the American Society for the History of Rhetoric, NCA 2007.

Reviewed papers for the Kenneth Burke Society, NCA 2005.

Panel Organizer and Chair, "Rhetorical Theory and the 'Problem' of Religion in Public Life." Rhetoric Society of America, Memphis, 2006.

Panel Chair, "Kenneth Burke's Circles 3: The 1950s and Beyond." The Penn State Conference on Rhetoric and Composition and the Kenneth Burke Conference, State College, 2005.

Panel Chair, "So Close, So Far: Power and Identification in Transit." The Penn State Conference on Rhetoric and Composition, State College, 2003.

#### Departmental Service

Member, Colloquium Committee, 2008-2009.

Library Committee Chair, 2008-2009.

Organized contemporary theory reading group. Spring 2007, University of Maryland.

Panel member for the department-sponsored colloquium entitled: "Developing your CV and a working relationship with your academic advisor: A panel discussion," September 2005.

Participated in a four-person panel designed to help potential graduate students think about their fit at Penn State, 2005.

Judge for the Penn State Civic Engagement Speaking Contest, 2003-2004

Peer Mentor for Incoming Graduate Students at PSU, 2001-2005

#### Community Service

Provided on-site communication consulting for Woodcraft Industries, Bellefonte, PA, August 2004.

#### **References**

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