



**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 21<sup>st</sup> 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**