



Center for Social Media

Nurturing Tomorrow's Doc Storytellers

**American University
Washington, DC
September 17-18, 2006**

Centerforsocialmedia.org

Centerforsocialmedia.wikispaces.com

*Funded by the Ford Foundation
and the Rockefeller Foundation*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At “**Nurturing Tomorrow’s Doc Storytellers,**” a convening of teachers and mentors of documentary film practice held on September 17-18, participants discussed the opportunities provided by changing business and technological practice to teach next generations of documentary filmmakers.

Social documentary is a vibrant zone of today’s public media, contributing to public knowledge and action. Films such as *Fahrenheit 9/11*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, and *ENRON: The Smartest Guys in the Room* have all played powerful roles in engaging publics. Projects such as the nationwide StoryCorps project featured on public radio and the Murmur Project in Toronto demonstrate the emerging strength of participatory media. As the opportunities to make social documentary expand, so do the opportunities and challenges that teachers and mentors of the practice face. In this meeting, participants identified key challenges, leading opportunities and potential areas of action and coordination. The greatest opportunities of the moment, participants concluded, lie in more information-sharing that can socialize knowledge being generated in many programs across the country.

CHALLENGES

What are today's challenges for those cultivating the next generation of public media makers? Participants identified them in the following areas:

Ethics of participatory culture

- What are the appropriate standards for documentary ethics?
- Do film students need codes of practice like some journalists have?
- How do participatory practices affect the teaching of ethics?
- Who gets to make work? How can minority voices be heard?

Distribution

- What are new digital-platform opportunities? What is their significance?
- Is there too much "white noise" now that everyone can distribute on YouTube?
- How can students' work get out there and seen by people who can employ them?
- How can work get out and really make a difference?

Aesthetics of new technologies and business

- As docs get ever more popular, will they become commercialized and formulaic?
- Will business demands make doc soulless?
- Is reality TV poisoning the doc?
- Where is the line between journalism, doc and filmmaking now?
- Can socially relevant work also be aesthetically challenging?

Rights

- How can we get more access to existing copyrighted material?
- Can I teach my students to employ fair use without putting them at risk?
- How can we get reliable, easy to understand information on rights?

Making a difference

- How can students be encouraged to be thoughtful about and address social issues?
- How can film students learn from/work with social scientists to deepen their understanding and the meaningfulness of their work?
- How can social scientists be trained to make and use documentary film?
- How can documentary topics be encouraged that address core public issues?
- How can documentary teaching reach the disadvantaged?

Collaboration

- How can nonprofits work productively with industry to benefit from new technologies?
- How can universities work well with community organizations and nonprofits?
- How can professionals and academics work cross-disciplinarily?
- How can we facilitate more global conversations?

Classroom practice

- How do we structure classes to incorporate new technologies when it all changes so fast?

How can we teach quality without devolving into pure technique?
What do doc students need to know about, say, journalistic standards? About social science research? About media policy?
What kind of training lets them both find jobs and get social documentary out into the world productively?
How can film programs incorporate both intellectual and technical education?

DISCUSSION

The group shared their various responses to these challenges in three areas: curriculum and classroom practice, rights, and ethics.

Curricula and classrooms

Programs range from the traditional to the experimental. In programs such as Jon Else's at University of California Berkeley and June Cross' at Columbia University, longform documentary—with a strong journalistic emphasis—continues to take pride of place. At the North Carolina School of Filmmaking, documentary is beginning to develop in a school traditionally focused on fiction. At University of Southern California and other places, documentary and fiction training are deliberating intertwined in the hopes of a fruitful interchange.

In other places, new combinations are being tried going beyond the field of communications. Some schools are developing cross-disciplinary programs. For instance, Montana State University offers a graduate program in Science and Natural History Filmmaking, which has been markedly successful. the University of California at Santa Cruz has opened a new Social Documentation graduate program in the Community Studies department. This program draws from sociology, anthropology, political science, photography and film. American University's School of Communication is developing a joint Masters of Arts with the School of International Service on campus, for students concerned with creating media on international affairs subjects. The North Carolina School of the Arts is collaborating with Wake Forest University to offer a combined MBA/MFA in Entertainment Entrepreneurship.

Academic programs increasingly are building and formalizing relationships with community and non-profit organizations that need media, and with media arts organizations in the community. Tom Rankin of Duke University uses special topic classes to link 10 film students to 10 community members who have ideas for documentaries, but who lack the technical film background. UCSC is developing a relationship with the Vietnamese Youth Development Center's Digital Media Lab, and may be able to offer post-Masters fellowships for recent graduates who want to work at a media arts center. Charlene Gilbert's Documentary and Social Change class at American University works with community organizations on a topic throughout the semester. Students in the University of San Francisco Department of Media Studies' Advanced Class work directly with social change or social service organizations. Such classroom-based collaborations are increasingly common.

The emerging, participatory universe of documentary is recognized in Bay Area Video Coalition's Onethel.org, a project of its Bay Unity Music Project. The site aggregates curriculum, guest practices, resources, tools and application for hip-hop makers.

The need for students to learn both production skills and context can also be addressed with partnerships. At the University of Southern California, Doe Mayer and Michael Renov jointly teach a Media and Social Change class. Mayer, coming from a production perspective, and Renov, coming from a theoretical perspective, engage in dialog and argument that both models productive collaboration and generates discussion.

Many programs have created centers in order to address both new interest in this area and cross-disciplinary approaches. The Center for Social Media at American University, which hosts a range of activities around the creation of media for public knowledge and action, is one example; so are the new Center for Environmental Media at the University of North Texas at Arlington and the Documentary Institute at the University of Florida in Gainesville. University of Texas at Austin is launching a Documentary Center focused on production and drawing on journalism programs. These centers permit sponsorship of special events and visitors as well as certificate programs, exhibitions, production and special training. The Finger Lakes Environmental Film Festival at Ithaca College, combining expertise from political science, environmental studies and cinema studies. These centers and activities join the ranks of longstanding centers such as Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies and Harvard's Film Study Center and Media Anthropology Lab.

