



Israeli Cinema and the Culture of Modern Israel

Tel Aviv University International

Fall Semester 2019

Lecturer's name: Dr. Shmulik Duvdevani

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Course description:

The course deals with the history and chronology of Israeli cinema, starting with early 1930s Zionist films up to the present. It analyses the ideological aspects of Israeli cinema – the way it established Zionist myths and then deconstructed them. It deals with the unique thematic and aesthetics of Israeli cinema – in fact, we will question *what is* Israeli cinema – and with its characteristic ‘genres’. And finally it focuses on the importance and contribution of some of Israel’s most prominent filmmakers (Ephraim Kishon, Menachem Golan, Uri Zohar and Assi Dayan among others), and the way Israeli cinema reflects Israeli culture. The course will be accompanied with screenings of excerpts and full length feature films and close reading of selected bibliography.

Course requirements:

The students are expected to attend classes and screenings, participate in class discussions (10%), submit a mid-term paper (30%), and final in-class exam (60%).

Attendance is mandatory. Students who have more than three absences will be excluded from the course.

Mandatory reading materials appear on the Moodle course site.

Eating is strictly prohibited in class during lectures and screenings.

Grading points:

Attendance and participation – 10%

Mid-term assignment – 30%

Final in-class exam – 60%

Weekly schedule and reading assignments

First week – Introduction

Israeli culture and Israeli cinema in the first decade of the 21st century

Screening: *The Band's Visit* (Eran Kolirin, 2007)

Short film: *Anthem* (Elad Keidan, 2008)

Second Week – Zionist Myths and their Manifestation in Early Israeli Cinema

The 1950s and 1960s – the National-Heroic cinema

Screening: *Sallah Shabati* (Ephraim Kishon, 1964)

Excerpts: *He Walked Through the Fields* (Joseph Milo, 1967)

Every Bastard A King (Uri Zohar, 1968)

Reading: Avisar Ilan, "The National and the Popular in Israeli Cinema," *Shofar* 24.1 2005: 125-143

Third Week – Popular Israeli Cinema

Popular Israeli cinema (the ideology of the melting pot)

Screening: *The Troupe* (Avi Nesher, 1978)

Reading: Shohat Ella *Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation*, London & New York: I.B. Tauris 2010. Pp. 126-140

Fourth Week – Family Portrayals

The "absent father" motif in new Israeli cinema

Excerpts: *Sweet Mud* (Dror Shaul, 2006), *Broken Wings* (Nir Bergman, 2002)

Fifth Week – the Blade and the Vessel

Images of masculinity and femininity in Israeli cinema – militarism in Israeli society

Screening: *Zero Motivation* (Talya Lavie, 2014)

Visiting Hours (Maya Dreifuss, 2005)

Sixth Week – He’s got the Wrong Part

Images of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the 1980s

Screening: *Bethlehem* (Yuval Adler, 2013)

Dark Night (Leonid Prudovsky, 2005)

Excerpt: *Avanti Popolo* (Rafi Bukai, 1986)

Reading: Ne’eman Judd, “The Empty Tomb in the Postmodern Pyramid: Israeli Cinema in the 1980s and 1990s”, in: Charles Berlin (ed.) *Documenting Israel*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard College Library, 1995. Pp. 136-142

SUBMISSION OF MID-TERM ASSIGNMENT

Seventh Week – Due to That War

Holocaust and survivors – from repression to recognition

Screening: *Walk on Water* (Eytan Fox, 2004)

Excerpts: *Wooden Gun* (Ilan Moshenzon, 1979)

Summer of Aviya (Eli Cohen, 1988)

Reading: Avisar Ilan, "The Holocaust in Israeli Cinema as a Conflict between Survival and Morality" in Miri Talmon and Yaron Peleg (eds.) *Israeli Cinema: Identities in Motion*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011, pp. 151-167

Eighth Week – 1990s and Beyond

Images of Judaism in Current Israeli Cinema

Screening: *Fill the Void* (Rama Burshtein, 2012)

Excerpts: *The Holly Guests* (Gidi Dar, 2004)

Reading: Chyutin, Dan, "Negotiating Judaism in Contemporary Israeli Cinema: The Spiritual Style of *My Father, My Lord*" in Miri Talmon and Yaron Peleg (eds.) *Israeli Cinema: Identities in Motion*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011, pp. 201-212

Ninth Week – Return to Lebanon: Trauma and Redemption in Current Israeli War Films

Screening: *Waltz with Bashir* (Ari Folman, 2008)

Excerpt: *Lebanon* (Shmuel Maoz, 2009)

Reading: Yosef, Raz. "War Fantasies: Memory, Trauma and Ethics in Ari Folman's *Waltz with Bashir*". *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 9:3 (2010): 311-326.

Tenth Week – Multiculturalism

Screening: *Sh'Chur* (Shmuel Hasfari, 1994)

Home (David Ofek, 1994)

Reading: Loshitzky Yosefa, *Authenticity in Crisis: Sh'Chur and New Israeli Forms of Ethnicity, Media, Culture & Society* vol. 18, 1996. Pp. 87-103

LAST WEEK: FINAL IN-CLASS EXAM

TAU International Course Guidelines

- No cell phones or laptops permitted in class unless approved by instructor for use
- Tardiness to class is not permitted
- As our courses bring together students from many different styles of learning and from a wide variety of home institutions, we ask that students remain respectful to and patient with fellow classmates at all time as some students may be more familiar with certain course material or procedures than others.

Learning Accommodations

In accordance to University guidelines, students with learning disabilities or accommodation requests must submit official documentation from their home country / university (translated into English by notary if not already in English) to TAU International (tauiacademic@tautex.tau.ac.il) in advance of arrival describing in detail any specific needs they have. Students must also bring a copy of this documentation with them on-site and give it to their faculty on the first day of class while introducing themselves so that the faculty know who they are and what sorts of needs they may have. TAU International and its faculty cannot guarantee that all accommodations received at the home school can be similarly met at TAU but certainly does the best it can to make any suitable accommodations possible that are needed.

In-class Exams

TAU does not permit, under any circumstances, taking any in-class (including mid or final) exams early or later than the scheduled exam day. When selecting courses, it is thus very important to note below if there is an in-class midterm or final exam as this date/exam cannot be changed. Early departures from the program are not approved, nor are early or exception in-class exams.

TAU International Absence Policy

Attendance is **mandatory** in all of the courses. Missing classes will be reflected in the final grade of the course. Up to three justified absences from classes will be accepted (for example:

emergency matter or illness, both of which will require an official doctor's note sent to the faculty **on the day of the absence**). Such cases of absence should be reported to your lecturer immediately and again, a doctor's note is required. Students are required to arrive on time for classes. Teachers are entitled to treat any single case of lateness and/or repeated lateness as an unjustified absence. Please note that according to TAU Academic Policy, if a student's behavior or attendance during the semester is disagreeable his/her course participation may be cancelled at the discretion of TAU.

Students are responsible for reading and adhering to the policies and procedures in the TAU International Academic Handbook [posted here](#) at all times.