

Cinematic representations of Jews and Israelis

JUST 484C

Fall 2011

Dr. Sarel Birnbaum

This course meets for lecture and discussion on Tuesday and Thursday 6-7p Fine Arts room 248 and for film screening on Tuesday 7:20-9:20 p Lecture Hall 003. Film screenings are open to the public.

Office: LT 1301-A ; Office telephone number is 607-777-4810 Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 16:50 – 17:50 and by appointment.
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course we will discuss some of the images of Jews, including Israeli Jews, in some of the most influential cinema industries around the world. Some visual and audio images of Jews from classic anti-semitic sources will be studied for the purpose of comparison with modern films. Another focal point will be the Arab cinema. When the Egyptian cinematic industry appeared, many Jews took an important part in all areas of the cinematic productions. Later, in the 1950s and 1960s, several anti-semitic films were made. In contemporary Arab films, namely 1990s and 2000s, anti-semitic themes became rare, and we will discuss these changes. The films we will view will include films from Egypt, France, Nazi Germany, as well as some Yiddish films, and films about Israel. The primary text used in the course is Omer Bartov's *The "Jew" in Cinema: From The Golem to Don't Touch My Holocaust* (Indiana University, 2005). The course will give the students some glimpses from various cinema industries across the globe.

Course objectives

- * To familiarize students with and facilitate students development of proficiency with the analysis of cinematic representation
- * To familiarize students with cinematic representations of Jews and facilitate their development of analytic skills that are needed in order to recognize different descriptions and stereotypes (anti-Semitic and other) usually attached to Jewish characters' images.
- * To enable students to write an original research paper about cinema.

Attendance, Participation, and reading

Attendance and participation are expected and taken for granted. All students are expected to attend and to contribute productively to the class. Attendance policy applies to punctuality (lateness counts as missing class). Missing class without justification counts against the grade for the course at a rate of ¼ of the final grade up to the 4th time. Missing class without justification for the 5th time results in failure of the course. Participation is expected to be informed by the assigned readings for the course and to be thoughtful. Before each class students are required to read the reading materials of that week, as appearing in the syllabus, and according to instructions in class.

Grading for the course

Final exam: 35% - the goal of the exam is to be sure that the student is well familiarized with the materials included in the frontal lectures, the films included in the syllabus and the obligatory reading materials.

Participation in the class: 10% - the lectures are based upon high level of participation by the students. Students are required to read the articles in the syllabus, and this part of the final grade is aimed at encouraging active participation and bringing additional knowledge to the class (from additional films, for example).

Final paper and class-presentation: 55% - the final paper should use the materials, methods and techniques acquired during the course, and implement them to write an independence research on a certain film, or several films.

Students are asked to choose the subject they want to write, after consulting with the lecturer, until the fifth week of the course. A few weeks (at least) before submitting the paper, each student is required to send a draft of his work to the lecturer and initiate a talk and consult with him about the progress of his project.

In later weeks of the course it is required by the students to give presentations of their findings in class. The final paper should repeat, develop and revise (if needed) the subject as presented during the presentation.

The paper should include no-less than 20 pages, and originality is highly encouraged. Films were made for the sake of the common men of our times (unlike Egyptian hieroglyphs and many legal texts, for example). Therefore, also the findings of undergraduate students can be meaningful, and inspire them along their academic way. All papers will be submitted via "turn-it-in" system.

A note on academic honesty: Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious breaches of the code of ethics governing academic life. They are also violations Binghamton University policies. See <http://www2.binghamton.edu/harpur/students/>

WEEK 01 (28 AUG-03 SEP) T, 30 AUG, first day of lectures **Introduction and Acquaintance.**

Film: The Merchant of Venice

Robert S. Wistrich: *Antisemitism : the longest hatred*. London : Thames Methuen, 1991. pp. 3-97, and pictures papers. 978-0805210149

WEEK 02 (04-10 SEP) Audio and visual aspects of Anti-Semitism

Film: Der Golem (1915)

Richard Wagner: *Judaism in Music*. (1850)

Mellinkoff, R., *Outcasts: Signs of Otherness in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages*, Berkeley 1993. 978-0520078154

Strickland, D. H., *Saracens, Demons, and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art*, Princeton 2003

B. Blumenkranz, *Le Juif Médiéval au Miroir de l'art Chrétien*, Paris 1966. (Images)
(Recommended)

WEEK 03 (11-17 SEP) Emergence of Cinema – First films: *Der Golem (1915)*,

Film : The Jazz Singer.