Intern and mentor programs are also crucial to helping students (both current and newly graduated) find opportunities for employment and to make connections with those in other disciplines. As Elizabeth Barret explained, Appalshop offers such programs to youth in Appalachian communities. At the same time, community-based media organizations often find that their needs and those of academic programs do not necessarily fit well. Katy Chevigny at Arts Engine finds that students expect to be making documentaries when a substantial portion of the work at Arts Engine has to do with arts administration. Spencer Nakasako at the Vietnamese Youth Development Center's Digital Media Lab finds that his students need hands-on training with a mentor who can solve practical problems with them on the spot. Louis Massiah, founder of Scribe Video, finds that it is important to keep the focus on the mission of the media arts organization, and that some academic partnerships can be distracting.

Both academic and non-academic programs increasingly act as de-facto publishers and distributors of student work, often in partnership. For instance, Arts Engine annually offers the Media that Matters Film Festival, showcasing young people's work on social themes, which is streamed online. The University of Texas at Austin creates a short-films reel for its students annually, as does Temple University. Montana State podcasts its students' work through TERRA, on a Montana PBS website. (The site receives 15,000 podcast hits a month.) Bay Area Video Coalition co-produces series with KQED, the San Francisco public TV station.

Rights

As social documentary practices proliferate, issues of rights management loom. The length of copyright has been extended again, putting most audio-visual material made after 1923 effectively in copyright forever. At the same time, much material is more available technically than ever before, in digital form and often circulating on the Internet. Therefore, both teachers and students are grappling with how to educate students on copyright use.

One recent bright light has been the creation of a Documentary Filmmakers' Statement of Best Practices in Fair Use (centerforsocialmedia.org/fairuse), which both clarifies for documentarians what is permissible to use without permission or payment and enables them to do so with safety. This statement, created with the coordination of the Center for Social Media, has been embraced by the University Film and Video Association (UFVA), which has also formed a working group to expand teaching practices about fair use. The UFVA is also building a web page for its members on fair use.

Many students are also confused between trademark and copyright. The Center for Social Media has prepared materials, particularly the "Yes You Can!" document, clarifying what students do not need to clear, but many students and professors still need to get this information.

Another arena of rights management work is in the so-called "copyleft" movement, in the use of Creative Commons licenses. These licenses, usually for nonprofit use, permit copyright holders to easily identify their work as borrow-able for non-profit uses. This can often be useful to students who restrict their work to nonprofit uses. The Creative Commons licenses are also used in some business environments; for instance, Magnatunes, a music company featuring many independent musicians, uses Creative Commons licenses.

In the past, university libraries have been a great help to teachers of documentary. In this area as well, teachers are reaching out to their librarians to get their assistance in promoting the knowledge of fair use.

Documentary teachers are also important creators and guardians of media archives. If archives are accepted without broad rights to screen, they can become albatrosses. Teachers can, as Patty Zimmermann disclosed, make sure that new materials are collected with public performance rights, which enable them to be shown beyond the classroom. Although this can be more expensive, teachers are in a good position to show librarians why the investment is important.

In some cases, particularly in the case of work of indigenous, or "fourth world" media producers, or in ethnographic film work, as Faye Ginsburg noted, special cultural rights may be involved. Some organizations, particularly the Center for Media, Culture and

History at New York University, are collecting best practices guides in cross-cultural work.

Ethics and impact

As documentary opportunities expand, teachers have a continued and heightened awareness of the importance of teaching ethics. At North Carolina School of the Arts, Dale Pollock teaches a film ethics class, and many production classes interweave ethics into the teaching of production. Many teachers have units on ethics, and ethics exercises in their classes.

At the same time, teachers find that ethical issues are extremely context-dependent and inadequately discussed. Consider, for instance, the filmmaker's relationship with the subject. The appropriate relationship may vary depending on the ethical practices of journalists (never pay), those of vérité filmmakers (you may be involved in the life of your subject), and anthropologists, who may need to be sensitive to cross-cultural issues. (Ethical relationships between filmmakers and their subjects is at the heart of NYU's Program in Culture and Media, which is grounded in the discipline of anthropology.)

Teachers may believe strongly that one must not lie to subjects, but also believe that some topics are so important that they may justify lying to obtain access. Teachers imagine many different tools that might synthesize knowledge. Documentarians with a journalistic background and orientation, such as Jon Else, note that codes of ethics work well in other professions such as journalism. Some teachers however believe that codes of practice may need to be targeted to sub-genres of documentary given the dispersion of practice. Larry Kirkman of American University suggests that perhaps a list of key questions for filmmakers would be useful. Melinda Levin of the University of North Texas imagines a primer providing a basic briefing on ethical issues. Marty Lucas of Hunter College would like pedagogical material. A common thread throughout the different proposals is the need for greater information-sharing on ethical issues and practices.

There is a lot of information to share as well. For instance, Dale Pollock's students all generate examples of a code of practice in ethics for the Film Ethics class. Faye Ginsburg is collecting protocols for relationships with indigenous subjects. Others have developed teaching modules.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The group identified knowledge-sharing as the top priority to build collaboration and to develop new tools to nurture the next generation of makers of public media. Participants suggested the following areas:

- teaching techniques on ethics;
- filmmakers' stories of ethical challenges and solutions;

- syllabi;
- lists of and share links to organizations that provide good internship opportunities for social documentarians;
- information on visiting artists and scholars, for possible joint programming;
- information on approaches to financing.

The group also identified areas of research to encourage, in order to deepen understanding:

- more briefing documents on rights, particularly on trademark to illuminate differences between trademark and copyright;
- new distribution systems and their implications;
- case studies of successful collaboration and cross-disciplinary projects.

Third, the group believed that working with and through existing organizations offered many opportunities. For instance, at professional meetings such as UFVA and the Society for Cinema and Media Studies and at film festivals and other events at which teachers and mentors of social documentarians gather, teachers and mentors can propose and participate in panels and discussions concerning opportunities to promote documentary as a vehicle for public knowledge and action. Schools can establish well-defined internship opportunities that provide mutual benefit. Members of UFVA can participate in its working group on teaching fair use.

Finally, participants believed that the group forms a solid nucleus of a network of people who share common values in education, and that it will be useful to maintain communication and expand the network. Many participants hope to reconvene at some later point.

