

Department of Cinema Studies
New York University
Spring 2007

ISRAELI CINEMA

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Mondays 12:30-4:30pm

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Since its origination in Palestine almost seventy years ago, Israeli cinema has been forced to deal with the hardships of representing the culture and history of a country under a never-ending siege, a nation liking to see itself as facing an ongoing war for survival. This course surveys the development of Israeli cinema in its social, historical and aesthetic contexts, exploring a remarkable evolution from almost primitive infancy to sophisticated maturity of a national cinema still struggling to even exist. Focusing on cinematic representations of state-building, war and trauma, military service, the Holocaust, the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, and the multifaceted Israeli Jewish identity, this course will attempt to provide insight into both the history of Israel since its establishment in 1948 and the burgeoning culture of its indigenous filmmaking.

Breakdown of Grades:

Mid-Term Exam.....	30%
Final Paper.....	40%
Participation in Class.....	15%
Attendance.....	15%

Course Policy:

1. Attendance is *vital*. Three absences will result in the loss of one full grade when final grades are tabulated. Six absences will result in a failure for the course.
2. Papers are to be typed (double-spaced) and submitted on time. I reserve the right to lower the grade of any late paper unless the student has made arrangements in advance of the due date.
3. Plagiarized material found in any paper is inexcusable and will result in a failing grade for the paper; *in extremis* it leads to expulsion from school. It is the student's responsibility to ensure proper documentation of any information.

Readings:

The following books are the required and optional readings, available for purchase at the NYU Bookstore on 18 Washington Place (Tel: 212-998-4667). The rest of the readings for the class are available online on the course's Blackboard website.

Required Books:

Loshitzky, Yosefa. Identity Politics on the Israeli Screen. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001.

Yosef, Raz. Beyond Flesh: Queer Masculinities and Nationalism in Israeli Cinema. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004.

Oz, Amos. A Tale of Love and Darkness. Orlando: Harcourt Books, 2003.

Optional Books:

Finklestein, G. Norman. Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict. New York: Verso, 2003.

Kimmerling, Baruch. The Invention and Decline of Israeliness: State, Society and the Military. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

All of the readings should be read prior to the lecture & screenings of each class. It is essential that you follow all of the reading assignments, as the discussions in class will depend on your familiarity with the texts. The readings are also valuable sources of information for the mid-term exam and final paper.

Schedule of Classes:

Session 1 (January 22nd):

Introduction/Why Studying Israeli Cinema?

Screening:

Feature: *A Wall in Jerusalem* (Albert Knobler and Frederic Rosif, 1970)

Readings:

Shohat, Ella. "Master Narrative/Counter Readings: The Politics of Israeli Cinema." Resisting Images: Essays on Cinema and History. Ed. Robert Sklar and Charles Musser. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990. 251-278.

Session 2 (January 29th):

The Foundation of Israel: Early Zionist Films and the Establishment of the Zionist Master-Narrative:

Screenings:

Feature: *Hill 24 Doesn't Answer* (Thorold Dickinson, 1955)

Clips: *Paisan* (Roberto Rossellini, 1946), *Exodus* (Otto Preminger, 1960), clips from the Nathan Gross collection.

Readings:

Jarvie, Ian. "National Cinema: A Theoretical Assessment." Cinema and Nation. Ed. Mette Hjort & Scott Mackenzie. London: Routledge, 2000. 75-87.

Loshitzky, Yosefa. "Screening the Birth of a Nation: *Exodus* Revisited." Identity Politics on the Israeli Screen. 1-14.

Shohat, Ella. Israeli Cinema. 58-76.

Recommended:

Finkelstein, Norman. "Zionist Orientations." Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict. 7-20.

Session 3 (February 5th):

The Evolution of the Israeli War Film (Part I): Patriotism and National Euphoria After the Six-Day War

Screening:

Feature: *Azit, The Paratrooper Dog* (Boaz Davidson, 1972)

Clips: *Mivza Yonatan (Operation Thunderbolt)* (Menachem Golan, 1977)

Readings:

Shohat, Ella. Israeli Cinema. 103-114.

