Note: Unless otherwise indicated, the readings listed below come from 50 Essays. Readings marked in italics and with an (x) will be provided via Telesis (Files). You should download and print the reading, and bring it to class on the day it is due.

I. Hearing Your Voice: The Writing/Reading “I”

“Strong voice is conversational: the writer leaves us with a sense that we are listening to a skilled raconteur rather than passing our eyes over ink on paper.”

~ Constance Hale

“She opened her mouth and a voice came out that wasn’t a whisper but wasn’t a proper voice either. . . . When it was my turn, the same voice came out, a crippled animal running on broken legs.”

~ Maxine Hong Kingston

Jan 17 Wed Introductions; Lamott, “Polaroids” (x); Kingston, “Tongue Tied” (x)


Jan. 29 Mon Didion, “On Keeping a Notebook”

Essay 1 Due

II. Hearing Others’ Voices: The Cultural “I”

“I was unable to hear my own sounds. . . .”

~Richard Rodriguez

“. . . we all speak in many voices, no one of which is more or less authentic or real.”

~Joseph M. Williams

Jan 31 Wed Baldwin, “Notes of a Native Son”; Liu, “Notes of a Native Speaker”

Feb 5 Mon Rodriguez, “Aria: Memoir of a Bilingual Childhood”

Feb 7 Wed Anzaldua, “How to Tame a Wild Tongue”

Feb 12 Mon Walker – “In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens” (x); Cofer, “The Myth of the Latin Woman.”

Feb 14 Wed In-class Workshop

Essay 2 Draft Due

Feb 19 Mon Kingston, “No Name Woman”

Essay 2 Due

III. Speaking for Others: The Representative “I”

“She speaks for greater numbers than I possibly can.”

~Bharati Mukherjee

“You must not tell anyone . . . what I am about to tell you.”

~ Maxine Hong Kingston

Feb 21 Wed Rodriguez, “The Triad of Alexis De Tocqueville” (x); Mukherjee, “Two Ways to Belong in America”
IV. Adding Your Voice to Cultural Conversations: The Public “I”

“… the common denominator of all we see is always, transparently, shamelessly, the implacable ‘I.’”

“Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity— I am my language. . . . I will have my voice.”

~ Joan Didion  

~ Gloria Anzaldúa

Mar 7 Wed  
Hearne, “What’s Wrong with Animal Rights?”; Singer, “Animal Liberation”

Essay 3 Due

Mar 12 Mon &  
Mar 14 Wed  
Spring Break  
Spring Break

Mar 19 Mon  
Didion, “Sentimental Narratives” (x); Bordo, “Never Just Pictures”

Mar 21 Wed  

Mar 26 Mon  
Coontz, “Blaming the Family for Economic Decline” (x); Kozol, “The Human Cost of an Illiterate Society” (x); Nocton, “Harvest of Gold, Harvest of Shame” (x).

Mar 28 Wed  
Zuckerman, “Rich Man, Poor Man” (x)

Assessment Essay – in class

Apr 2 Mon  
In-class Workshops

Essay 4 Draft Due

V. Adding Your Voice to Disciplinary Discourse: The Professional “I”

“…academic writing is no longer the linguistic equivalent of a black-tie affair.”

“Voice usually gets squeezed out of … prose by the Official Style.”

~ Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein  

~ Richard A. Lanham

Apr 4 Wed  
Packet of materials: Fabes et al., Ballard, Lull, Gorn and Goldberg (x)

Essay 4 Due

Apr 9 Mon  
Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone”

Bring to class: 1 scholarly article from field, 1 paper you wrote for your field

Apr 11 Wed  
Williams – “And We Are Not Married” (x)

Apr 16 Mon  
Allen, “The Rhetorical Situation of the Scientific Paper and the ‘Appearance’ of Objectivity” (x)

Apr 18 Wed  
Mini-Workshop: Part I (draft)

Bring to class: all of the essays you’ve written so far this semester, including end-comment sheets. (If you’ve written revisions, bring those, too.)
VI. Seeing Your Voice: The Reading / Writing “I”

“Writing is a social act, even though it feels in the doing like a private one.”
~Dona Hickey

“The truth of your experience can only come through in your own voice.”
~Ann Lamott

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Apr 25 Wed  Workshop: Part III (draft)
Conclusions, Connections, and Contemplations

May 2 Wed  Essay 5 and Final Meta-Commentary Due
(Essays should be put in my mailbox, in Duncker Hall, no later than noon.)