NEXT STEPS

The Center for Social Media will develop a web-based platform linked to its website, to share information and alerts, host discussion, and to share documents. This site, which is open to anyone, will first be populated by the participants in this convening's discussion. The participants will also be inviting students, colleagues and allies to join in enriching the site as well.

Participants in the group pledged to contribute both to building the network to nurture new social documentary practices and to continue the discussion within their own networks and organizations.

Participants

Barbara Abrash

New York University

Barbara is the director of public programs at the Center for Media, Culture and History and the Center for Religion and Media at New York University. She and Faye Ginsberg run the Center for Media, Culture and History, based in the Anthropology dept at NYU. All of these programs are concerned with the teaching, making and circulation of documentary film. among other things.

Here is a statement about the Culture and Media Program

(<http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/anthro/programs/cultmedia>):

This graduate program integrates production with theory and research. Training in this program will enable students to pursue the following:

- Production work in 16mm film and state-of-the-art digital video based on their own research;
- Ethnographic research into the uses and meanings of media in a range of communities and cultures. Students from the program have been doing PhD research on the development of media in diverse settings, from the emergence of media in Papua New Guinea, to circulation of religious media in Northern Nigeria, to the use of media in linking the Tibetan Diaspora;
- Teaching the history, theory, and production of ethnographic documentary and related issues in cinema and media studies;

The program's philosophy takes a broad approach to the relationships between culture and media in a number of domains including: ethnographic film's significance for the fields of anthropology and cinema/media studies; problems in representation of cultures through media; the development of media in indigenous, Diaspora, and non-Western communities; the emerging social and cultural formations shaped by new media practices; and the political economy shaping the production, distribution and consumption of media worldwide.

The **Center for Media, Culture and History** (<http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/media>) a collaborative project, drawing on faculty from the [Africana Studies](#) Program and the Departments of [Anthropology](#), [Cinema Studies](#), [Comparative Literature](#), [History](#), and [Religious Studies](#). We address issues of representation, social change, and identity construction embedded in the development of film, television, video and new media worldwide. Our focus on the role that these media play in shaping our perceptions of history and culture; in forging individual, collective, national, and transnational identities; and in mediating the direction and character of social change.

The Center for Religion and Media at New York University

(<http://www.nyu.edu/fas/center/religionandmedia>) is one of ten [Centers of Excellence](#) funded by [The Pew Charitable Trusts](#), as part of an effort to stimulate innovative research and teaching in the interdisciplinary study of religion. The Center's goal is to develop and broaden interdisciplinary and cross-cultural scholarship, pedagogy, and public knowledge

of religion and media at New York University. While this project was conceived before September 11, that event and its aftermath have dramatized the need for understanding the spread of religious ideas and practices through a variety of media.

All three of these programs are centrally concerned with the social uses of media. Together, they engage in a range of activities including production, research and publications, and public programming, as well as hosting scholars in residence from around the world. Recent innovations include websites for research and teaching such as Modiya (<http://modiya.nyu.edu>).

Patricia Aufderheide

American University

The Center for Social Media showcases and analyzes strategies to use media as creative tools for public knowledge and action. It focuses on social documentaries for civil society and democracy, and on the public media environment that supports them. The Center is part of the School of Communication at American University.

Elizabeth Barrett

Appalshop

Appalshop's mission is to enlist the power of education, media, theater, music, and other arts: to document, disseminate, and revitalize the lasting traditions and contemporary creativity of Appalachia; to tell stories the commercial cultural industries don't tell, challenging stereotypes with Appalachian voices and visions; to support communities' efforts to achieve justice and equity and solve their own problems in their own ways; to celebrate cultural diversity as a positive social value; and to participate in regional, national, and global dialogue toward these ends.

Located in the coalfield town of Whitesburg, Kentucky (pop. 1,200), Appalshop had its beginnings as a federal War on Poverty effort to introduce media training programs in areas of high youth unemployment. Appalshop's most significant accomplishment is that it has survived and grown for 36 years in a place where one out of three people live below the federal poverty line, where the literacy rate hovers at 50%, where more than half the public school students are considered economically deprived, and where over-reliance on extractive industries has resulted in chronically high unemployment, a lack of diversity in the job market, and a political culture susceptible to corruption.

As a media arts organization, Appalshop's recent activities and accomplishments within film/video/audio production, training, distribution, & preservation include:

Production: Presently 12 documentaries are in various stages of production with topics ranging from portraits of a traditional musician, a civil rights activist, and a local politician to a look at the impact of globalization in the region, the true costs of coalmining and energy production in the upland South, and the role of a small weekly newspaper in providing a journalistic conscience in speaking for the citizens of the mountains. Based on the video and radio work of the "Holler to the Hood" (H2H) project, Appalshop received support from Artography: Arts In A Changing America, a

pilot grant and documentation program incubated with the support of the Ford Foundation, to extend that work through **Thousand Kites**, a community-based performance, web, and radio project centered on the US prison system and created with inmates, correctional officers, and families of both. <http://www.thousandkites.org/>
WMMT-FM, Appalshop's public community radio station, celebrated its 20th year of broadcasting to eastern Kentucky, parts of central Appalachia, and across the globe via the internet. Approximately 95% of the musical and public affairs programming offered by this CPB-qualified station is provided by 60+ volunteers and 5 staff members. WMMT broadcasts at 88.7FM, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 15,000 watts and via webcasts. <http://www.appalshop.org/wmmt>

Karla Berry

University Film and Video Association

Founded in 1947, the UFVA has developed into an organization of professionals and institutions involved in the production, research, and education of film, video, and newer media arts. UFVA members are image-makers and artists, teachers and students, archivists and distributors, college departments, libraries, and manufacturers. The UFVA publishes The Journal of Film and Video and UFVA Monographs. We promote communication within an international community of media educators through our web site, listserv, and monthly electronic newsletter.

The organization:

www.ufva.org

Mobile media workshop:

<http://www.nmi.uga.edu/mmworkshop/>

Katy Chevigny

Arts Engine

Arts Engine expands the reach and impact of independent social issue media. We do this through the execution and promotion of the following programs:

MediaRights.org

www.mediarights.org

With over 2 million annual visits, MediaRights.org helps media makers, educators, librarians, non-profits, and activists use documentaries and shorts to encourage action and inspire dialogue on contemporary social issues.

