

RS/JS 385

Israeli Filmmakers: Cinema and Society

Rivka Ribak, University of Haifa, *Schusterman Visiting Professor*

Department of Religious Studies, Jewish Studies Program

University of Tennessee, Knoxville

rribak@utk.edu

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Office hour: Thursday, 12:45-13:45

The course will offer a survey of contemporary Israeli cinema as a starting point for analyzing visual representations of Israeli society. Films are manufactured by filmmakers within a cultural industry; thus Israeli cinema, as a collection of personal voices and visions, is embedded within Israeli political economy and politics of representation. By exploring Israeli cinema, we gain insight into the filmic construction of Israeli society, particularly as it relates to issues of gender, ethnicity, war and conflict, the holocaust, and communities within the collective.

Course requirements:

Attendance (10%): Students are expected to complete the reading assignments and be prepared to participate in class discussion.

Assignment (30%): Discuss one of the films that are screened in class (2,000 words).

Describe the film (15%) and analyze the ways in which it develops one of the themes that we explored (25%). Then, analyze the ways in which it sheds light on one other social or cultural practice (religion, commemoration, ethnicity, etc) (35%). Finally, express your opinion and make a sound argument based on your analysis (15%).

Submission by Dec. 2, 2008.

Final take-home exam (60%)

Reading: Gertz, Nurith (2000). *Myths in Israeli culture: Captives of a dream*. London: Vallentine Mitchell.

1. Aug. 21

Introduction: Israeli society

2. Aug. 26-28

Introduction: Representation, narrative, framing

Ne'eman, Judd (1999). The death mask of the moderns: A genealogy of New Sensibility cinema in Israel. *Israel Studies* 4/1, 100-128.

Gertz, chapters 1-2, pp. 5-58.

3. Sept. 2-4

Gender

Lubin, Orly (1999). Body and territory: Women in Israeli cinema. *Israel Studies* 4/1, 175-187.

Lemish, Dafna and Barzel, Inbal (2000). "Four mothers": The womb in the public sphere. *European Journal of Communication* 15/2, 147-169.

Screening: *Broken Wings*, Nir Bergman, 2002

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0317842/>

4. Sept. 9-11

Screening: *Nina's Tragedies*, Savi Gavison, 2003

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0376007/>

5. Sept. 16-18

Screening: *Aviva, My Love*, Shemi Zarhin, 2006

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0833422/>

6. Sept. 23-25

Militarization

Levy, Yagil, Lomsky-Feder, Edna and Harel, Noa (2007). From "obligatory militarism" to "contractual militarism": Competing models of citizenship. *Israel Studies* 12/1, 127-148.

Zanger, Anat (1999). Filming national identity: War and women in Israeli cinema. In Edna Lomsky-Feder and Eyal Ben-Ari, eds, *The military and militarization in Israeli society*, pp. 261-280. Albany: SUNY Press.

Screening: *Beaufort*, Joseph Cedar, 2007

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0758732/>

7-8. Sept 30 – Oct 7

Screening: *Driks' Brother*, Ori Inbar, Doron Tsabari, 1994

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0156491/>

9. Oct. 14-16

Holocaust in collective memory

Loshitzky, Yosefa (2001). *Identity politics on the Israeli screen*, pp. 15-71, 178-192. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Screening: *Walk on Water*, Eytan Fox, 2004

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0352994/>

10. Oct. 21-23

Screening: *Metallic Blues*, Dan Verete, 2004

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0402374/>

11. Oct. 28-30

The conflict

Shohat, Ella (1989). *Israeli cinema: East/west and the politics of representation*, pp. 237-273, 288-9, Austin: University of Texas Press.

Gertz, Chapters 3-5, pp. 59-108

Screening: *The Syrian Bride*, Eran Riklis, 2004

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0423310/>

12. Nov. 4-6

Screening: *The Band's Visit*, Eran Kolirin, 2007

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1032856/>

13. Nov. 11-13

Immigration and Multiculturalism

Shohat, Ella (1989). *Israeli cinema: East/west and the politics of representation*, pp. 115-178, 281-6, Austin: University of Texas Press.

Gertz, chapters 6-8, pp. 109-172.

Screening: *Late Marriage*, Dover Koshashvili, 2001

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0287471/>

14. Nov. 18-20

Screening: *Turn Left at the End of the World*, Avi Nesher, 2004

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0374279/>

15. Nov. 25-27 Thanksgiving

Screening: *Noodle*, Ayelet Menahemi, 2007

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0892332/>

16. Dec. 2: Submit paper, take home exam

Avisar, Ilan. (2005). The national and the popular in Israeli cinema. *Shofar*, 24/1, 125-143.

Exam due: December 9, 11:10, room 127