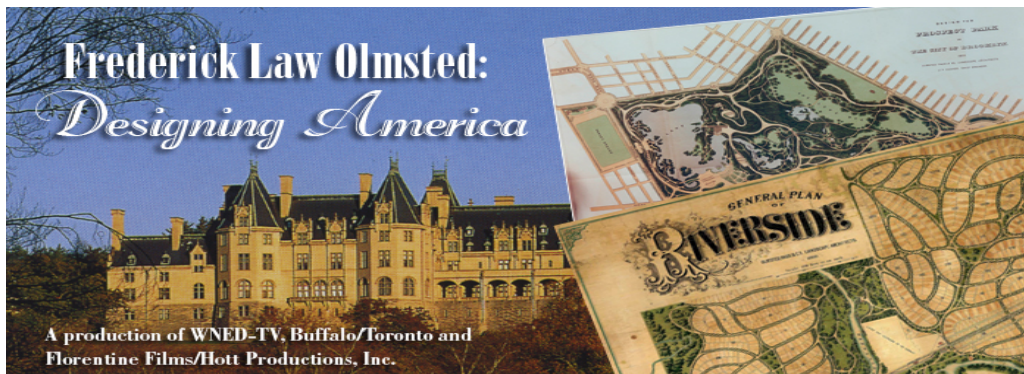


# MDOCS

JOHN B. MOORE DOCUMENTARY STUDIES COLLABORATIVE

Fall 2014, 1.4



November 3, 2014  
A Bi-weekly Newsletter

## Larry Hott & Diane Garey: *Bringing History to Life on Screen*

Two weeks ago, documentary filmmakers Larry Hott and Diane Garey from Florentine Films/Hott Productions arrived at Skidmore to cover the ins and outs of their craft over two exciting and busy days.

The Emmy- and Peabody-award winning duo achieved a lot in 48 hours. Hott and Garey, known for over two dozen nationally-aired historical films, spent their first day with Media and Film Studies. Students in Tom Lewis' Documentary Film Writing class, EN280, heard the film- and life-partners of 32 years speak on their vast experience in the trade and discussed clips from two of their films: *Through Deaf Eyes* and *Divided Highways*.

In the evening, Hott and Garey joined students for pizza, offering individualized advice on class documentary film projects. Dinner concluded with a screening of *Frederick Law Olmsted: Designing America*, which premiered in June 2014.

The next day, Hott & Garey brainstormed with MDOCS on what might attract filmmakers to Skidmore's upcoming summer Storytellers' Institute. Hott then entranced a small, enthusiastic crowd using examples from *War of 1812* and other films to identify the challenges of relying on historical images for truthful depictions of the past.

Hott and Garey noted that documentarians have 90% of the skills of a narrative filmmaker. But, Hott added, with the hint of a smile, the opposite does not hold true. Perhaps he was suggesting that documentary filmmakers take on Hollywood!

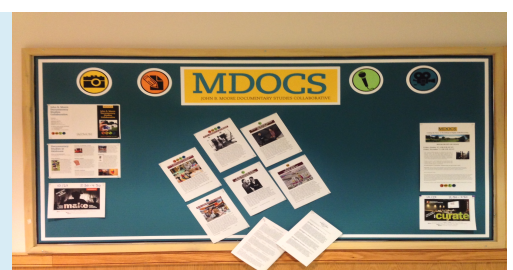
*Hott and Garey began Florentine Films/Hott Productions in 1981, and have produced two dozen films for a national audience. Honors include an Emmy, a DuPont-Columbia Journalism Award, a Peabody Award and two Academy Award nominations, among others.*

Research by J. Hoffer, '16, EN280

### Inside This Issue:

- **Larry Hott & Diane Garey:** *Bringing History to Life on Screen*
- **Doc Dates & Featured Events:** Inclusive MDOCS & Raoul Peck
- **Documentarians on Campus:** Lei Bryant, Music
- **LI 113 Profile:** Shane Boissiere

**Plus:** MDOCS Spring 2015 Classes!





## Director's Note

Only half way through the semester, and it's already time to think about next year! As we welcomed Larry Hott and Diane Garey to campus (thanks to a long relationship between Tom Lewis & Florentine Films/Hott Productions), students were dreaming about Doc Studies courses for Spring '15 and MDOCS faculty, staff and students and a couple of documentarians were already brainstorming about the summer 2015 Storyteller's Institute.

In mid-October, the Spring 2015 Master Schedule went on line, showcasing 6 courses in the brand new "DS" (Documentary Studies) rubric. In addition to offering students the chance to learn about documentary traditions and ethics (Principles of Documentary), MDOCS is proud to showcase faculty teaching interviewing, exhibition, and film festival organizing--& covering large swathes of the globe, from Latin America to South Asia. The Skidmore Saratoga Memory Project also takes on its first collaboration, helping the Adult and Senior Center of Saratoga, to tell the story of 60 years of community and service.

