

Multiculturalism in Contemporary Israeli Cinema

UCLA Nazarian Center for Israel Studies

Winter Quarter 2016

Mondays, 2:00PM-4:50PM

Contact information:

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Office Hours: Mondays, 5:30PM-7:30PM (by appointment or drop-in)

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Course overview:

The course will examine Israel's multicultural society reflected in 20th-Century and contemporary Israeli cinema. One of the predominant themes in Israeli modern feature films and documentaries is trauma as a collective and individual experience. Events such as the legacy of the Holocaust, wars, terrorism, and human loss as well as an immanent hope for peace have been essential in modern Israeli cinema. Movies are an important medium in Israel in a soul-searching effort to question and define the values and morality of an emerging nation. Other recurrent topics are social tensions, immigration and ethnicity, and the impact of religion in shaping the multi-faceted Israeli society. The course will examine various genres such as comedies about ethnic tensions during the Sixties, the 'New Sensitivity' films during the Seventies, to Israeli docudrama during the Eighties, through current Israeli cinematography that is focusing on the personal realm and the figure of the anti-hero.

Course method:

A full-length feature film, documentary film or excerpts from films will be screened in class. At the beginning of the class students will present their topics, followed by a pre-viewing introduction and screening of the film. The last part of the class will be devoted to a discussion, based on the film and readings that are assigned per session (see bibliography and class schedule).

Course objectives:

1. Learn about the historical and cultural context of modern Israeli film.
2. Develop abilities to study and analyze the formal characteristics of feature films and documentaries.

Classroom etiquette:

- Food is allowed in class.
- All of you are expected to arrive in class on time and to avoid leaving the class during lectures, discussions, and other activities. If you are more than 10 minutes late, please do not enter the classroom. If you need to leave ahead of time, make sure to notify the instructor before the beginning of class and sit as close as possible to the door.
- Students can bring their smart phones, tablets and laptops to class because we use them in-group activities to conduct in class-research. However, if students are

checking emails, social media accounts or surfing the Internet purely for entertainment purposes, it would be marked as absent from class (only three absences are allowed). Please show respect to your fellow students by turning off or silencing cell phones during class time.

- Disruptive behavior would result in deduction of points from your final grade.

Special Needs:

If you have any special needs (i.e. learning disability, visual or hearing impairment, or medical condition) that you believe the instructor needs to be aware of, please contact her after the first class.

Grading scale:

Students will receive grades in points (up to 100 points). For your knowledge, here is the letter grade percentage:

98-100 A+

90-97 A

88-89 B+

80-87 B

78-79 C+

70-77 C

60-69 D

59-below F

Course assignments:

1. Attendance	10%
2. Demonstrating knowledge of reading assignments, participation in class discussion and group work	30%
3. Oral presentation in class	15%
4. Submit critique (5 th week)	15%
5. Submit research paper (last week)	30%

1. Attendance is important and students are encouraged to attend the lectures. Attendance will be taken. Students are allowed to have three absences. More than three absences (without the instructor's permission) will lower the final grade by one step per absence. Late arrival and early departure may result in loss of participation credit points.
2. Participation in class discussions, group work in class, and demonstrating knowledge of readings assigned per session (see bibliography and class schedule).

3. Presentation in class: students choose their study partners, a theme related to Israeli cinema and date of presentation. A list of names and themes will be finalized at the beginning of the second week. Instructions will be given in class.
4. Critique: submit a written critique of the article 'War Fantasies: Memory, Trauma and Ethics...' by Raz
 - Critique the article itself (one page)
 - Describe the image of the Israeli soldier in films from the fifties until today (one page). Instructions will be given in class.
5. Research paper: students submit a research paper at the end of the course. You are requested to analyze one or two related Israeli films according to a topic chosen after consulting with the instructor. Please refer to two scholarly articles or chapters. Topics may be chosen from the course syllabus in relation to the course themes such as multiculturalism in Israeli society, religion, etc. (4 pages, including a page of bibliography and scholarly references). Instructions will be given in class.

Grading procedures:

Presentation in class:

Content of presentation: 30 points

Contextualizing the film within the larger setting of the course: 50 points

Conclusion: 20 points

Written critique of an article:

Informative details: 25 points

Student's opinion of the article (argue/give a reason): 25 points

Organization of the critique: 25 points

Conclusion: 25 points

Written research paper:

Organization 30 points: introduction 5 points; thesis 5 points; argumentation 10 points; and conclusion 10

Content: 30 points

Language: 10 points

Scholarly references and bibliography: 20 points

Required Bibliography:

Dagan, H., "'Holocaust-Nostalgia', Humour and Irony: The Case of Pizza in Auschwitz," in: *Historical Comedy on Screen: Subverting History with Humour* (Hannu Salmi, ed.), (Bristol: Intellect, 2011), pp. 153-74

Raz, Y., 'War Fantasies: Memory, Trauma and Ethics in Ari Folman's *Waltz with Bashir*,' in: *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, Vol. 9, no. 3, 2010, pp. 311-26

Sicher, E. 'The Future of the Past: Counter memory and Post memory in Contemporary American Post-Holocaust Narratives,' *History & Memory*, Vol. 12, no. 2, 2001, pp. 56-91

Talmon M., and Peleg Y., (eds.), *Israeli Cinema: Identities in Motion* (Austin: University of Texas, 2011), (ISBN 978-0-292-72560-7): Introduction, pp. ix-xvii; Cohen, pp. 43-58; Kaplan, pp. 59-69; Shemer, pp. 120-33; Avisar, pp. 151-67; Yosef, pp. 181-98; Dushi, pp. 213-24