Recommended:

Finkelstein, Norman. "To Live or Perish." Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict. 123-149.

Session 4 (February 12th):

The Comic Satires of Ephraim Kishon and the Ridicule of Socialist Zionism

Screenings:

Feature: *Sallah Shabati* (Ephraim Kishon, 1964)

Clips: *Ervinka* (Ephraim Kishon, 1967), *The Big Dig (Der Blaumilchkanal)* (Ephraim Kishon, 1970), *The Policeman (Hashoter Azoulay)* (Ephraim Kishon, 1970), *James Journeys to Jerusalem* (Ra'anana Alexandrowicz, 2003)

Readings:

Shohat, Ella. Israeli Cinema. 138-155.

Kishon, Ephraim (with Kariel Gardosh). So Sorry We Won! Tel Aviv: Ma'ariv Library, 1967; Woe to the Victors Bloch, 1969 (excerpts)

Session 5 (February 26th):

The "Bourekas" Social Comedies: Representing Ethnic Tensions Between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews

Screenings:

Feature: *Kazablan* (Menachem Golan, 1974)

Clips: *Charlie and a Half* (Boaz Davidson, 1974), *Shlager* (Assi Dayan, 1979),

Snooker (Boaz Davidson, 1975)

Readings:

Na'aman, Dorit. "Orientalism as Alterity in Israeli Cinema." Cinema Journal 40:4 (Summer 2001): 36-54.

Ben-Shaul, Nitzan. "The Euphoric Decade: Vulgar Poetics and Dishonesty in Post-1967 Israeli Films." Journal of Modern Jewish Studies 4:2 (July 2005): 233-242.

Recommended:

Shohat, Ella. "Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of its Jewish Victims." Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation & Postcolonial Perspectives Ed. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti and Ella Shohat. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997. 39-68.

Session 6 (March 5th):

[mid-term exam]

The 'New Sensibility' Films Between Two Wars: The Collapse of the Israeli Ethos and the Zionist Dream

Feature: *Hole in the Moon* (Uri Zohar, 1965)

Clips: *Breathless* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1959), *Peeping Toms* (Uri Zohar, 1972), *But Where is Daniel Wax?* (Av'raham Heffner, 1972), *The House on Chelouche Street* (Moshe Mizrachi, 1973)

Readings:

Ne'eman, Judd. "The Death Mask of the Moderns: A Genealogy of *New Sensibility* Cinema in Israel." Israel Studies 4:1 (Spring 1999), 100-128.

Shohat, Ella. Israeli Cinema. 179-197.

Recommended:

Finkelstein, Norman. "Language of Force: The Real Meaning of the October War and its Aftermath." Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict. 150-171.

Session 7 (March 19th):

The Image of the Arab in Israeli Cinema: The New 'Palestinian Wave'

[finish reading Amos Oz's "A Tale of Love and Darkness"]

Feature: *Hamsin (Eastern Wind)* (Daniel Wachsmann, 1982)

Clips: *Behind the Walls* (Uri Barabash, 1984), *Cup Final* (Eran Riklis, 1991)

Readings:

Shohat, Ella. Israeli Cinema. 253-273.

Yosef, Raz. "Homoland: Interracial Sex and the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict." Beyond Flesh: Queer Masculinities and Nationalism in Israeli Cinema. 118-132.

Loshitzky, Yosefa. "Forbidden Love in the Holy Land." Identity Politics on the Israeli Screen. 112-127.

Recommended:

Said, Edward. "Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims." Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation & Postcolonial Perspectives Ed. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti and Ella Shohat. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997. 15-38.

Session 8 (March 26th):

The Haunting Shadow of the Holocaust: Survivors Speaking Their Past

Screenings:

Feature: *Because of That War* (Orna Ben-Dor Niv, 1988)

Clips: *Shoah* (Claude Lanzmann, 1985), *Summer of Aviya* (Eli Cohen, 1988, Israel, 95m), *Under the Domim Tree* (Eli Cohen, 1994), *Schindler's List* (Steven Spielberg, 1993), *The Specialist* (Eyal Sivan, 1999)

Readings:

Loshitzky, Yosefa. "Surviving the Survivors", "Postmemory Cinema." Identity Politics on the Israeli Screen. 15-36.