Media That Matters Film Festival

www.mediathatmattersfest.org

The Media That Matters Film Festival brings high-impact shorts and Take Action tools to audiences around the country all year long through distribution of a DVD with all sixteen films, web streaming, broadcasts and community screenings.

Big Mouth Films

Big Mouth Films produces award-winning, social issue documentaries independently and in collaboration with numerous companies and organizations. Big Mouth Films has produced seven feature-length documentaries, including “Deadline”, which won the Thurgood Marshall Journalism Award.

YMDi.org

www.ymdi.org

The Youth Media Distribution Initiative (YMDi) is a comprehensive series of online and offline programs that boost the distribution and impact of youth-made films.

Fiscal Sponsorship

Arts Engine serves as a fiscal sponsor for independent filmmakers who are applying for funding from organizations that require a non-profit status.

Intern/Mentor Program

Arts Engine has maintained an intern/mentor program since its inception, training over 50 young people in the art of social issue media making.

Arts Engine supports, produces, and distributes independent media of consequence and promotes the use of independent media by advocates, educators and the general public. By fostering the production and use of independent film, video and new media, Arts Engine connects media makers and active audiences in order to spur critical consideration of pressing social issues.

The governing philosophy of Arts Engine is that the work of independent media makers is crucial to the enrichment of society and culture. With the growing consolidation of media worldwide, independent media makers face daunting obstacles in their efforts to introduce new perspectives into public debate. Advocates, educators and the public have limited access to media that illustrates a variety of points of view. In order to support the presence of diverse perspectives in our society, Arts Engine is dedicated to forging vital links between media makers and the public, and to realizing independent media’s potential for broad social impact.

June Cross

Columbia University

In the lobby of The School of Journalism students pass the words of the school’s founder, Joseph Pulitzer: high-sounding words, which in practice in many classrooms translates to a simpler slogan: “comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.” I have always had a bit of a problem with the phrase “social documentary” as if all documentaries don’t explore the social contract. Even documentaries which unabashedly take a point of view can acknowledge that there is another side to the story. I fear we let storytellers off the hook when we say that if they present a “social” documentary they don’t have to make a good faith effort to present all sides. One-sided is one-sided, whether it’s Fox or PBS.

Students come to Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism because they want to make a difference, and they want to do so in the country's elite newsrooms. The school focuses on the core competencies of reporting, research, writing, and storytelling. We stress grassroots reporting and old-fashioned legwork – including the exploration of public records; encourage skepticism, emphasize the importance of verifying conflicting accounts and documenting facts whenever possible. We drum into our students the necessity for context – understanding statistics, non-journalistic narratives, history – stress the importance of culture and how political relationships affect current policy. We seek to train reporters who eschew bias while embracing a point of view that is fair and gives voice to as many sides of the story as they have room for. We want them to be trained to analyze and interpret the mass of information audiences are bombarded with daily in as credible a manner as possible.

In the current media market, where newsrooms themselves face an identity crisis as the market undergoes a sea change characterized by 24-hour news, niche reporting, personalized “edgy” journalism, infomercials and pre-packaged news, the time available to do the kind of reporting we expect from our students has shrunk – concomitantly, so have the resources available from news organizations. On the other hand we have a burgeoning – if non-paying- market on the internet. Yet I think society needs these trained reporters now more than ever as the public attempts to parse out conflicting bits of information. Those students who want to do documentary reportage at the school are trained to work as freelancers. We want them to be multi-lingual – capable of producing long-form reportage not only in video or film but as radio/still photo stories and in a form of English recognizable to the mass market.

Jon Else

University of California at Berkeley

The University of California Graduate School of Journalism trains professional journalists in broadcast (including documentary), print, photojournalism, and new media. The two year Master of Journalism program provides intensive training in the practical skills, traditions, principles, and ethical foundations of the field. The documentary program within the school aims to fully prepare young film makers for careers making highly innovative, engaging, and significant non-fiction films for the widest possible mass audience on all platforms. Course emphasis is almost entirely on production.

Charlene Gilbert

American University

American University offers graduate programs that include MA in Film and Video, an MFA in Film and Electronic Media, and an MA in Communication: Producing for Film and Video. American University has one of the largest and liveliest documentary film programs in the world. Graduate students can tailor their programs to suit their interests and experience and also can elect to study at the Prague Film Academy as part of their degree requirements. The hands-on programs prepare students for a wide range of production, management and script writing opportunities throughout the media industry.

Faculty include Emmy, Oscar and Sundance award winners. Their knowledge and state-of-the-art technology are available to everyone in the SOC community, including first-semester first-year students.

Faye Ginsburg

New York University

Faye is the director of the graduate program in Culture and Media in the Anthropology dept at New York University. She co-directs the Center for Religion and Media, a project of the Center for Media, Culture and History and Religious Studies program at NYU. Faye and I together run the Center for Media, Culture and History, based in the Anthropology dept at NYU. All of these programs are concerned with the teaching, making and circulation of documentary film. among other things.

Here is a statement about the Culture and Media Program (<http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/anthro/programs/cultmedia>):

This graduate program integrates production with theory and research. Training in this program will enable students to pursue the following:

- Production work in 16mm film and state-of-the-art digital video based on their own research;
- Ethnographic research into the uses and meanings of media in a range of communities and cultures. Students from the program have been doing PhD research on the development of media in diverse settings, from the emergence of media in Papua New Guinea, to circulation of religious media in Northern Nigeria, to the use of media in linking the Tibetan Diaspora;
- Teaching the history, theory, and production of ethnographic documentary and related issues in cinema and media studies;

The program's philosophy takes a broad approach to the relationships between culture and media in a number of domains including: ethnographic film's significance for the fields of anthropology and cinema/media studies; problems in representation of cultures through media; the development of media in indigenous, Diaspora, and non-Western communities; the emerging social and cultural formations shaped by new media practices; and the political economy shaping the production, distribution and consumption of media worldwide.

