

RS/JS 405

Israeli Media Studies: Cultural Approaches

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Office hour: Thursday, 12:45-13:45, McClung Tower, room 501-b

This course will explore identities and processes in Israeli society as they are constructed in and through the media. We will begin with a survey of the cultural history of the media in Israel: the political economy of their establishment and evolution, their roles in the nation building project, and their distinctive contributions to Israelis' collective memory. We will then shift to explore the mediated representation of various sectors in Israeli society, focusing on ethnic, national, gender, youth and religious identities. Finally, we will look into cultural and political dynamics, asking about the ways in which Israeli media are implicated in such processes as globalization and the transformation of the public sphere; and the ways in which different ideological groups in Israel adopt or resist specific media. The course is based on the assumption that the media play leading roles in the production and maintenance of culture; thus the study of Israeli media offers important insights for the understanding Israeli society.

Course requirements:

Attendance (10%): Students are expected to complete the reading assignments and be prepared to participate in class discussion.

Assignment and class presentation (30%): Analysis of a cultural text that relates to Israel (1,000-1,500 words). Describe the text (20%), discuss its significance (20%), analyze it according to at least three of the perspectives presented in class (40%), express your opinion and make a sound argument based on your analysis (20%).

Texts need to be approved by Sept. 16.

Analyses will be presented in class Nov. 18-25.

Submission by **Nov. 11 2008**. Guidelines below.

Final exam (60%)

Reading:

Tamar Katriel (1991). Communal webs: Communication and culture in contemporary Israel. Albany: SUNY Press.

Tasha Oren (2004). Demon in the box: Jews, Arabs, politics, and culture in the making of Israeli television. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Schedule:

1. Aug. 26- Sept 2

Media and cultural studies: Theory, practice and the case of Israel

Introduction to Israeli society

History and political economy of Israeli media

2. Sept. 9

Nationalism, national identity and Israeli media

Meyers, Oren (2005). Israeli journalism during the state's formative era: Between ideological affiliation and professional consciousness, Journalism History, 3/2, 88-98.

Frosh, Paul and Gadi Wolfsfeld (2007). ImagiNation: News discourse, nationhood and civil society. Media, Culture and Society, 29/1, 105-129.

Gertz, Nurith (1998). From Jew to Hebrew: The "Zionist narrative" in the Israeli cinema of the 1940s and 1950s, Israel Affairs, 4/3-4, 175-199.

Suggested:

Anderson, Benedict (1991). Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism, pp. 1-36. London/New York: Verso.

3. Sept. 16

Collective memory and Israeli media

Meyers, Oren and Eyal Zandberg (2002). The soundtrack of memory: *Ashes and Dust* and the commemoration of the holocaust in Israeli popular culture. Media, Culture, Society, 24/3, 389-408.

<http://www.nmc-music.co.il/nmc/artists/poliker/yehuda.html>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ebBW9eL0bg

Gertz, Nurith (2000). Sons of light and sons of darkness: Speeches of Menachem Begin, 1981. In Nurith Gertz, Myths in Israeli culture: Captives of a dream, pp. 59-74. London: Vallentine Mitchell.

Peri, Yoram (1999). The media and collective memory of Yitzhak Rabin's remembrance. Journal of Communication, 49/3, 109-124.

Suggested:

Zerubavel, Yael (1995). Recovered roots: Collective memory and the making of Israeli national tradition, pp. 3-12. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

4. Sept. 23

Identities

Ethnicity in Israeli media

Avraham, Eli (2002). Social-political environment, journalism practice and coverage of minorities: The case of marginal cities in Israel. Media, Culture and Society, 24/1: 69-86.

Horowitz, Amy (1999). Israeli Mediterranean music: Straddling disputed territories. Journal of American Folklore, 112, 450-463.

Lemish, Dafna (2000). The whore and the other: Israeli images of female immigrants from the former USSR, Gender and Society, 14/2, 333-349.

Suggested:

Elias, Nelly and Lemish, Dafna (2006). Between three cultures: Media in the lives of immigrant children in Israel and Germany. Paper Presented at the Annual Conference of the International Communication Association.

5. Oct.7

Arabs in Israeli media

Podeh, Elie (2000). History and memory in the Israeli educational system: The portrayal of the Arab-Israeli conflict in history textbooks (1948-2000), History and Memory, 12/1, 65-100.

Shohat, Ella (1989). Israeli cinema: East/west and the politics of representation, pp. 237-273, 288-9. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Avraham, Eli, Gadi Wolfsfeld and Isaam Aburaiya (2000). Dynamics in the news coverage of minorities: The case of the Arab citizens of Israel, Journal of Communication Inquiry, 24/2, 117-133

Sept **30** Rosh Hashana

6. Oct. 14

Gender in Israeli media

Lemish, Dafna (2003). Normalizing inequality: Portrayals of women in the Israeli media. In Hannah Naveh, ed., Israeli family and community: Women's time, pp. 110-125. London: Vallentine Mitchell.

Lubin, Orly (1999). Body and territory: Women in Israeli cinema, Israel Studies, 4/1, 175-187.

Moriel, Liora (1998). Diva in the promised land: A blueprint for newspeak? World Englishes, 17/2, 225-237.

