Description

Israeli cinema offers a powerful and esthetically distinctive set of perspectives on Israel. This course offers an in-depth study of 12 films and related fiction against a backdrop of state-building, creation of an Israeli identity, constant war, secular-religious strife, and the shadow of the Holocaust. We also ask: How has Israeli cinema evolved thematically and in filmic terms such as New Wave aesthetics, how do the film-makers see themselves, and what happens when books become movies, as in Oz's *My Michael* and Kaniuk's *Himmo King of Jerusalem?*

Assessment

Four 1000 word essays (40% of the grade)
One final 4000-5000 word project (40% of the grade)
Two quizzes on Israeli cinema in general, based on Kronish's book (20% of the grade)
The essays and project are to be blitzed to me, as an attachment.

Read Kronish to extract the main points about how Israeli cinema developed, in particular the social and historical changes the films reflect -- and the changes in the artistic and ideological outlook of the filmmakers.
Aside from the details relating to our own films and their directors, ignore the details and focus on the main points.

About citing from the films in your essays, it's sufficient to name the film -- but if you have an exact time reference, how much the better.

You will also be asked, at random, to report on films you have just studied. The quality of your report may affect your final grade.
Viewing

In my syllabus, the films are to be viewed by the TUESDAY of that week (unless there are two).

The reading for each week is generally to be done by the THURSDAY class within that week, for me to discuss it on that Thursday. I've deliberately left myself some flexibility on this.

However, when we come to Oz's My Michael and Kaniuk's Himmo, please note that I want you to read the novel BEFORE the film -- otherwise, the film will comandeer your imagination.

All the films are available for viewing as videos, on reserve in the Jones Media Center in the Berry Library (2nd floor).
**Reading**

**The course pack**

This can be purchased at Wheelock Books. It comprises some books and articles, including:


Friedman, Regine. Between silence and abjection: The film medium and the Israeli war widow. *Film Historia* 3(1-2), 1993, pp. 79-89


Wurmser, Meyrav. (2001) Escapism and defeat.INTERNET JERUSALEM POST, Apr 20, 01


Reserve

In addition, the following have been placed on 24-hour reserve in Baker Library:

LITERATURE

Abramson, Glenda. The Oxford Book of Hebrew Short Stories.
Amichai, Yehuda. Not of this time, not of this place. London, Vallentine, Mitchell, 1973
Penueli, S. & A. Ukhmani. Hebrew short stories. (2 volumes), 1965
Ramras-Rauch, G. & Michman-Melkman, J. (eds), Facing the Holocaust. JPS, 1985
Sonntag, Jacob (ed.) New writing from Israel London : Corgi, 1976
Yehoshua, A.B. The Lover, Garden City, N.Y. : Doubleday, 1978

CRITICISM


Monaco, James. How to Read a Film. Oxford.


BACKGROUND HISTORY


Goldscheider, Calvin. Cultures in Conflict: the Arab-Israeli Conflict (Greenwood, 2002)


Mishal, Nissim. Those were the Years. Yediot Ahronoth, 1997.

Porat, Dan. From the Scandal to the Holocaust in Israeli Education. J of Contemporary History


http://www.us-israel.org/jsource/History/timeline.html
Schedule

Week 1: Introduction/Early Zionist narratives
Two overviews: The history of Modern Israel; the evolution of Israeli cinema and fiction

The film They were Ten

Smilansky Squatters Rights in Penueli Hebrew Short Stories, vol. 1, 182-191
Aricha 'Night Scene' (in Penueli & Ukhmani, vol. 2, 233-244)
Raab 'Wedding' (in Diament 20-26)

Turner, Graeme. 'Film Languages'.
Erens, Pamela. Israeli cinema. [class hand out]

Elon, ch 6, pp 106-147
Barnavi 220-1
Ne’eman, Judd. The empty tomb… (read 117-129)

Week 2: The War of Independence:
The film Hill 24 Doesn't Answer

Tammuz The Swimming Contest in The Oxford Book of Hebrew Short Stories, 127-138
Shamir's play He Walked in the Fields
Gertz. From Jew to Hebrew
Barnavi 242-245

Essay due by Blitz.
The heroes/heroines in Zionist cinema are often subject to inner conflict and change. How far is this true of They were Ten and Hill 24 Doesn't Answer?