The **Center for Media, Culture and History** (<http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/media>) a collaborative project, drawing on faculty from the [Africana Studies](#) Program and the Departments of [Anthropology](#), [Cinema Studies](#), [Comparative Literature](#), [History](#), and [Religious Studies](#). We address issues of representation, social change, and identity construction embedded in the development of film, television, video and new media worldwide. Our focus on the role that these media play in shaping our perceptions of history and culture; in forging individual, collective, national, and transnational identities; and in mediating the direction and character of social change.

The Center for Religion and Media at New York University (<http://www.nyu.edu/fas/center/religionandmedia>) is one of ten [Centers of Excellence](#)

funded by [The Pew Charitable Trusts](#), as part of an effort to stimulate innovative research and teaching in the interdisciplinary study of religion. The Center's goal is to develop and broaden interdisciplinary and cross-cultural scholarship, pedagogy, and public knowledge of religion and media at New York University. While this project was conceived before September 11, that event and its aftermath have dramatized the need for understanding the spread of religious ideas and practices through a variety of media.

All three of these programs are centrally concerned with the social uses of media. Together, they engage in a range of activities including production, research and publications, and public programming, as well as hosting scholars in residence from around the world. Recent innovations include websites for research and teaching such as Modiya (<http://modiya.nyu.edu>).

Dorothy Kidd

Department of Media Studies at the University of San Francisco

One of the primary focuses of our video production program is the production of social documentaries. Students are encouraged to document some of the social issues important to them. One innovation is that students in the Advanced Class work with social change or social service organizations to produce a documentary, which gives them production skills and the experience of working with a community-based organization.

Another innovation is that our program draws on adjunct faculty from the San Francisco Bay area, several of whom work in social documentary. They bring their skills and commitment to the courses and to the wider university community. We also offer a senior seminar on "The Documentary." Initiated in 1998 by Laura Stein, it presents the history and development of the documentary, and is being taught this semester by social documentarian Sam Green.

Larry Kirkman

American University

American University offers graduate programs that include MA in Film and Video, an MFA in Film and Electronic Media, and an MA in Communication: Producing for Film and Video. American University has one of the largest and liveliest documentary film programs in the world. Graduate students can tailor their programs to suit their interests and experience and also can elect to study at the Prague Film Academy as part of their degree requirements. The hands-on programs prepare students for a wide range of production, management and script writing opportunities throughout the media industry.

Faculty include Emmy, Oscar and Sundance award winners. Their knowledge and state-of-the-art technology are available to everyone in the SOC community, including first-semester first-year students.

Melinda Levin

University of North Texas

The Department of Radio, Television and Film at the University of North Texas offers a 3-year, terminal Master of Fine Arts degree in documentary filmmaking. While students

come from a variety of regions of the United States and a number of other countries (most recently Kenya, Turkey, Lebanon, Korea, Mexico, United Arab Emirates and China) and have wide-ranging interests, the program is designed to encourage production excellence and an ethically informed approach to documentary media. Due to our geographical location and various areas of expertise within the institution, the program is situated to address issues related to Southwestern culture and border issues, environmental issues, environmental terrorism related to the military and American politics as it relates to the Middle East, among other issues. The RTVF Department boasts 1,200 undergraduate majors and pre-majors, and houses the Center for Spanish Language Media and the new Center for Environmental Media.

Wendy Levy

BAVC

BAVC is a model nonprofit whose mission is to level the playing field for independent media producers through access to technology, training, and services. We offer certified, subsidized training in Apple, Adobe, Autodesk, Avid, and Digidesign platforms, as well as craft-based video, web, and audio production classes taught by industry professionals. Private, state and city partnerships enable us to offer large percentage of this training at no cost to participants, and it is our close, working ties to industry that differentiates us in the nonprofit community. We offer fiscal sponsorship and in-kind postproduction grants (including online/color correction, PBS tech evals, digital audio mixing, captioning, dvd services) to documentary producers. We co-produce the SPARK! and TRULY CALIFORNIA series on KQED, offer subsidized postproduction services for ITVS series' Independent Lens and True Stories. We run nationally-recognized youth media training programs in audio, video, web and game design, serving over 500 low income participants per week in nine yearlong, school-based and onsite programs that stress economic empowerment and social entrepreneurship. We have a state-of-the-art video and audio preservation facility, serving national collections from Museum of Modern Art, the Smithsonian, the Kitchen, Georges Pompidou Centre, Stanford University, and many others. Our combined constituencies make BAVC a truly intergenerational learning space with growing opportunities for mentorship across generations. We are partnered with organizations and institutions like UthTV, Current TV, Frameline, MOMA, Podshow.com, Arts Engine, Stanford, Arizona State, SF State University, and many others, on a diverse set of exciting new projects, including:

NEW MEDIA

Supporting new pathways and modes of distribution for independent producers

Producers Institute for Multi-Platform Project Development

Pending funding from CPB, this three-week residency program for 8 independent producers (or production teams) will bring mid-career media artists and public television stations into a creative incubator for new cross-platform projects. The workshop will match documentary producers from television and film with design and technology experts and an array of programming initiators in an immersive creative environment to adapt new and existing projects to digital creation and distribution. The Workshop will directly support the creation of creative content for emerging and cross digital media

platforms, and reflects an important new direction for BAVC as a complete professional development partner.

YOUTH

Next Generation programs that explore the role of youth in driving change in the media marketplace

Onthe1.org: a project of BAVC's Bay Unity Music Project (BUMP)

Onthe1 seeks to place youth at the center of the changing media landscape to engage and recognize them as producers and innovators and not merely consumers of media. This website will aggregate curriculum, best practices, resources, tools and applications to create a space that is currently absent: a collective and intentional site for the hip-hop community to co-exist and learn from one another. Onthe1 is focused on arts education, literacy, youth development and the transformative nature of music production and performance; the space in which technology, hip-hop, learning and product are combined and wielded by innovative youth.

