

RS/JS 385

**Israeli Filmmakers: Israel in Documentary Film**

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Spring 2009, room 252 H. Library (\*room 213)

Office hour: Thursday, 12:30-13:30, McClung Tower, room 501

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%)*

Reading: Gertz, Nurith (2000). *Myths in Israeli culture: Captives of a dream*. London: Vallentine Mitchell.

Course plan:

January 8

**Introduction:** Documenting Israel

January 13\*-15

Introduction: Issues of representation and memory

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

January 20-22

**Representing the conflict:** The official narrative

*Pillar of Fire, 7: A Nation Reborn* (1979) Ya'akov Eisenman

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

January 27-29

The conflict, a look from within

*The Inner Tour* (2001) Ra'anana Alexandrowicz

Ashuri, Tamar (2007) Television tension: National versus cosmopolitan memory in a co-produced television documentary. *Media, Culture & Society*, 29/1, 31-51.

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  
 Loshitzky, Yosefa (2001). *Identity politics on the Israeli screen*, pp. 15-71, 178-192. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- February 17-19      The holocaust, looking at ourselves  
*Because of that War* (1988) Orna Ben-Dor  
 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.
- February 24-26      The holocaust, going there  
*Martin* (1999) Ra'anana Alexandrowicz
- The holocaust in Israeli cinema I  
*Walk on Water* (2004) Eytan Fox
- March 3-5              The holocaust in Israeli cinema II  
*Walk on Water* (2004) Eytan Fox  
 March 3: Assignment #2
- Immigration:**  
*Tkuma, 4: The Ingathering* (1998) Neta Efroni  
 Weingrod, Alex and Andre Levy (2006). Paradoxes of homecoming: The Jews and their diasporas. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 79/4, 691-716.
- March 10\*-12\*      Immigration: Looking back  
*The Cemetery Club* (2006) Tali Shemesh  
 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  
*A Hebrew Lesson* (2006) David Ofek  
 Gershenson, Olga and Dale Hudson (2008). New immigrant, old story: Framing Russians on the Israeli screen. *Journal of Film and Video*, 60/3-4, 25-41.
- March 31-April 2      Immigration, personal fiction  
*Late Marriage* (2001) Dover Koshashvili  
 Gertz, Nurith (2000). *Myths in Israeli culture: Captives of a dream*. London: Vallentine Mitchell. Ch. 6-7, pp. 109-134.
- April 7 (April 9)      **Privatization:** Concretizing the economy  
*Tkuma 17: The Economic Revolution* (1998) Nathan Lifshits  
 April 7: Assignment #3

Ben-Porat Guy (2005). Netanyahu's second coming: A neoconservative policy paradigm? *Israel Studies*, 10/3, 225-245.

April 14-16

Privatizing the center

*Children of the Sun* (2007) Ran Tal

Kedem, Eldad (2007). *The Kibbutz and Israeli cinema: Deterritorializing representation and ideology*. Raanana, Open University Press, pp. 28-35, 103-118, 133-147.

April 21-23

Privatizing the margins

*A Working Mom* (2006) Limor Pinchasov

Kama, Amit (2008). Labor migrants' self-empowerment via participation in a diasporic magazine: Filipinos at Manila-Tel Aviv. *Asian Journal of Communication*, 18/3, 223-238.