Week 3: Childhood, adolescence and a shifting set of values:
The film Noa at 17
The film The Wooden Gun
Yehoshua, A.B. 'The literature of the generation of the state'
Ne’eman, Judd. The empty tomb… (read 129-136)
Porat.
Shoham

Quiz (Kronish)
**Week 4** The melting pot:
Kishon's film Sallah
Kishon's satirical stories Unfair to Goliath, 'the economics of babysitting' to 'a matter of porterage'
Barnavi 254-5

*Essay due by Blitz.*
Is the film Sallah a put-down of Sephardim?
or
What are the targets of Kishon's satire in Sallah?

**Week 5: The Six Day War:**
The film Siege
Yehoshua The Last Commander in The Oxford Book of Hebrew Short Stories, 220-236
Porat A diagonal view (in Sonntag 129-137)

Friedman, Regine. Between silence and abjection
Elon, ch 9, pp. 222-255
Barnavi 260-5

*Arab and Jew*
The film Hamsin
Liebrecht: Room on the Roof in Diamant 231-258
Ne’eman, Judd. The death mask of the moderns

*Quiz*

**Week 6: Arab and Jew (continued)**
Amos Oz's novel My Michael
The film version of My Michael
Elon, ch 10, pp 256-289

Gertz, Nurith. "My Michael - From Jerusalem to Hollywood via the 'Red Desert"

*Essay due by Blitz.*
Compare the techniques of fiction and film with reference to My Michael.
NB: you may find some good ideas in (a) Monaco How to read a Film, the chapters on Signs and Syntax, (b) some chapters from Murray The Cinematic Imagination (photocopies)
Week 7: Responses to the Holocaust:
The film Summer of Aviya,
The film Under the Domim Tree
The film Because of that War

Megged The Name in Ramras-Rauch 21-36
Liebrecht Morning in the Park with Nannies in The Oxford Book of Hebrew Short Stories, 387-396

Ramras-Rauch, Introduction and Afterword
Feldhay Brenner, R. 'Discourses of mourning and rebirth'
Gertz, Nurith "The Impact of the Holocaust on Israeli Ideological Models"

Elon, ch. 8 'An open wound'

I'd like you to think about how the crisis in Megged's powerful story "The Name" is resolved, if that's the word -- what are the young couple and grandfather Zisskind thinking at the end, and is the outcome a viable one psychologically for them and for their society?
Also, what light does it throw on Elon Chapter 8? Note: The name of the Israeli central memorial for the Holocaust, Yad VaShem, means literally "Place and Name"

Week 8: Demythologizing the national struggle:
Kaniuk's novel Himmo King of Jerusalem
The film version of Himmo King of Jerusalem
The film Late Summer Blues


Katriel Communal Webs, ch. 2 on gibbush.

Essay due by Blitz.
Discuss the portrayal of the Holocaust 's impact on survivors and their families in the films and fiction you have studied.

Week 9: Conflict in the 80s and 90s

The film Song of the Siren
The film Cup Final

Mishal 234-240, 291-2
Avisar, Ilan. Israeli cinema and the ending of Zionist ideology.
Gertz, Nurith. "A World Without Boundaries"
Shaviv, Miriam. A literary blank ballot
Wurmser, Meyrav. Escapism and defeat.

Project due by Blitz
How do filmmakers’ and authors’ attitudes to the Arab-Israeli conflict vary in the films and literature you have studied?

or

‘The open end has become a virtual cliché of the Israeli cinema.’ (Pamela Erens) How far is this true of the films you have studied. and what might the open end seek to convey?’