True2Life: This single-day event (October 14, 2006 in San Francisco) with the support of the San Francisco Mayor's office, includes a day of youth-driven panels and music events to focus on the theme of *Everyday Activities and Youth Changing the World*. Some highlights:

- **MIX AND MASH/The Future of Music:** Members of a famous, yet-to-be-announced hip-hop band will play and record a short piece in front of an audience that then will be captured on the fly and "re-mixed" by key folks in the audience, including some very talented youth engineers. Industry partner, DigiDesign, has agreed to stage 20 Pro Tools workstations to accomplish this. Following, there will be a panel discussion about technology's impact on music and the music business.
- **SHAKE UP IN CYBERSPACE:** This panel is about non-traditional forms of cyber communication and pop culture—specifically, blogging and networking--and how youth are changing the world through free speech experiments, micro-commerce practices and developing politics. The discussion would move beyond youth voice and expression to engage policy, security, economic development and communities online.
- **JOHN LENNON IMAGINE TOUR BUS:** will be open to the public all day, filled with recording equipment, and musician/trainers.

PRESERVATION

the only professionally equipped nonprofit preservation center in the nation

The Marlon Riggs Project: in collaboration with Vivian Kleiman, Frameline and Signifyin' Works, BAVC will oversee the preservation of the Marlon Riggs collection, including *Tongues Untied*, *Color Adjustment*, and *Ethnic Notions*. We hope to develop community-based projects that bring young people into active engagement with these works.

Dance Preservation Initiative: beginning with lead partners Merce Cunningham and Twyla Tharp, the BAVC Preservation Center will be developing a funding-and-access model for dance companies to clean, preserve, re-master, encode and stream their video assets, protecting a national legacy currently at risk. Using web 2.0 technologies, we will also provide technical consulting to enable and empower the artists to share and distribute their media widely.

<http://www.bavc.org/media/preservation/index.htm>

EDUCATION

Intensive training taught by industry professionals using the latest in new media technologies

Accreditation: in collaboration with San Francisco State University and City College of San Francisco, all BAVC classes were recently approved for academic credit, offering our trainees the ability to complete an associates or bachelors degree while receiving high-level vocational training at BAVC.

www.bavc.org/classes

Marty Lucas

City University of New York

Hunter College is one of the top schools of the City University of New York, and one of several that offers degrees in media production. Our department of Film and Media Studies has a major focus on teaching documentary production. Faculty includes noted documentarians Tami Gold and Kelly Anderson. Recently we have included a graduate Integrated Media Arts Program which combines documentary with new media production.

Louis Massiah

American University

American University offers graduate programs that include MA in Film and Video, an MFA in Film and Electronic Media, and an MA in Communication: Producing for Film and Video. American University has one of the largest and liveliest documentary film programs in the world. Graduate students can tailor their programs to suit their interests and experience and also can elect to study at the Prague Film Academy as part of their degree requirements. The hands-on programs prepare students for a wide range of production, management and script writing opportunities throughout the media industry.

Faculty include Emmy, Oscar and Sundance award winners. Their knowledge and state-of-the-art technology are available to everyone in the SOC community, including first-semester first-year students.

Doe Mayer

USC School of Cinema Television

There are few courses at USC that are designed specifically to explore social media. One that does is “Media and Social Change,” offered jointly by the Production and Critical Studies divisions. Open primarily to grad students in both programs, the course provides

an intellectual and critical framework while encouraging students to go into the USC neighborhood and the wider Los Angeles community to develop and produce appropriate media. Final projects are often collaborative, both among the students themselves, and with the community.

http://www.centerforsocialmedia.org/resources/syllabi/media_and_social_change_ctcs_585/

Other courses that would be of particular interest to the conference include graduate and undergraduate courses in guerilla TV, and independent video production. All of the above courses are offered intermittently, at most once a year, and therefore have developed limited word of mouth. Two of our adjunct production faculty, Allen Rucker and Wendy Apple, early members of the guerilla production group TVTV, teach the guerilla TV course.

Courses offered consistently, (every year or semester) include documentary research and production in the graduate Production program, documentary theory and history, taught in Critical Studies, and writing the documentary, a required course for undergraduate writers in the Writing division. These courses are well regarded by the students who take them, and have helped develop USC's reputation at an excellent place to study and make nonfiction.

Spencer Nakasako

Vietnamese Youth Development Center Digital Media Lab

Started in 1989 as part of an inner-city summer arts program for children of Southeast Asian refugees, the Vietnamese Youth Development Center's (VYDC) Digital Media Lab has been both a training center and social hub for several "generations" of immigrant youth in San Francisco's Tenderloin neighborhood, from those arriving from distant homelands in Southeast Asia to their American-born younger siblings and, with the passage of time, their own children. Over the past 15-plus-years, the Lab has distinguished itself in several important ways:

- As a youth media center created and operated as an integral part of a neighborhood-based social service agency;
- As an artist-in-residence program that demonstrates the power of visual storytelling to record and transform the experience of being a new American; and
- As a nonprofit production company that has produced and distributed numerous award-winning videos that have been screened worldwide.

Cara Pilson

University of Florida

The Documentary Institute is housed within the College of Journalism and Communications at the University of Florida. In addition to producing documentaries, my three colleagues and I offer a two-year graduate program in documentary production. The curriculum consists of courses in writing, production, and research as well as documentary history, ethics and business, i.e. grant writing, distribution, etc. Likewise,

we believe it is vital that our students be exposed to a wide variety of filmmaking styles and philosophies. To that end, we bring two to three visiting filmmakers to campus each year to conduct workshops. Our students have also gained experience through internships at independent production houses such as Maysles Films, Cabin Creek and Big Mouth as well as networks such as Discovery, National Geographic, and PBS entities WGBH and Independent Lens. While social documentary is not an exclusive focus of our curriculum, it is certainly an aspect of documentary making that is explored and encouraged throughout the program. Over the years, our students have produced historical, public affairs and observational documentaries on topics ranging from the role chimps played in the race to space to the environmental and societal impact of America's obsession with lawns. I'm happy to say that although our program is relatively young, the work of our students is already being well received. Several of our student films have made the official selection lists at a wide variety of festivals. In addition, they have received Best Documentary awards at Hot Springs, Urban World, Palm Beach, Black Maria and the Angelus Awards in both student and non-student categories. You can learn more about our program <http://www.jou.ufl.edu/documentary>

Dale Pollock

North Carolina School of the Arts, Filmmaking

The North Carolina School of the Arts School of Filmmaking is one of the premier film conservatory training programs in the United States, and is generally ranked among the top 10 undergraduate film programs in the country. We teach primarily narrative storytelling, with a heavy emphasis on fictional storytelling. We are now encouraging our students to engage in non-fiction narrative work, and for the first time in the 13-year history of our school, we have two documentary Senior Thesis projects shooting this fall on digital video. Our students also shoot on super 16mm and output to DigiBeta. We are also the only film school in the U.S. to offer a required curriculum in the Ethics of Filmmaking, concentrating on the responsibilities of the individual filmmaker. We hosted a major Cine-Ethics conference in 2001, involving all of the top film programs in the country to discuss this important subject.