Avisar, Ilan. "Personal Fears and National Nightmares: The Holocaust Complex in Israeli Cinema." Breaking Crystal: Writing and Memory After Auschwitz. Ed. Efraim Sicher. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998: 147-59.

Recommended:

Gertz, Nurith. "The Early Israeli Cinema as Silencer of Memory." Shofar 24:1 (Fall 2005). 67-80.

Session 9 (April 2nd):

The Evolution of the Israeli War Film (Part II): Self-Criticism and Left-Wing Pacifism

Screenings:

Feature: *Time for Cherries* (Haim Buzaglo, 1991)

Clips: *Late Summer Blues* (Renen Schorr, 1987), *One of Us* (Uri Barbash, 1989), *Cup Final* (Eran Riklis, 1991)

Readings:

Ne'eman, Judd. "The Empty Tomb in the Postmodern Pyramid: Israeli Cinema in the 1980s and 1990s." Documenting Israel. Ed. Charles Berlin. Cambridge: Harvard College Library, 1995: 117-52.

Yosef, Raz. "Cannon Fodder: National Death, Homoeroticism, and Male Masochism in the Military Film." Beyond Flesh: Queer Masculinities and Nationalism in Israeli Cinema. 48-83.

Recommended:

Kimmerling, Baruch. "The Code of Security: The Israeli Military-Cultural Complex." The Invention and Decline of Israeliness. 208-228.

Session 10 (April 9th):

Masculinity in Crisis: From the Israeli Macho to the Vulnerable Anti-Hero

Screenings: *Walk on Water* (Eytan Fox, 2004)

Clips: *Don't Give a Damn* (Shmuel Imberman, 1987), *Yossi and Jagger* (Eytan Fox, 2002).

Readings:

Gertz, Nurith. "The Myth of Masculinity Reflected in Israeli Cinema." Modern Jewish Mythologies. Ed. Glenda Abramson. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1999. 68-88.

Yosef, Raz. "The Zionist Body Master Narrative." Beyond Flesh: Queer Masculinities and Nationalism in Israeli Cinema. 16-47.

Session 11 (April 16th):

Amos Gitai: Israel's Notorious Cinematic Ambassador

Screenings:

Feature: *Kippur* (Amos Gitai, 2000)

Clips: *Field Diary* (Amos Gitai, 1982), *Kadosh* (Amos Gitai, 1999), *Kedma* (Amos Gitai, 2002), *September 11* (Amos Gitai, 2002), *Alila* (Amos Gitai, 2003), *Free Zone* (Amos Gitai, 2005)

Readings:

Michelson, Annette. "Filming Israel: A Conversation." October 98 (Fall 2001): 47-75.

Yosef, Raz. "Spectacles of Pain: War, Masculinity and the Masochistic Fantasy in Amos Gitai's *Kippur*." Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies 24:1 (Fall 2005): 49-66.

Session 12 (April 23rd):

Contemporary Israeli Documentaries

Screenings:

Feature: *Arna's Children* (Juliano Mer Khamis, 2003)

Clips: *Description of a Struggle* (Chris Marker, 1960), *House* (Amos Gitai, 1980), *The Inner Tour* (Ra'anan Alexandrowicz, 2001), *August: A Moment Before the Eruption* (Avi Mograbi, 2002).

Readings:

TBA

Session 13 (April 30th):

[final paper is due]

The 'New Wave' of Israeli Cinema: The Commercial and Aesthetic Impact of the Israeli Film Fund

Screenings:

Feature: *Or (Mon trésor)* (Keren Yedaya, 2004)

Clips: *Late Marriage* (Dover Kosashvili, 2001), *Nina's Tragedies* (Savi Gavison, 2003), *The Syrian Bride* (Eran Riklis, 2004)

Readings:

Klein, Uri. "Israel Journal: On the Brink." Film Comment 41:5 (Sep-Oct 2005): 19-22.