MDOCS' first Institute will focus on the theme of families, which are (as Leo Tolstoy famously noted in *Anna Karenina*) alike only when happy. Our primary goal: building a happy Storytellers' Institute family of practitioners, students, and faculty. The challenge: finding the perfect balance between a summer program rich in learning opportunities for student documentarians developing their craft, faculty diving into documentary work, and independent artists interested in a tune-up, new skill, or even a tech exchange session. We brainstormed towards a solution: building in time for master classes, critiques, & screenings and also time for serendipity and reflection, whether in solitude or following a collaborative impulse. Check out [www.skidmore.edu/mdocs/storytellers-institute](http://www.skidmore.edu/mdocs/storytellers-institute) for more on our theme and our call for documentarian applications (due DEC 15!). We'll keep you posted as the schedule firms up and as we gear up to recruit Skidmore participants in early 2015.

Jordana Dym

### November Doc Dates:

*Wednesdays, 3:30-5pm*

Conversations, workshops and presentations on documentary.

#### November 5:

##### MDOCS Planning

Inclusive Doc, LI 113

#### November 12:

##### What's up, Doc?

Screenwriter Nicole Coady describes the process of "Screen-writing for the Real World," LI 113

#### November 19:

##### What's up, Doc? Alum and

emerging filmmaker

Noah Throop, '14, LI 113

### Featured Event!

#### RAOUL PECK ON CAMPUS

**11/5:** Pre-screen *Fatal Assistance* with Workshopping Doc students...(LI 113, 6pm)

**11/6, 3:40pm, FI 119:**  
Join class to talk filmmaking with Raoul Peck...

**11/6:** Francophone Lunch, 12:30 (Open to all Skidmore! RSVP to [mdocs@skidmore.edu](mailto:mdocs@skidmore.edu))

**11/6, 7pm, Davis Aud.**  
**Raoul Peck's film *Fatal Assistance* (2013)** followed by Q&A with the director.





# LI 113

## Staff Profile: Shane Boissiere



As a student lab assistant for MDOCS & Project VIS, I help staff LI 113 in order to assist Skidmore students, faculty and staff with visual projects and checking out our equipment. I also use my background in graphic design to produce posters and other designs for MDOCS and Project VIS.

My involvement in media studies stems from my interest in entertainment media and in creating visual work. My communication design concentration comes into play when I use our space in LI 113 to design and create promotional materials. I am a Film & Media Studies minor. I get to do what I love and gain more experience in what I hope to do after I graduate.

Class of 2015: MAJOR: Art  
MINOR: MFS



## Spring 2015: MDOCS Classes

MDOCS is delighted to offer its first Documentary Studies (DS) courses.

### DS 251 **Principles of Documentary**

*Understand local, national and global documentary traditions through readings, screenings, discussion, and engaging with practitioners.*

### DS 251 **Documenting Saratoga through Sound**

*Using Saratoga as our laboratory and The Cube - a mobile recording booth, learn theoretical foundation of good oral history practice and critical interviewing, recording and editing.*

### DS 251A 002 **Documenting Latin America**

*Learn about Latin American social documentary & curate a film festival!*

### DS 351 B **Exhibiting South Asia**

*Design exhibitions while exploring thematic, theoretical, political, and curatorial issues related to the display of South Asian art in museums.*

### DS 251A 001: **Interviewing Musicians**

*Learn basic techniques and approaches for ethnographic interviewing of musicians following methods from ethnomusicology.*

### DS 381 002 **Skidmore Saratoga Memory Practicum**

*Help document and then present the history of Saratoga Springs' Senior Center as it prepares to celebrate its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in fall 2015!*

FOR MORE INFORMATION: <http://www.skidmore.edu/mdocs/courses/>

*Other courses on offer this spring—a veritable feast!*

AM260 - Museum Studies

AR131 - Visual Concepts

EN280 - Writing Rock

FL322 - The French Film

ID 251 - Designing the Book

PY109 - Sound & Music (Lab)

## Documentarians on Campus:

### Professor Lei Bryant - Music Department

*In Spring 2015, Professor Bryant will teach a documentary studies course, Interviewing Musicians (see p. 3). Our very own Lisa Fierstein '16 connected with Prof. Bryant for insight on her views on documentary, ethnomusicology, and the details on what this exciting new course will offer.*



#### What prompted you to teach a class on interviewing musicians?

Interviewing plays a central role in ethnographic fieldwork. It is a practice employed by nearly all ethnomusicologists.

#### What will students gain from taking the course?

Students will gain insight into the nuts and bolts of interviewing (how to develop rapport, design questions, technical aspects, etc.) as well as gain an understanding of why and how the methodologies we use are in place. Largely this has a lot to do with getting the most out of an interview while maintaining ethical and respectful practices. More specifically, we will explore strategies and challenges in interviewing individuals not accustomed to discussing an art [music] in words. Furthermore, students will have the opportunity to develop their own unique project; something they can build upon in many other ways after the semester.

#### Why are interviews an integral part of documentary studies and ethnomusicology?

As an ethnomusicologist it is important to me to understand the stories of individuals in different musical cultures. In other words, how, what, and why they value a certain musical tradition. All this information is found in the lived experience of individuals and typically does not appear in books or archives. Therefore, interviewing is an essential component of ethnomusicological and ethnographic fieldwork.

*Lei Bryant is an Associate Professor in the Music Department and holds a Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology. She has a passion for studying how music intersects with topics such as memory, politics, race/ethnicity, identity and social justice.*

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Scribner Library 113

