

SOCI 189 Images of Israel in Popular Culture

Professor Aviad E. Raz

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Time and place: Tues/Thurs 9:30-10:50am

Warren Lecture Hall 2206 (will move into WLH 2112 on May 6)

Office hours: TuTh 11:00-12:00

Office location: 499 Social Science Building

From its inception and through its 65 years of existence, Israel has attracted diverse and fervent media depictions. This course will look at these popular images (some well-known and some less familiar) from Spielberg to the Simpsons and from social protest to roadblock movies. We will discuss and compare images of "Israel" as seen from the outside - in American popular culture - as well as from within, looking at self-depiction in Israeli media. These cultural texts will be decoded in search of their underlying images and what they can tell us about the simulations and realities of "Israel" as a country constantly straddling contrasts such as global and local, secular and religious, Jewish and non-Jewish, Israeli and Palestinian, immigrant and native-born, Ashkenazi and *Mizrahi*, and more.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

For each film we see, write down a list of 2-3 major points concerning the relationship between reality and myth or "fact" and representation by comparing the message of the film with the socio-historical narratives presented in the relevant presentation and reading(s). This will serve as the basis for class discussions. Lists will be submitted at the end of the course. The quality of class participation plus the written lists will count for 30% of the final grade. In addition, there will be a 10-15 page final paper (70%) due during finals week, with an analysis of Israeli images in popular culture. The paper can build and expand on one of the films we looked at by building on your relevant lists, or you can look at a new film/program for the paper.

REQUIRED READINGS

Adler, E (Ed). 2013. Introduction: Israel's Unsettled Relations with the World: Causes and Consequences. In his *Israel in the world: legitimacy and exceptionalism*. NY: Routledge. [electronic resource available through Geisel library]

Bernstein, Deborah, 1984. "Conflict and Protest in Israeli Society: The Case of the Black Panthers of Israel," *Youth and Society* 16(2):129-152.

Gavison, Ruth. 2003. "The Jews' Right to Statehood: A Defense". *Azure*, 15, 70-108. Available from Azure online at <http://www.azure.org.il/article.php?id=239>

Hazan, H. 2000. Taming Youth Culture: The Generational Discourse. Chapter 4 in his book *Simulated Dreams*. Oxford: Berghan

Hertzberg, S. 1986. "The Religious Right in the State of Israel." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 483, pp. 84-92

Loshitzky, Y. The Post-Holocaust Jew in the Age of "The War on Terror": Steven Spielberg's Munich. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (Winter 2011), pp. 77-87

Mart, M. "The Cultural Foundations of the U.S.-Israel Alliance," Tikkun, November 19, 2006, www.spme.net/cgi-bin/articles.cgi?ID=1452.

Sela-Sheffy, Rakefet. 2004. "'What Makes One an Israeli?' Negotiating Identities in Everyday Representations of 'Israeliness'". *Nations and Nationalism* 10, 4: 479-497.

Smootha, Sammy, 2009. "The Mass Immigrations to Israel: A Comparison of the Failure of the Mizrahi Immigrants of the 1950s with the Success of the Russian Immigrants of the 1990s", *Journal of Israeli History*, Vol. 27:1, 1–27

Spiro, Melford 2004. "Utopia and Its Discontents: The Kibbutz and Its Historical Vicissitudes." *American Anthropologist*, 106, 3: 556-569

Spiro, M. 1957. "The Sabras and Zionism: A Study in Personality and Ideology," *Social Problems*, Vol. 5, No. 2, Special Issue on the Kibbutz, pp. 100-110

Tessler M., & Grant, A. 1998. "Israel's Arab citizens: The continuing struggle." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 555, 97-113.

Waltzer, K. 2006. Spielberg's *Munich*, Ethics, and Israel. *Israel Studies*, Volume 11, Number 2, pp. 168-171

Yiftachel, Oren. 2000. "Social Control, Urban Planning and Ethno-class Relations: Mizrahi Jews in Israel's 'Development Towns'", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 24 (2): 418-438.

Zanger, A. 2005. Blind Space: Roadblock Movies in the Contemporary Israeli Film. *Shofar* 24,1: 37-48

Recommended Reading

Ariel L. Feldestein *Cinema and Zionism: the development of a nation through film*. London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2012

Mart, M. *Eye on Israel: How America Came to View Israel as an Ally* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006)

Shohat, Ella, *Israeli cinema: East/West and the politics of representation* (1989)

Weekly schedule and reading assignments

1. Tue April 2

Introduction: "Israel" – Images vs. Realities

Read: Israel Briefing Book, Fact Sheets: Israel at 63 - A Statistical Glimpse, online at <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/brief/fact1.html>
 Guy Ben-Porat, [Multicultural Realities](#), from the online [Israel Studies: An Anthology](#) at <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/>

BBC documentary: *The Birth of Israel*
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sy59eISl37U&feature=related>
The Simpsons – Israel episode

2. Thu 4-4

Continue: Introduction: The Israel "Fact" Sheet – Image vs. Reality

3. Tue, 4-9

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict
Checkpoints/Shamir (2003)

Read: Gavison (2003)
 Zanger (2005)
 Loshitsky (2011)

4. Thu, 4-11

Continue: The Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Western Eyes
Munich/Spielberg (2005)

Read: Waltzer, K. 2006.
 Adler, E (Ed). 2013. Introduction

5. Tue, 4-16

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Western eyes

Sela-Sheffy, R. 2004. Pp. 479-497

6. Thu, 4-18

Israel-Diaspora Relations, the Discourse of Independence, Pioneers and Sabras
"He Went In the Fields"/Yosef Milo (1967)

Halamish, A. [The Yishuv: The Jewish Community in Mandatory Palestine](#), from the online [Israel Studies: An Anthology](#)

7. Tue, 4-23

The Kibbutz
 'Degania' - The First Kibbutz Fights its Last Battle / Yitzhak Rubin

Read: Spiro, M. 1957
 Spiro, M. 2004. Pp. 556-569

8. Thu, 4-25

Continue: The Kibbutz

9. Tue, 4-30

The Melting Pot and Mass Immigration
Sallah Shabati/ Ephraim Kishon (1964)

Read: Yiftachel, O. 2000. Pp. 418-438.

10. Thu, May 2

Continue

11. Tue, 5-7

Class and ethnicity: Social protest old and new
"Turn Left at the End of the World"/ Avi Neshet (2004)

Bernstein, D. 1984. Pp. 129-152.

12. Thu, 5-9

Class and ethnicity continued

13. Tue 5-14

Religion and State

"Time of Favor"/ Yoseph Cider (2000)

Hertzberg, 1986

14. Thu, 5-16

Continued, State and Redemption: Religious Zionism

15. Tue, 5-21

The Arab-Israeli Minority

"Arab Labor"/ Sayed Kashua (2007)

Read: Tessler M., & Grant, A. 1998

16. Thu, 5-23

The Arab-Israeli Minority Continued

17. Tue, 5-28

From collectivism to individualism

"Late Summer Blues"/ Renen Schorr (1987)

Read: Hazan, H. (2000)

18. Thu, 5-30

Continue

19. Tue, June 4

Present and discuss plans for final paper

20 Thu, 6-6

Conclusions; discussion of final papers as needed

Instruction Ends: Friday, June 7

Please e-mail papers during finals week to Prof. Raz.