

Middle Eastern Cinema

NES 2793, COML 2293, VISST 2193, JWST 2793, PMA 2493

Professor D. Starr

Spring 2019

T-Th 10:10-11:25, 106 White Hall

Office: 415 White Hall

Phone: (607) 254-6594

Email: das86@cornell.edu

Office hours: Mondays 1:30-2:30
Thursdays 11:30-12:30

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course offers an introduction to films produced in the Middle East. In this class we will view films from the Arab world, including North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean, as well as from Israel, Iran, and Turkey. Readings will provide background on the particular cultural and historical contexts in which the films are produced, and the aesthetic traditions from which they emerge and to which they refer. Readings will also serve to familiarize students with approaches to critically interpreting visual media. All films will be screened with English subtitles.

Film industries in the Middle East, as in much of the rest of the world, emerged out of efforts at the national level. In the Arab world and Israel, the film industries reflect upon struggles of national self-determination. The Iranian film industry underwent significant changes following the Islamic Revolution of 1979. We will consider the significance of these national rubrics and how they have shaped the work of filmmakers throughout the Middle East.

But, films reach beyond the boundaries of the nation, and so, we will also consider how these films transcend national borders. On the one hand we will consider limit factors, like censorship, and the role of language and dialect on film viewership and distribution. And, on the other hand, we will consider external forces, such as the influence of foreign film markets in Europe and North America on filmmakers in the Middle East, as well as the effects of foreign financing—both from Europe and the Gulf States.

READINGS

Books available at the Cornell Store:

Corrigan, Timothy. *A Short Guide to Writing about Film*

Gugler, Josef, ed. *Film in the Middle East and North Africa*

Other articles are available on the course blackboard site. The course is listed under NES 2793 for all students, regardless of the department or course number in which you enrolled. The Cornell Blackboard site is available at: <https://blackboard.cornell.edu>.

VIEWING FILMS

Streaming Films: Films for this class are available to stream via blackboard. Films can be found in two places.

- Click on the “Contents” tab to then “Films” to access films located on Blackboard
- Click on the “Course reserves” tab for titles on Uris Library Digital Reserves

Cornell Cinema Screenings: There are four films screening at Cornell Cinema this semester. Only one of them (*In Between / Bar Bahar*) is available in streaming format, so you will need to attend one of the Cornell cinema screenings. Individual student tickets cost \$6.50 and are available onsite prior to the screening. A student six-film pass is also available for purchase for \$30. Details available at: <http://cinema.cornell.edu/info/tickets.html>

The Wild Pear Tree (Turkey 2019) Nuri Bilge Ceylan

Wednesday, February 27, 6:45 PM

Sunday, March 3, 6:45 PM

In Between (Bar Bahar) (Israel 2016) Dir. Maysaloun Hamoud

Thursday, February 28, 6:45 PM

Working Woman (Israel 2018) Dir. Michal Aviad

Thursday, March 7, 8:30 PM

Sunday, March 10, 7:00 PM

Capernaum (Lebanon 2018) Dir. Nadine Labaki

Thursday, April 25, 7:00 PM

Friday, April 26, 7:00 PM

How to watch a film: For the films you watch on your own: watch on the biggest screen you can. If you are watching on a computer close all other applications. Do not answer your phone or even look at it. Turn it off. If possible, watch in a dark room with no other distractions. Do not pause the film except perhaps for a bathroom break (and then only if absolutely necessary). We cannot replicate the experience of watching these films on a screen 30 feet wide and 12 feet high, in a dark theatre with hundreds of other people, which is how they were intended to be seen. But you should do as much as you can to make this a continuous, focused viewing experience.

ASSIGNMENTS

Class Participation (30%)

Students are expected to have read assignments and viewed the film prior to class. Everyone is expected to participate actively in class discussions. In order to avoid distractions, please refrain from using electronic devices (including computers) during class discussions.

Short Preparatory Writing Assignments (6%)

There will be 4-5 assignments from the Corrigan book to help students approach writing as a process. These preparatory assignments will be graded satisfactory/unsatisfactory. Students are expected to take these assignments seriously, copy edit, and submit them on time. Please print out two hard copies of your short assignments and bring them to class on the due date.

<u>Exercise</u>	<u>Film</u>	<u>Due date</u>
Corrigan Exercise 2, p. 37	<i>Bedwin Hacker</i>	Tues, Feb 5
Corrigan, Exercise 2, p. 85	Any film	Thurs, Feb 14
Corrigan, Exercise 1 or 2, p. 111	Any Israeli film	Tues, March 19
Corrigan Exercise 1, p. 130	Any Turkish film	Tues, Apr 9
Corrigan Exercise 2, p. 130	Any film	Thurs, May 7

Film Analysis Papers (64%)

For these papers, students will be asked to reflect upon, analyze and interpret a film viewed in class. Film Analysis papers 1,250-1,500 words in length (approx. 5 pages) are to be submitted via blackboard. All papers are due at 4:30 on the date indicated. Please reference Corrigan *A Short Guide to Writing About Film*, Chapter 7 for standards of quoting from films and citing sources, etc.

<u>Paper</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Paper #1	North African/Arab Cinemas	Fri. 2/22
Paper #2	Israeli Cinema	Fri. 3/22
Paper #3	Turkish Cinema	Fri. 4/12
Paper #4	Iranian Cinema/Recent Arab Films	Th. 5/16

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: I pledge to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity, and I expect students in this class to do the same. For details see:

<http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html>

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Appropriate and confidential accommodations will be made for students eligible for support from Student Disabilities Services. Students in need of special accommodations should bring a letter from SDS to the professor at the beginning of the semester.

