



MFA SOCIAL DOCUMENTARY FILM DEPARTMENT FACT SHEET

The MFA Social Documentary Film Department provides students with a solid foundation in the fundamentals of non-fiction filmmaking and an immersion into the critical and analytical processes necessary to conceptualize and develop film projects with content of significant social relevance. The program, which represents the convergence of journalism, social activism and the art of filmmaking, prepares students to find and capture stories that raise social, political and cultural consciousness on issues of public concern.

In the first year, students study the history of filmic practice as it relates to documentary, and master the necessary tools and techniques of the social documentary form, while creating a series of short films. In the second year, students receive advanced instruction in directing, producing and editing, as they focus on completing an individual thesis film, which will be suitable for broadcast and meet festival standards.

2011 – 2012 student population

35 matriculated students

Department chair

Maro Chermayeff, producer, director and author

Faculty members

Axel Baumann (*Carrier*), Joshua Bennett (*Circus, Nimrod Nation*), Peter Chelkowski (*Carnival Roots*), Ann Collins (*Sound and Fury*), Maryann DeLeo (*Chernobyl Heart*), Deborah Dickson, (*Lalee's Kin: The Legacy of Cotton*), Michael Epstein (*American Masters: Lennon NYC*), Micah Fink (*PBS/Wide Angle – H5N1 Killer Flu*), Tom Hurwitz (*The Last Emperor*), Robyn Hutt (TruTV), Michael Kantor (*Make 'Em Laugh: The Funny Business of America*), Mark Mandler (*American Experience: New York, a Documentary Film*), Michel Negroponte (*Jupiter's Wife, Dangerous in Love*), Thom Powers (documentary programmer of the Toronto International Film Festival), Bob Richman (*My Architect, The September Issue*), Jerry Risius (*The Devil Came On Horseback*), Bernardo Ruiz (*Clemente*), E. Donna Shepherd (*Power Girls, Carrier, Circus*), Joia Speciale (*Intervention*), J.T. Takagi (*North Korea: Beyond the DMZ*)

Some notable guest lecturers

Natalia Almada, Christine Choy, Paco de Onis, Jeff Dupre, Alice Elliott, Susan Froemke, Alex Gibney, Beth Hoppe, Yves Jeanneau, Simon Kilmurry, Susan Lacy, Christine LeGoff, Ross McElwee, Brett Morgen, Sheila Nevins, Elena Paul, D.A. Pennebaker, Sam Pollard, James Redford, Yoruba Richen, Amy Schewel, Deborah Shaffer, Pamela Yates

Student exhibitions

There are screenings of student films each semester and a festival in the fall. First-year students present their short films and second-year students present their thesis films.

For further information, please visit <http://mfasocdoc.sva.edu>.