Tom Rankin

Duke University

The Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University teaches, engages in, and presents documentary work grounded in collaborative partnerships and extended fieldwork that uses photography, film/video, audio, and narrative writing to capture and convey contemporary memory, life, and culture. CDS values documentary work that balances community goals with individual artistic expression. CDS promotes documentary work that cultivates progressive change by amplifying voices, advancing human dignity, engendering respect among individuals, breaking down barriers to understanding, and illuminating social injustices. CDS conducts its work for local, regional, national, and international audiences.

CDS serves as a resource for individuals and groups wishing to learn or develop documentary skills. CDS-sponsored **courses taught at Duke University** are open to area university students, and a new **undergraduate certificate program** allows Duke

students to further concentrate their academic work in documentary studies. Graduates have an opportunity to take their knowledge abroad through the **Lewis Hine Documentary Initiative**, which connects young documentarians with the resources and needs of organizations serving children and their communities around the world. For other adult learners, a thriving **certificate program** in documentary studies is offered to the community in conjunction with Duke Continuing Studies. In addition, a growing number of **workshops and institutes** provide short-term intensive training and discussion involving documentary tools and topics.

For more than ten years **Literacy Through Photography (LTP)**, a CDS program directed by Wendy Ewald, has worked with teachers and children in the Durham Public Schools in learning the use of cameras and the written word as tools for observation and developing creative powers. LTP also offers **workshops** to help train teachers and community leaders in other parts of the country in the use of the LTP model. Adapting the LTP approach, **Regarding Race** uses photography and writing as a catalyst for opening dialogue about race with young people and for developing the capacities of future North Carolina teachers to connect with children of varied backgrounds.

Youth Document Durham is a nationally recognized program engaging young people from diverse local communities in documentary training and projects that examine their viewpoints and amplify their voices. Students in both the after-school and summer programs share the results of their work through publications, exhibitions, Web sites, radio and media projects, public art and community-service projects, and public forums. **The Neighborhoods Project** works with teachers and students in two Durham elementary schools, using an innovative experiential learning model to engage young students in the communities surrounding their schools and to document individual lives and stories through photographs, narrative writing, and oral history.

CDS offers a number of opportunities for individual documentary project support through its competitive prizes: the biennial **CDS / Honickman First Book Prize in Photography**, the **Dorothea Lange – Paul Taylor Prize** for a writer / photographer team in the early stages of a project, the **John Hope Franklin Student Documentary Awards** for college students, and the **CDS Filmmaker Award**, selected from films in competition at the annual Full Frame Documentary Film Festival. CDS also takes the documentary process a step further, encouraging the effective presentation of documentary work through its **book publishing program** (Lyndhurst Books), an active **exhibitions program**, the annual **Documentary Happening**, film and video events, and a growing involvement with **documentary radio**.

CDS also directs two extensive research projects incorporating in-depth fieldwork: **Behind the Veil: Documenting African American Life in the Jim Crow South**, a major project involving more than 1,200 oral history interviews and thousands of family photographs, and the **Jazz Loft Project**, devoted to preserving and cataloging audiotapes, researching photographs, and obtaining oral history interviews with all surviving participants from the Manhattan loft of legendary photographer W. Eugene Smith, where major jazz musicians of the day (1957–64), along with countless underground figures,

gathered and played their music. Past CDS projects have included **Indivisible**, a national documentary photography and audio project examining the nature of civic life, community, and grassroots experience in America today.

<http://cds.aas.duke.edu>

Ruby Rich

University of California, Santa Cruz

The Social Documentation Program aims to be a laboratory for knowledge acquisition and deployment, pioneering a model of documentary practice suited to real-world applications within a social-change dynamic. The digital revolution of recent years and the growth of alternative models of documentary creation, distribution, and transmission have energized new methods of knowledge transmittal, social organization, and communication. Alternative modes of social documentation can take into account both codes of production and subjects of study, without sacrificing access to audiences or communities not previously within reach. The Social Documentation program was created by the UCSC Community Studies department, and accordingly takes as its foundation a social science approach to sociopolitical issues, prioritizing graphic expressions of people's lives and cultures, the conditions under which they work and sustain themselves, challenges to their survival, and strategies for improving their lives.

Building upon years of Community Studies experience in social change and community intervention, students are able to hone documentary approaches suited to their project concerns, acquiring professional skills and tool for social analysis while maintaining social-change commitments.

David Scheerer

Humboldt State University (incoming), Montana State U Graduate program in Science and Natural History (outgoing)

Here are two pertinent URLs for the Montana State U Graduate program in Science and Natural History Filmmaking that I helped innovate and direct. In this program we train young scientists as filmmakers with the idea that they are best equipped to speak to their subject than a third party filmmaker. The program has attracted top tier students from around the world. While here they are immersed in both intensive hands-on training and applied critical studies leading to an MFA. A highlight is the pod-casting success of TERRA, the program's distribution outlet for student's films through Montana PBS, launched last October. As the world's first and only terminal degree program in science and natural history filmmaking, in its first five years the students in the program have distinguished themselves with a long list of awards, including first and second place Emmy's in '05 and '06 consecutively for Best Documentary. Terra receives nearly fifteen thousand pod-cast "hits" per month.