Gertz, Nurit. "Woman-The Image of the 'Other' in Israeli Society." Literature/Film Quarterly 24:1 (1996): 39-46.

Supplemental Readings (Available in English):

Arzooni, O. G. J. The Israeli Film: Social and Cultural Influences, 1912-1973. New York: Garland Publishing, 1983.

Avisar, Ilan. "The National and the Popular in Israeli Cinema." Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies 24:1 (Fall 2005).

Bachmann, Gideon. "Young Israelis." Sight & Sound XLVII: 2 (Spring 1978): 83-84.

Bardenstein, Carol. "Cross-Cast: Passing in Israeli and Palestinian Cinema." Palestine, Israel, and the Politics of Popular Culture. Ed. Rebecca L. Stein and Ted Swedenburg. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.

Ben-Shaul, Nitzan. Mythical Expressions of Siege in Israeli Films. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997.

Bleach, Anthony C. "Hooray for Hollywood: The Creation of an Israeli National Identity in Amos Oz's *Panther in the Basement*." Literature/Film Quarterly 31:1 (2003): 50-56.

Brumm, Anne-Marie. "Migration, Marginality, and Cultural Conflict in Recent Israeli and Palestinian Cinema." Canadian Review of Comparative Literature 23:2 (June 1996): 561-76.

Chamish, Barry. "Sex, Religion and Satire in the Israeli Cinema: Black Banana." Cineaste 11:4 (1982): 26-29.

Downing, Taylor. Palestine on Film. London: Council for the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding, 1979 [pamphlet]

Elon, Amos. The Israelis: Founders and Sons. New York: Penguin, 1983.

Erens, Patricia. "Israeli Cinema." Film Comment 17:1 (1981): 60-64.

Erens, Patricia. "Patricia Erens from Israel." Film Comment 16:1 (1980): 4-6.

Fainaru, Dan. "Israeli Film: A Short Personal History." New Orleans Review 9:3 (Winter 1982): 81-87.

Friedman, Regine Michal. "Between Silence and Abjection: The Film Medium and the Israeli War Widow." Film Historia 3:1-2 (1993): 79-89.

Gertz, Nurith. "From Destruction to Redemption: Israeli Literature and Cinema, 1960-1990." Shofar 13:1 (Fall 1994): 55-67.

---. "From Jew to Hebrew: The Zionist 'Narrative' in the Israeli Cinema of the 1940s and 1950s." Israel Affairs (Spring 1998): 175-200.

---. "The Others in Israeli Cinema of the 1940s and 1950s: Holocaust Survivors, Women, and Arabs." Israeli and Palestinian Identities in History and Literature. Ed. David Jacobson. New York: St. Martin, 1999: 214.

Gross, Ya'ackov. "Father of Hebrew Film." Ariel 83 (1991): 22-39.

Hakak, Lev. Modern Hebrew Literature Made into Films. Lanham: University Press of America, 2001.

Harris, E. "Film Production Problems and Activities in Palestine." Penguin Film Review January 1948: 36-41.

Helman, Anat. "Hollywood in an Israeli Kibbutz: Going to the Movies in 1950's Afikim." Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television 23:2 (June 2003): 153-163.

Horak, Jan-Christopher. "The Penetrating Power of Light: The Films of Elmar Lersky." Image 36 (Autumn/Winter 1993): 40-53.

Hoberman, J. "Michel Khleifi: Man from Galilee." Village Voice 28 (June 1988): 84.

Kronish, Amy. World Cinema: Israel. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996.

Kronish, Amy, and Costel Safirman. Israeli Film: A Reference Guide. London: Praeger Publishing, 2003.

Loshitzky, Yosefa. "Authenticity in Crisis: *Shur* and New Israeli Forms of Ethnicity." Media Culture & Society 18:1 (1996): 87-103.

