

Department of Hebrew and Semitic Studies

Fall 2009

"The Holocaust and Israeli Cinema"

Dr. Miri Talmon-Bohm

Hebrew Studies 371 Lecture 3 / Jewish Studies 371 lecture 3

Class hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 4:00 PM– 5:15 PM

Class location: Van Hise 383

Office location: 7137 Social Science Bldg

Office Hours: Thursdays, 2:00-3:00 PM

Please coordinate appointments in advance

E-Mail: talmonbohm@wisc.edu

Telephone: 608-890-3368

THE HOLOCAUST AND ISRAELI CONSCIOUSNESS-A CINEMATIC PERSPECTIVE

Course Description:

This course traces fundamental contradictions in Israeli-Jewish collective consciousness which link national anxieties and militant attitudes to the trauma of the Holocaust, as articulated in Israeli films from the 1940s to the first decade of the 2000s. We'll discuss narratives and cinematic imageries of potent masculine fighters and terror victims, the relationship between the Israeli native *Sabra* and the Holocaust survivor, complex Israeli attitudes to Germans and Palestinians, and the Israeli experience of terror and war.

Course Requirements

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all classes and screenings (which are incorporated into classes).

In addition, students are expected to attend all screenings of Israeli films on the UW Madison Israeli Film Festival, which are an integral part of the course.

Attendance comprises 10 % of the course grade. Students who miss over two classes will lose this component of the grade.

Oral presentation in class

At the beginning of each class students are asked to present their summary of the discussion and viewing in the previous class. Presentations will be up to 5 minutes long each. The grade for this oral presentation in class comprises 20% of your final grade. If you choose not to present orally you have to submit your written summary at the beginning of class: 2-3 pages.

Written Analysis Assignment (mid-term)

This written assignment requires a comparative analysis of two films, according to guidelines provided specifically when it is assigned. This assignment should be typed, 4-5 pages long (a maximum of 2000 words).

You will be required to submit one such written analysis, 20 % for this component of your final grade.

Critique of UW Madison Israeli Film Festival

You are required to write one critical essay about one Israeli film screened in the Israeli film series. Your critical essay for these films should be 1 page long; in your essay you should give a description of the film's narrative and themes, and explain in what ways it is relevant to our discussions in class.

This film review of UW Madison Israeli Film Series comprises 10% of your final grade.

Final Paper

The final paper is a comparative discussion of one topic (to be chosen from a list provided by me) which includes a textual analysis of at least three Israeli films discussed in class or screened in the UW Israeli Film Festival. The final paper should be submitted no later than December 12 2009, 7 PM. This final paper should be 6-8 pages long. It comprises 30% of your final grade.

Fall 2009 Jewish Heritage Lecture Series

You are required to attend one lecture offered by the Mosse-Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies as Jewish Heritage Lecture Series, and it is highly recommended that you consider attending all of them. The program is detailed as an appendix to this syllabus.

A typed summary of the lecture you attended, 1-2 pages long, should be submitted to me no later than one week after the lecture event. This summary comprises 10% of your final grade.

Course Grade:

1. Attendance: 10%
2. One Oral presentation in class: 20%.
3. One written comparative analysis assignment [mid term]: 20 %
4. One written Israeli Film Festival Review: 10%
5. One written final Paper: 30% (to be submitted by December 12 2009, 7 PM, 6-10 pages).
6. One Jewish Heritage Lecture Series lecture summary: 10%

Class Syllabus and Viewing Schedule

Unit 1: The Holocaust and the foundation of the state of Israel: cinematic negotiations.

September 3,8,10, 15, 17

Films: The True Story of Palestine [Hebrew: Etz O Palestine] (Nathan Axelrod, Yoel Zilberg, Uri Zohar 1962); Hill 24 Doesn't answer (1955, Thorold Dickinson); Exodus, (1960, Otto Preminger); Kedma (2002, Amos gitai);

Unit 2. Encounters of the absorbing Israeli society and Holocaust survivors; the sabra and the Holocaust survivor distinction challenged; critique of the Israeli ethos of cohesion.

September 22, 24, 29; October 1, 6, 8

Films: My Father's House (Herbert Kleine and Joseph Lejtes, 1947) He Walked through the Fields (Yossef Milo, 1968) The Wooden Gun (Ilan Moshenzon, 1979); The Summer of Aviya (Eli Cohen, 1988); Under the Domim Tree (Eli Cohen, 1994)

Unit 3: 1950s-1960s revisited; The Holocaust and the Jewish-Israeli family- transformations of a national narrative and the rise of the domestic sphere

October 13, 15, 20, 22, 27, 29.

Films: Alex in Love (Boaz Dasvidzon, 1985), Over the Ocean, (Jacob Goldwasser, 1992); Dear Mr Waldman [Letters to America] (Hanan Peled, 2006)

Unit 4: The Holocaust and the Israeli-Arab conflict: paradoxes of victims and victimizers

November 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24; December 1, 3.

Films: Operation Thunderbolt (Menachem Golan, 1976) Munich (Steven Spielberg, 2005) Walk on Water (Ethan Fox, 2004), Made in Israel (Ari Folman, 2001) Metallic Blues (Daniel Verete, 2006), The Debt, (Assaf Bernstein, 2007)

Unit 5: Documentary negotiations of the Holocaust-Personal stories and the Jewish-Israeli saga; Second Generation Discourses.

December 8, 10, 15.

Films: Le Grand Akshan (Ron Goldman, 2002) Watermarks (Yaron Zilberman, 2004), Because of that War (Orna Ben Dor-Niv, 1988), Father Take me to the Fair (Nitza Gonen, 1986).

Additional Resources of Information

1. The Internet Movie Data Base provides you with information about films, directors, producers, cast, production year, awards, synopsis and reviews. You can find the necessary information about the films we discuss, and others you are curious about, and add your own reviews.

www.imdb.com

2. The virtual Jewish library can be used as a resource for basic information and definitions of concepts in Israeli history you are not familiar with.

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/>

Appendix:

**Mosse/Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies Fall 2009 Jewish
Heritage Lecture Series**

For More information consult the Center's website: <jewishstudies.wisc.edu>