<http://terravideos.blogspot.com/> <http://naturefilm.montana.edu/index.php>

Here is the pertinent contact info of the Program Manager, Julie Geyer:
MFA Science and Natural History Filmmaking

Montana State University
PO Box 173350
Bozeman, Montana 59717-3350
jgeyer@montana.edu
406.994.5884 office
406.994.6214 fax

Nancy Schiesari

**University of Texas Radio-Television and Film Department
Projected Documentary Center**

The UT Documentary Center is a creative documentary production and research center where UT students produce photographic, video, audio and interactive non-fiction works in close working relationships with UT professors and renown professionals in their media fields.

The Center is an interdisciplinary enterprise, which synthesizes experiential media production with critical investigative journalism to tell the diverse stories, which reflect our ever-changing global and local cultural conditions. The Center provides meaningful life experience for students to work in key roles on professional productions-- in radio, television and interactive documentary projects-- from West Texas to West Africa.

The UT Documentary Center nurtures exceptional young documentary filmmakers and provides scholarships and stipends so that every qualifying student can participate in special programs, regardless of financial need. The University of Texas is uniquely situated to create a cutting-edge comprehensive Center that promotes student involvement in professional non-fiction media productions, while attracting internationally recognized mentors from around the world to work with our students in special programs.

Ellen Spiro

**University of Texas Radio-Television and Film Department
Projected Documentary Center**

The Department of Radio-TV-Film is a large program within the University of Texas. Each semester we have over 800 students enrolled in a variety of film, video and radio production courses. While we have no official Documentary Program, our strength lies in our faculty who are both working documentary filmmakers and professors. When digital technology emerged as a viable format, we embraced it. Our students, mostly working and middle-class Texans, do not have access to the financial resources that would permit extensive experimentation in film. So, while film courses are an option, most documentary students work with digital video and HDV.

We emphasize storytelling and cultivate filmmakers who have something passionate to say and are seeking the methods to say it. We have an impressive array of production equipment including over 50 digital video cameras and digital and analog recorders, 16mm film cameras, lighting packages, a student ADR/Foley/mix studio, and more than

50 non-linear editing systems with all the latest software. We upgrade our equipment every year.

Many innovative projects have been launched from our department including:

East Austin Stories : <http://www.eastaustinstories.org/>

10 Under 10 short doc program: www.10under10.com

Cinematexas Short Film Festival : www.cinematexas.org

Texas Documentary Tour: <http://rtf.utexas.edu/news/doctour/>

Lucien Taylor

Harvard University, Film Study Center, Media Anthropology Lab

Film Study Center, Harvard University:

<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~fsc/index.html>

The Film Study Center at Harvard University was founded in 1957 for the purpose of supporting work that records and interprets the world in images and sounds. As such it sustains endeavors, from the ethnographic to the experimental, that explore and expand the expressive potential of audiovisual media, especially through nonfiction. To this end, it provides annual **fellowships** to both internationally eminent and emerging filmmakers, video artists, sound artists, and photographers whose creative projects seek to interpret the world, especially the fabric of human existence and cultural difference, through moving and still images and sounds. Award-winning and in many cases classic works that have been produced over the years with the Film Study Center's assistance include John Marshall's **The Hunters** (1957), Robert Gardner's **Dead Birds** (1963) and **Forest of Bliss** (1985), Jan Lenica's **Landscape** (1974), Susan Meiselas, Alfred Guzzetti, and Richard Rogers' **Pictures from a Revolution** (1991), Robb Moss' **The Same River Twice** (2003), Ross McElwee's **Six O'Clock News** (1997) and **Bright Leaves** (2003), and Richard P. Rogers' **DoHistory** (2000).

Media Anthropology Lab, Harvard University:

<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/%7emediaant/>

The training offered through Harvard's Media Anthropology Laboratory is practice-based, and has original experimentation with culturally-inflected, non-fiction image-making at its core. It provides an academic and institutional context for the development of an anthropology which is itself constitutively visual and/ or aural — in other words, which is conducted through audiovisual media rather than purely verbal sign systems — and which may thus complement anthropology's traditionally exclusive reliance on the written word. Harnessing a wide variety of perspectives drawn from disciplines across the human sciences, the arts, and the humanities, the aim of the MAL is to support innovative non-fiction media-making practices that explore the bodily praxis and affective fabric of human existence. As such, it encourages attention to the many dimensions of social experience and subjectivity that are barely if at all representable through words alone.

<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/%7emediaant/bulletins.html>

Patricia Zimmerman

Ithaca College, Department of Cinema and Photography

The Finger Lakes Environmental Film Festival (FLEFF) is a one week multi-media and inter-arts extravaganza that reboots the environment and sustainability into a larger global conversation embracing issues such as labor, war, health, disease, women's rights, software, interface art, music, remix, economics, AIDS, social and environmental justice and human rights. The festival features 100 events, 75 media works, 30 guests with works from over 50 countries around the globe. It includes not only film, but video, video art, installation, fine art, music, photography, painting, performance, archive film with live music, net.art, plasma screen exhibition. It spans a wide range of media interfaces, and explores feature length narrative, documentary, experimental, mixed media and interface/software art genres.

One of our innovations was to expand, complicate, reimagine, intervene and redefine the American-centric pastoral definition of the environment into a more global and contextual conversation. To this end, we also expanded and complicated the notion of a film festival to explore a range of different interfaces beyond film on a wall, to see media arts/music as environments to be produced. It is important to note that our festival is structured with two co-directors from different academic disciplines who split a full time job (Dr. Tom Shevory, politics and environmental studies, and myself, Cinema history and theory) and as a result, bring different skills sets, scholarly credentials and training, and administrative experience to this reconceptualization of the terms environment and festival. Rather than viewing the environment and media forms as fixed, we enacted a conceptual model based on interrogation, complication, opening up: from one screen to many screens, from one idea to a multiplicity of intersecting concepts. Different from many other film festivals and environmental film fests, FLEFF is integrated into the academic mission of Ithaca College, where a large portion of screenings, master classes, workshops and events are folded into classes across campus and involve scholars from a broad range of disciplines leading discussions, as well as community and international activists. Another large portion of screenings run in a non profit art cinema in Ithaca, with whom we have a collaborative partnership. Also, as part of our academic mission, we developed a range of collaborative partnerships with film archives and other political groups. (<http://www.ithaca.edu/fleff>) Partnerships have also been a key innovation of our organization.