

Middle Eastern Societies in Cinematic Transitions: Israel and Egypt

JUST 287A

Fall 2011

Dr. Sarel Birnbaum

TR 2:50-4:15p Science 2, Room 337

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine the intriguing cinema industries of two neighboring Middle Eastern countries - Israel and Egypt. The course will focus on cinematic changes and their relation to changes in society and politics. Among the foci of the courses will be historical films (films that represent a historical period to an audience removed in time from it), the representation of the "other" in the films of each country, and the meaning of the "East" that the films of each society convey.

Course objectives

- * To familiarize students with the analysis of cinematic representations
- * To introduce students to questions about the relationship between cinema and society
- * To familiarize students with important examples of Israeli and Egyptian films
- * 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 $\frac{1}{4}$ 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.

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 (including possible 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 10-12 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/>

Egyptian Cinema:

WEEK 01 (28 AUG-03 SEP) T, 30 AUG, first day of lectures The beginning of Egyptian Cinema. Era of the Studios, at the time of Monarchy.

P.J. Vatikiotis: *The history of modern Egypt : from Muhammad Ali to Mubarak*. The Johns Hopkins University Press\ 1991.

Film: Afrita Hanem

WEEK 02 (04-10 SEP) Social Problems at the Time of Monarchy and their cinematic representations.

Film: Lashin (also: Lachine)

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

WEEK 03 (11-17 SEP) Revolution and Cinema. What can a revolutionary do with cinema?

Film: Victorious Saladin (Dir. Youssef Chahine)

Book: Joel Gordon: **Revolutionary Melodrama: Popular Film and Civic Identity in Nasser's Egypt**. Chicago: Univrsity of Chicago, 2002 .
0970819900

WEEK 04 (18-24 SEP) Youssef Chahine.

Film: Alexandria, Why?

WEEK 05 (25 SEP-01 OCT) Chahine and colonial and Post colonial west

Film: Alexandrie... New York (2004)

Armbrust, Walter: **Mass culture and modernism in Egypt**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 0521484928

WEEK 06 (02 08 OCT) Historical Genre

Film: The Mummy (1969)

Can be watched fully with subtitles at:

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=7122835586526122213#docid=3532349035760927064>

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

WEEK 07 (09-15 OCT) Imarat Yacubian and revision of 20th century. Film : Yacubian Building

Book recommended: Alaa Al-Aswani: Yacubian Building (Roman)

Israeli Cinema:

WEEK 08 (16-22 OCT) **Arab Films from 1990s and 2000s** Remembering and re-remembering 1948. Film: Khirbet Khizeh

Amy Kronish, *World cinema: Israel, Trowbridge, Wiltshire* : Flicks Books [etc.], 1996

WEEK 09 (23-29 OCT) Cinema of the 1960s – Salah Shabati
Ella Shohat: *Israeli Cinema East/West and the Politics of Representation*

WEEK 10 (30 OCT-05 NOV) Burekas Films: Snuker\חגיגה בסנוקר

Article: Sigalit Banai: Arabic and Iranian films in Hebrew? Tracing the middle-eastern roots of Israeli Cinema

WEEK 11 (06-12 NOV) Israeli comedies: Givat Halfoun

Howard M. Sachar: *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time*

WEEK 12 (13-19 NOV) Arab-Isreli films: Ajami, Attash

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

WEEK 13 (20-26 NOV) Years 2000s - Return of Ethnic trend – Late Marriage
(**התונה מאוחרת**)

WEEK 14 (27 NOV-03 DEC) Years 2000s - Return of Ethnic trend, and the memory of the Holocaust: *Once I was* (פעם הייתי) Avi Neshet, 2010)

WEEK 15 (04–10 DEC): War, Trauma , and the Israeli and foreign audience. *Two Fingers from Sidon*(1986) Walse with Bashir,

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

Raya Morag: *Defeated Masculinity: Post-Traumatic Cinema in the Aftermath of War*

Peter Lang, 2009.

ISBN-13: 978-9052014692

[http://books.google.com/books?id=4L6FIdfy2AsC&pg=PA28&lpg=PA28&dq=RAY A+MORAG+defeated+masculinity&source=bl&ots=K0KGVCAhOU&sig=cgNWNsSXO8m0oR2d0Sc_ZVvmMtk&hl=en&ei=F04pTq3yCsTLhAe_heTwCw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=2&sqi=2&ved=0CB4Q6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=4L6FIdfy2AsC&pg=PA28&lpg=PA28&dq=RAY+A+MORAG+defeated+masculinity&source=bl&ots=K0KGVCAhOU&sig=cgNWNsSXO8m0oR2d0Sc_ZVvmMtk&hl=en&ei=F04pTq3yCsTLhAe_heTwCw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=2&sqi=2&ved=0CB4Q6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q&f=false)