Omer Bartov: *The "Jew" in Cinema: From The Golem to Don't Touch My Holocaust*.
Indiana University Press, 2005.

WEEK 04 (18-24 SEP) Yiddish Cinema – Screening: *Yiddle with a Fiddl;*

Mamele

J. (James) Hoberman , *Bridge of light : Yiddish film between two worlds*
New York : Museum of Modern Art, 1991 pp. 287-297.

WEEK 05 (25 SEP-01 OCT) Cinema of The Third Reich – Screening *The Jew*

Suss (Jud Süß):The Eternal Jew;

Vivian B. Mann, Richard I. Cohen: *From Court Jews to the Rothschilds : Art, Patronage, and Power 1600-1800 (Art & Design)* Prestel Publishing

B. Gitlis: " *Redemption" of Ahasuerus: the " Eternal Jew" in Nazi film*

1991 , Holmfirth . 978-9654140010

Possible: Lion Feuchtwanger: *Jew Suss*. Carroll & Graf Pub (May 1984)

WEEK 06 (02-08 OCT) Islamic Anti-Semitism and Arab Antisemitic films. Arab intellectual discourse about Israel

Film: La Rafle (France, 2010)

Bernard Lewis: *Muslim Anti-Semitism*. Middle East Quarterly June 1998, pp. 43-49

Sariel Birnbaum: "Historical Discourse in the Media of the Palestinian National Authority". In: *Palestinian Collective Memory and National Identity*. Edited by Meir Litvak, Palgrave Macmillan. Published: April 2009. (Will be sent by E-mail)

"Knight without a Horse" (TV Series) – Summaries will be sent by E-mail.

WEEK 07 (09-15 OCT) Introduction to Arab Cinema, Appearance of Jews in the First Egyptian films

Viola Shafik: *Arab Cinema, History and Cultural Identity*. The American University in Cairo Press, Cairo – New-York 1998. 9789774244759

Possible: Viola Shafik: *Popular Egyptian Cinema: Gender, Class, and Nation*. The American University of Cairo Press. Cairo, New-York, 2007

Film: Hasan, Murqus and Cohen:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4fU7rknUkx0>

Scenes from different films.

WEEK 08 (16-22 OCT) Arab Films from 1990s and 2000s – *Embassy in the Bulding (scenes. Probably was not translated); Yawm El-Karama*. (I have the second).

Film: *Alexandria, Why?*

WEEK 09 (23-29 OCT) Holocaust on the screen

Film: *The Grey Zone (2001)*

Annette Insdorf: *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust*. Cambridge, 2003.

WEEK 10 (30 OCT-05 NOV) Zionism and Israel On Screen – Films: *Exodus ; Theodor Herzl der Bannerträger des jüdischen Volkes (1921)*

Patricia Erens: *The Jew in American Cinema*. Indiana University Press, 1984.

WEEK 11 (06-12 NOV) The New Jew from Hollywood – Cohen Brothers and others. *Big Lebowski, A Serious Man*

WEEK 12 (13-19 NOV) French Cinema:

Film: Gainsbourg

Renée Poznanski. **Jews in France during World War II**. Translated by Nathan Bracher. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1997. **978-1584651444**

WEEK 13 (20-26 NOV) R, F 24-25 NOV, no classes (US Thanksgiving) *Crucifixion Never dies. Film: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly (1966)*

Caviness M., "From the Self-Invention of the Whiteman in the Thirteenth Century to *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*", *Different Visions: A Journal of New Perspectives on Medieval Art* 1(2008) <http://differentvisions.org/one.html>

WEEK 14 (27 NOV-03 DEC) *Crucifixion Never dies II. The Passion of the Christ, Film: Life of Brian, Paradise Now.*

Elliott Horowitz: "**Odd Couples: The Eagle and the Hare, the Lion and the Unicorn**" *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 11:3 (August 2004): 243-258

Traditional sources – Talmud , Origenes Adamantius, Contra Celsum. will be sent by mail.

WEEK 15 (04–10 DEC) Conclusion

Film: Paradise Now

Possible additional films for final papers and / or extra-curricular screenings and presentations:

Life is beautiful (1997), Schindler's list, The Social network, Waltz with Bashir, Fiddler on the Roof (1971), Madame Rosa, Hidden (Haneke, 2005)