---. "Orientalist Representations: Palestinians and Arabs in Some Postcolonial Film and Literature." Cultural Encounters: Representing 'otherness'. Ed. Elizabeth Hallam and Brian V. Street. London: Routledge, 2000.

---. "The Bride of the Dead: Pahllocentrism and War in *Himmo, King of Jerusalem*." Film Literature Quarterly 21:3 (1993): 218-229.

Lubin, Orly. "Body and Territory: Women in Israeli Cinema." Israel Studies 4:1 (Spring 1999): 175-187.

Naficy, Hamid. "Recurrent Themes in the Middle Eastern Cinema of the Diasporic." The Cinema of Displacement: Middle Eastern Identities in Transition. Ed. Jonathan Friedlander. Los Angeles: UCLA Center for Near Eastern Studies, 1995: 3-63.

Ne'eman, Judd. "The Jar and the Blade: Fertility Myth and Medieval Romance in Israeli Political Films." Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History 22:1-2 (Winter 2002): 141-56.

---. "The Tragic Sense of Zionism: Shadow Cinema and the Holocaust." Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies 24:1 (Fall 2005).

Rosen, Miriam. "The Architecture of Documentary Filmmaking: An Interview with Amos Gitai." Cineaste 18:3 (1990): 48-50.

---. "Beyond the Walls." Cineaste 14:3 (1986): 47-50.

Ross, Jay. "The Israeli Film Industry." Israel Scene February-March 1988: 12-16.

Schorr, Renen. "40 Years Filmmaking in Israel." Ariel 71-72 (1988): 106-127.

---. "Uri Zohar: The Films and the Enigma." Ariel 59 (1985): 42-54.

Segev, Tom. 1949-The First Israelis. Trans. By Neal Weinstein, New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1986.

Shohat, Ella. "Anomalies of the National: Representing Israel/Palestine." Wide Angle 11:3 (1989): 39.

---. "From Didactic Texts to Allegorical Readings: Israeli Culture and Film Narrative." Jewish Folklore and Ethnology Review 11:1-2 (1989): 38-41.

---. "Israel." World Cinema Since 1945. Ed. William Luhr. New York: The Ungar Publishing Company, 1987: 330-346.

---. "Making the Silences Speak in the Israeli Cinema." Calling the Equality Bluff: Women in Israel. Ed. Barbara Swirsky and Marilyn P. Safir. New York: Pergamon Press, 1991: 31-40.

---. "The Return of the Repressed: The Palestinian Wave in Recent Israeli Cinema." Cineaste 15:3 (1987): 10-17.

Shohat, Ella, and Robert Stam. Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Sicher, Efraim. Ed. Breaking Crystal: Writing and Memory After Auschwitz. University of Illinois, 1998.

Smith, D. Charles. Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict. St. Martin's, 2004.

Stein, Rebecca, and Ted Swedenburg. Palestine, Israel, and the Politics of Popular

Culture. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.

Tryster, Hillel. Israel Before Israel. Jerusalem: Steven Spielberg Jewish Film Archive, 1995.

Weitzner, Jacob. "Yiddish in Israeli Cinema." Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History 22:1-2 (Winter 2002): 186-99.

Willemen, Paul (Ed.). The Films of Amos Gitai. A Montage. London: British Film Institute, 1993.

Yakir, Dan. "Eye on Zion." Film Comment 19:3 (1983): 60.

---. "Israel's Black Box." Film Comment 24:4 (1988): 69-70.

Zanger, Anat. "Filming National Identity: War and Woman in Israeli Cinema." The Military and Militarism in Israeli Society. Ed. Edna Lomsky-Feder and Eyal Ben-Ari. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999.

---. "Hole in the Moon or Zionism and the Binding (Ha-Ak'eda) Myth in Israeli Cinema." Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies 22:1 (Fall 2003): 95-109.

Zertal, Edith. "The Films of Dan Wolman." Ariel 44 (1977): 88.

Ziv, Ilan. MAR'A: The Israeli Cinema and the National Question: The Primal Sin. Cineaste 9:3 (1979), 36-7.