Recommended Bibliography:

Avisar, I., 'The National and the Popular in Israeli Cinema,' in: *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 24.1 (2005), pp. 125-43

Gertz, N., 'From Jew to Hebrew: The 'Zionist Narrative' in the Israeli Cinema of the 1940s and 1950s,' in: *Israel Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1998, pp. 175-99

Gertz, N., 'Gender and Nationality in the New Israeli Cinema,' in: *Shofar: an Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1, Fall 2003, pp. 110-11

Kronish, A., *World Cinema: Israel*, (NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996), (ISBN: 0838636977)

Kronish, A., *Israeli film: a Reference Guide* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2003), (ISBN: 0313321442)

Lubin, R., 'Body and Territory: Women in Israeli Cinema,' in: *Israel Studies*, Vol. 4. No. 1, pp. 176-87

Raz, Y., *The Politics of Loss and Trauma in Contemporary Israeli Cinema* (Taylor & Francis Publication, 2011) (ISBN-10: 0415876885)

Class Schedule:

First Week: introduction; the history of Israeli cinema

Building rapport in class

Instructor explains the course syllabus, assignments, etc.

Introductory lecture I: the evolution of local cinema from 1933 to the beginning of the Eighties. We will examine three film genres popular during that period: Zionist propaganda movies (1930s), Israeli national heroism and the *Sabra* myth (1950s and 1960s), and the so-called 'Bourekas film' genre (1970s).

The History of the Israeli Cinema, part 1: 1932-1978 (Director: Raphael Nadjari, 2009), discussion

(Read for next meeting: Talmon and Peleg: Introduction, pp. ix-xvii)

Second Week: assignments; the history of Israeli cinema

1. Pair up with another student and choose a topic and date for your presentation. Each presentation should take max 15 minutes.

2. Outside of class: each student chooses a short biography of an individual from an ethnic group in Israel. Students are requested to learn about the characteristics and the history of that group (Ashkenazi, Mizrahi, Ethiopians and Russian Jews), Muslim Arabs, Christian Arabs, Armenians, Druses, Bedouins and Palestinians living in Israel, Gaza Strip, and the West Bank (4th week: role-play game in class)

Introductory lecture II: Israeli politics, society and cultural life from the Seventies until today. Students will be introduced to the main film genres since 1980s: movies questioning Israeli collective identity, films dealing with personal traumas, and those articulating the unique multiculturalism in Israel today.

The History of the Israeli Cinema, part 2: 1978-2007 (Director: Raphael Nadjari, 2009)

(Read for next meeting: U. Cohen, 'From Hill to Hill...'; Y. Raz, 'War Fantasies...')

Third Week: from a heroic soldier to a victim

Students' presentations

Lecture: cinematic imagery of Israeli soldiers: from altruism to anti-war movies

Hill 24 Doesn't Answer (Thorold Dickinson, 1955); *Waltz with Bashir* (Ari Folman, 2008), discussion

Fourth Week: the Assassination of Prime Minister Rabin in 1995

Role-play game in class

Lecture: Palestinian suicide attacks in Tel Aviv and the Assassination of Prime Minister Rabin by a Jewish religious extremist in 1995

Documentary film *Out for Love, Be back Shortly* (Dan Katzir, 1997)

(Read for next meeting: Y. Shemer, 'Trajectories of Mizrahi...')

Fifth Week: the multi-faceted Israeli society

Students' presentations

Lecture: social stereotypes of and inequality between Ashkenazi and Mizrahi Jews in films

Sallah Shabati (Ephraim Kishon, 1964); *The Band Visit* (Eran Kolirin, 2008), discussion

Students submit critique

(Read for next meeting: Sicher, E. 'The Future of the Past: Counter memory and Post memory in Contemporary American Post-Holocaust Narratives')

Sixth Week: the legacy of the Holocaust: from feature films to documentaries

Students' presentations

The Summer of Aviya (Eli Cohen, 1988), discussion

Lecture: shaping the memory of the Holocaust in American and Israeli films

(Read for next week: H. Dagan, 'Holocaust-Nostalgia', Humour and Irony...')

Seventh Week: the legacy of the Holocaust

Students' presentations

Pizza in Auschwitz (Moshe Zimmerman, 2009), discussion

Student discussion: H. Dagan, 'Holocaust-Nostalgia', Humour and Irony' and Zimmerman's movie

(Read for next meeting: N. Dushi, 'Women and Religious Oppression...',')

Eighth Week: ultra-Orthodox Judaism and gender role

Students' presentations

Lecture: women in Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities: domesticity, modesty and purity.

Kadosh (Amos Gitai, 1999); *Black Bus* (Anat Zuria, 2009), discussion

Ninth Week: gender and poetry: Lea Goldberg

Students' presentations

Lecture: the revival of the Hebrew language in Israel

The Five Houses of Lea Goldberg (Yair Kedar, 2011), discussion

Tenth Week: gender and soul-searching: Rita Yaha Farouz, Iranian-born Israeli pop singer

Students' presentations

Rita (Director: Ayal Goldberg, 2013), discussion

Students submit research paper

Note: the course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary. Additional films may be added, and the format of the meetings may be changed to incorporate students' suggestions and their presentations

“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn”
(Benjamin Franklin (1706-90))