The course offers an initial exploration of Israeli culture through a study of documentary films that aim to represent aspects of this culture. Specifically, the course will focus the representation of four cardinal issues: the conflict, the holocaust, immigration and privatization. At the same time, the course will reflect on questions of representation: what “documentation” means, and how does it differ from “fiction”?

Course requirements:

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

Assignments (2/3x20%): Discuss one of the films that are screened in class (1,000 words).

Final take-home exam (50%)


Course plan:

January 8     **Introduction**: Documenting Israel

January 13*-15  Introduction: Issues of representation and memory

January 20-22  **Representing the conflict**: The official narrative
*Pillar of Fire, 7: A Nation Reborn* (1979) Ya’akov Eisenman

January 27-29  The conflict, a look from within
*The Inner Tour* (2001) Ra’anana Alexandrowicz

February 3-5  The conflict, a look at the borders
*Machssomim* (Checkpoints, 2003) Yoav Shamir
Assignment due.
February 10-12  **The Holocaust**: The official narrative
*Pillar of Fire, 5: Holocaust* (1979) Ya’akov Eisenman

February 17-19  The holocaust, looking at ourselves
*Because of that War* (1988) Orna Ben-Dor

February 24-26  The holocaust, going there
*Martin* (1999) Ra’anan Alexandrowicz

The holocaust in Israeli cinema I

March 3-5  The holocaust in Israeli cinema II
March 3: Assignment #2

**Immigration:**
*Tkuma, 4: The Ingathering* (1998) Neta Efroni

March 10*-12*  Immigration: Looking back
Ofer, Dalia (2009). The past that does not pass: Israelis and holocaust memory. *Israel Studies*, 14/1, 1-35.

March 24-26  Immigration: Uneasy encounter

March 31-April 2  Immigration, personal fiction
*Late Marriage* (2001) Dover Koshashvili

April 7 (April 9)  **Privatization**: Concretizing the economy
April 7: Assignment #3

April 14-16 Privatizing the center

April 21-23 Privatizing the margins