Suggested:

Herzog, Hanna (1999). Gendering Politics: Women in Israel, pp. 237-260. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Kama, Amit (2000). From terra incognita to terra firma: The logbook of the voyage of gay men's community into Israeli public sphere, Journal of Homosexuality, 38/4, 133-162.

7. Oct. 21

Youth cultures and media in Israel

Katriel, Tamar (1991). Communal webs: Communication and culture in contemporary Israel. Albany: SUNY Press.

Hijazi-Omari, H. and Ribak, R. (2008). Playing with fire: On the domestication of the mobile phone among Palestinian teenage girls in Israel. Information, Communication and Society, 11/2, 149-166.

8. Oct. 21

Religion and Israeli media

Caplan, Kimmy (1997). God's voice: Audio-taped sermons in Israeli *haredi* society.

Modern Judaism, 17/3, 253-280.

Urian, Dan (2004). "To catch the sky": The Jewish identity of Israelis, Journal of Modern Jewish Studies, 3/1, 33-49.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2teOz8YND-4>

Oren, Tasha (2004). Demon in the box: Jews, Arabs, politics, and culture in the making of Israeli television, Ch. 5, pp. 137-155. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

9. Oct. 28

Processes

Globalization/glocalization/Americanization

Stein, Rebecca L. (2005). "First contact" and other Israeli fictions: Tourism, globalization and the Middle East peace process. In Rebecca L. Stein and Ted Swedenburg, eds., Palestine, Israel and the politics of popular culture, pp. 259-287. Durham: Duke University Press.

Azaryahu, Maoz (1999). McDonald's or Golani Junction? A case of a contested place in Israel. Professional Geographer, 51/4, 481-492.

Avraham, E. and First, A. (2003). "I buy American": The American image as reflected in Israeli advertising. Journal of Communication, 53/2, 282-299.

Ribak, R. (2007). "Privacy is a basic American value": Globalization and the construction of web privacy in Israel. The Communication Review, 10/1, 1-27.

10. Nov. 4

Transformation of the public sphere: News, media, politics

Blum-Kulka, Shoshana, Menahem Blondheim and Gonen HaCohen (2002). Traditions of dispute: From negotiations of Talmudic texts to the arena of political discourse in the media, Journal of Pragmatics, 34/10-11, 1569-94.

Liebes, Tamar (1999). Displacing the news: The Israeli talk show as public space, Gazette, 61/2, 113-125.

Yadgar, Yaacov (2002). The media and the public sphere: Reflections in the wake of the Rabin assassination, Journal of Modern Jewish Studies, 1/2, 150-166.

Bloch, Linda-Renee (2000). Setting the public sphere in motion: The rhetoric of political bumper stickers in Israel, Political Communication, 17/4, 433-456.

11. Nov. 11 **Please hand in assignments**

Use and non-use of media technology

Livio, Oren and Keren Tenenboim-Weinblatt (2007). Discursive legitimation of a controversial technology: Ultra-Orthodox Jewish women in Israel and the internet. The Communication Review, 10/1, 29-56.

Ribak, Rivka and Michele Rosenthal (2006). From the field phone to the mobile phone: A cultural biography of the phone in Kibbutz Y., New Media and Society, 8/4, 551-572.

Cohen, Akiba, Lemish, Dafna and Schejter, Amit (2008). The wonder phone in the land of miracles: Mobile telephony in Israel, pp. 75-105, 161-182. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, Inc.

12. Nov. 18
Presentations

13. Nov. 25
Presentations

14. Dec. 2
Presentations

Conclusion

Oren, Tasha (2004). Demon in the box: Jews, Arabs, politics, and culture in the making of Israeli television, pp. 1-70, 192-198. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Assignment:

1. Select a cultural text or a cultural practice that relate to Israel in some way. This can be a film, a book, an ad, etc.
2. Send me a note about your choice (or options) by **Sept 16**; your note should consist of a paragraph (5-7 sentences) with the following: (1) a brief description of the text, (2) an explanation – why this text/practice are worthy of your analysis, and hopefully (3) what your argument might be; plus (4) a list of 2-3 (outside) references that can shed light on this text and help analyzing it.
3. Analyze the text/practice according to at least 3 of the perspectives presented in class. Drawing on the analyses that we read, provide (1) a description of the text that highlights its meanings – as a hegemonic (total?) voice, perhaps, or possibly as complicated, contradictory set of messages, etc. (2) why do you think this text is significant – for example, what are your assumptions (or theory) concerning its social and cultural role? Do you think it is reflective of things that stand behind it? Does it amplify or construct meanings, and if so, how? These points should set the stage for (3) an analysis of the text from different (though possibly related) perspectives: Israeli Hummus sold in US supermarkets as an intersection of, for example, nationalist, gendered and global discourses. Conclude the analysis by (4) expressing your opinion and making a sound argument concerning this text – its meanings, the practices that are associated with it, etc. (1,000-1,500 words).
Description: 20%
Assumptions/theory: 20%
Analysis: 40%
Argument: 20%
4. Prepare a presentation of your analysis that would consist of the same components.
5. Submit by **Nov 11**, 2008.