

# Arab Israeli Conflict through Cinema

Spring 2013

Dr. Sarel Birnbaum

**SPRING 2013 - JUST 287A - ARAB 384A**

**FA 245 - S2 132**

MW 1750 -1850, M 1900 – 2100

Office: LT 1301-A ; Office telephone number is 607-777-4810 Office Hours:

Monday: 11:00-12:00 Wednesday 11:00-12:00 , and by appointment.

E-mail: [Birnbaum@binghamton.edu](mailto:Birnbaum@binghamton.edu),

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Arab Israeli conflict, which started in late 19<sup>th</sup> century and its end is far from sight even today, often fills many pages in the newspapers, but only a few studied it thoroughly. The course will offer a survey of the conflict from its earliest periods to current events, focusing on the interactions between Zionism and the National Arab movements.

We will not confine to learn the facts alone, but learn the entire picture around them. Namely, the course will deal with myths, collective memory, and what can be called "popular historiography" (in Newspapers, popular literature, and "historiophoty" in cinema). Some cinema scenes will be incorporated in class lectures.

Special place will be given to cinema. We will watch selected films from various periods and directors, that will shed light on selected issues, such as Jews leaving Arab countries, Israeli Arabs under military administration and more.

## Course objectives

- \* To familiarize students with basic and important information about the conflict
- \* To familiarize students with the major historical events of Middle East in 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

To familiarize students with the Israeli and Arab cinema industries, and the way they represent the conflict.

\* To introduce students to questions about the relationship between conflict, society, cinema and collective memory

\* To enable students to write an original research paper.

### Attendance, Participation, and reading

Attendance and participation are expected and taken for granted. We may or may not discuss all assigned readings in class, but students are in any case responsible for all required readings as demanded on the class. You are expected to bring to every class at least one brief paragraph with written questions or critique of at least one of the assigned readings and on each film. I may choose to collect these questions/critiques at any time. If you do not have a prepared paragraph on more than one such occasion, your grade will be affected. Occasionally, you might be asked to send in short email comments (1-2 paragraphs) on the readings.

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  $\frac{1}{4}$  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. Using electronic devices, like cell-phones and laptops, in class, for purposes that are not related to the lectures, is forbidden.

### Grading for the course

**Midterm and Final exams: 40%** - the goal of the exams is to be sure that the student is well familiarized with the materials included in the frontal lectures, the films 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.

**Final paper (including class-presentation): 50%** - 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 subject that relates to the course's theme. 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 11-13 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 printed to the lecturer as hard copies, and also 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**

Introduction: the long and complicated conflict.  
Origins of conflict: Nationalism and modernism. From theory to praxis, in the Jewish and Arab cases.

Book: Ernest Gellner : Nations and nationalism.

Film: Attash ? \ The Border (Al-Hudud. Syria. Starring Dureid Lahham)

## **WEEK 02**

Historical general survey.  
Film: Yacubian Building (Part 1)

## **WEEK 03**

Emergence of Zionism. Balfour declaration.  
Book: Theodor Herzl, Jewish state : an attempt at a modern solution of the Jewish question.

Google Books:

<http://books.google.com/books?id=7cNJAAAAMAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

Film: Yacubian Building (Part 2)

## **WEEK 04**

Islam and Jews. Arab communities in the late Ottoman Period

Porath, Yehoshua. The emergence of the Palestinian-Arab national movement, 1918-1929

Film: Exodus

## **WEEK 05**

Struggle in the days of British mandate: (Great?) Arab revolt 1936-1939.

Palestinian Historical discourse

Film: Attash

Porath, Yehoshua, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement : from riots to rebellion : vol. 2, 1929-1939* / Y. Porath. Published: London ; Totowa, N.J. : F. Cass, 1977.

## **WEEK 06**

1948 : War, Invasion and Refugees. Arab States getting involved

Yoav Gelber, *Palestine, 1948: war, escape and the emergence of the Palestinian refugee*

[http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=UcSUgrDsD\\_sC&oi=fnd&pg=PR6&dq=YOAV+GELBER&ots=aXV65CeaEL&sig=IK8MTFu2qij7EVDYwX55nUupFu8#v=onepage&q=YOAV%20GELBER&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=UcSUgrDsD_sC&oi=fnd&pg=PR6&dq=YOAV+GELBER&ots=aXV65CeaEL&sig=IK8MTFu2qij7EVDYwX55nUupFu8#v=onepage&q=YOAV%20GELBER&f=false)

## **WEEK 07**

Aftermath of 1948n War: First years of Israel. Military revolutions in Arab Countries. Remembering and re-remembering 1948.

Film: Khirbet Khizeh

Article : Shapira, Anita: *Hirbet Hizah: Between Remembrance and Forgetting*

## **WEEK 08**

Liquidation of Jewish communities in Arab countries. 1956 crisis. United Arab Republic. Israeli Arabs – military administration.

Film: Attash \ Ajami

Alexander Bligh (Ed.) : *The Israeli Palestinians: an Arab minority in the Jewish state*. Routledge, 2003

Film: Wedding in Galilee

## **WEEK 09**

1967 war and aftermath. Khartoum Conference. First stages of Israeli control of Judea and Samaria and Ghazza Strip.

Image of the Jew in Arab cinema  
Film: Alexandria Why. Fragments from other films

### **WEEK 10**

Further developments in Arab countries. Establishment of PLO and Fatah  
Movements. 1973 war

Film: Behind the Walls מאחורי הסורגים

### **WEEK 11**

Lebanese Civil War and 1982 Israeli Invasion.

Itamar Rabinovich: *The war for Lebanon, 1970-1985*. Cornell University Press, 1985.

Film: Walse with Bashir.

### **WEEK 12**

Return of Islam. Iran 1979 Islamic Revolution

Bernard Lewis: Return of Islam

Film: Hasan and Murqus

### **WEEK 13**

Oslo Agreements. 2000 Second Intifada

Avraham Sela: Politics, Identity and Peacemaking: The Arab Discourse on Peace with Israel in the 1990, *Israel Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (Summer, 2005), pp. 15-71.

Film: Paradise now

### **WEEK 14**

Years 2000s and future prospects. Arab Spring. Did Arab cinema presict this upheaval?

Fragments from Shahatta's Shop, Terror and BBQ, I want my right, and more

### **WEEK 15**

Conclusion , Presentations