

## **Dr. Valerie Lynn Schrader**

**Professor Tenure-Line**

**Communication Arts and Sciences**

**Title of your research project.**

To Express Oneself or to "Talk Less, Smile More?:" Rawlins' Relational Dialectic of Expressiveness and Protectiveness in the Musical Hamilton

**Description of research. Please provide a few sentences that explain the question and the methods employed in this research project.**

In the musical Hamilton, Alexander Hamilton tests many of his relationships while trying to build a legacy. The relationship he strains the most in pursuit of this legacy is his friendship with Aaron Burr. In this rhetorical analysis, we apply Rawlins' relational dialectic of expressiveness and protectiveness to Alexander Hamilton's friendship with Aaron Burr as portrayed in the musical Hamilton. We argue that the tensions caused from the lack of management of the dialectic of expressiveness and protectiveness in Hamilton and Burr's friendship leads to the loss of Hamilton's life and the demonization of Burr as a villain. By seeing how Hamilton and Burr's relationship was strained from their failure to manage the dialectic of expressiveness and protectiveness, audience members can learn how to appropriately trust friends in their lives. We suggest that Hamilton, in this way, provides audience members with what Kenneth Burke describes as "equipment for living," enabling them to learn life lessons about the dialectic of expressiveness and protectiveness that they can apply to their own relationships.

**Did this project include Penn State students as researchers?**

Yes

**If yes to the above question, please state where it was published.**

It published in the Carolinas Communication Annual.

**What problem do you address with your research?**

How theatre-goers can learn about the dialectic of expressiveness and protectiveness through the characters in Hamilton and apply what they learn to their own lives.