ELECTRONIC DEVICE POLICY

Electronic devices are permitted in class *only* to access electronic texts. When using electronic devices, please close all other windows and disable notifications. Please plan to take notes on paper.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Dates indicate what we will discuss in each class session. Please watch films and read materials **prior** to class session.

T 1/22

Introduction

Th 1/24	Film: Readings:	<i>Battle of Algiers</i> [Algeria, 1965] Dir. Gillo Pontecorvo (121 min) Gugler, "Creative Responses to Conflict" in Gugler, p. 1-36. Corrigan, <i>A Short Guide</i> , Chapter 1
T 1/29	Film: Readings:	<i>Omar Gatlatto</i> [Algeria, 1976] Dir. Merzak Allouache (92 min) Armes, "From State Production to <i>Cinema d'Auteur</i> in Algeria," in Gugler, pp. 294-306. Armes, <i>Omar Gatlatto</i> (BB)
Th 1/31	Film: Readings:	<i>A Door to the Sky</i> [Morocco, 1989] Dir. Farida Benlyazid (107 min) Dwyer, "A National Cinema with Large Ambitions," in Gugler, pp. 325-338. Martin, "Bab al-Sama Maftouh / A Door to the Sky" in Dönmez-Colin, pp. 123-134 (BB). Corrigan, <i>A Short Guide</i> , Chapter 2.
T 2/5	Film: Readings:	<i>Bedwin Hacker</i> [Tunisia, 2003] Dir. Nadia El Fani (99 min) Martin, "Cinema and State in Tunisia," in Gugler, pp. 271-284. Gugler, " <i>Bedwin Hacker</i> (Nadia El Fani): A Hacker Challenges Western Domination of the Global Media," in Gulger, pp. 285-293.
Th 2/7	Film:	<i>Hollywood on the Nile</i> , [France 2005] Dir. S. Boukhemal (52 min) Corrigan, <i>A Short Guide</i> , Chapter 3.
T 2/12	Film: Readings:	<i>Alexandria, Why?</i> [Egypt, 1978] Dir. Yusuf Chahine (133 min) Armbrust, "Political Film in Egypt," in Gugler, 228-252.
Th 2/14	Film: Readings:	<i>Terrorism and Kebab</i> [Egypt, 1992] Dir. Sherif Arafa (105 min) Corrigan, <i>A Short Guide</i> , Chapter 4.
T 2/19	Film: Readings:	<i>A Suspended Life</i> [Lebanon, 1984] Dir. Jocelyn Saab (90 min) Khatib, "Lebanese Cinema and the Representation of War," in Gugler, 134-146.

- Th 2/21 **Film:** *Passion* [Syria, 2005] Dir. Muhammad Malas (98 min)
 Readings: Wedeen, “Tolerated Parodies of Politics in Syrian Cinema,”
 in Gugler, 104-112.
- T 2/26 ** No Class - February Break **
- Th 2/28 **Film:** *A History of Israeli Cinema, part 1* [Israel, 2009]
 Dir. Raphaël Nadjari (104 min)
- T 3/5 **Film:** *In Between (Bar Bahar)* [Israel, 2016]
 Dir. Maysaloun Hamoud. (103 min)
- Th 3/7 **Film:** *The Wild Pear Tree* [Turkey, 2018]
 Dir. Nuri Bilge Ceylan (188 min)
- T 3/12 **Film:** *Working Woman* [Israel, 2018] Dir. Michal Aviad (93 min)
- Th 3/14 **Film:** *The House on Chelouche Street* [Israel, 1973]
 Dir. Moshe Mizrahi (110 min)
 Readings: Gertz and Munk, “Israeli Cinema Engaging the Conflict,”
 in Gugler, 154-166.
- T 3/19 **Film:** *The Footnote* [Israel, 2011] Dir. Josef Cedar (106 min)
- Th 3/21 **Film:** *The Yacoubian Building* [Egypt, 2006]
 Dir. Marwan Hamed (161 min)
- Th 3/21 ** Special Event Alaa al-Aswany, the writer of The Yacoubian Building,
 Visits Cornell. Details TBA ****
- T 3/26 **Film:** *Remake, Remix, Rip-Off: About Copy Culture and Turkish Pop
 Cinema* [Turkey/Germany, 2014] Dir. Cem Kaya.
 Readings: Arslan, Introduction to *Cinema in Turkey*, 1-22 (BB).
- Th 3/28 **Film:** *Hope* [Turkey, 1972] Dir. Yilmaz Güney (93 min.)
 Readings: Dönmez-Colin, “Umut / Hope,” in Dönmez-Colin, pp. 41-50 (BB).
- T 4/2 – Th 4/4/ **No Class, Spring Break**

- T 4/9 **Film:** *Mustang* [Turkey, 2015]
Dir. Deniz Gamze Ergüven (97 min)
- Th 4/11 **Film:** *Iran: A Cinematographic Revolution* [Iran, 2007]
Dir. Nader Homayoun (98 min)
- Readings:** Egan, "Regime Critics Confront Censorship in Iranian Cinema,"
in Gugler, 37-62.
- T 4/16 **Film:** *Taste of Cherry* [Iran, 1997] Dir. Abbas Kiarostami (95 min)
- Th 4/18 **Special Guest Lecturer, Prof. Parisa Vaziri*
- Film:** *Marriage of the Blessed* [Iran, 1989]
Dir. Mohsen Makhmalbaf (75 min)
- Readings:** Egan, "*Marriage of the Blessed* (Mohsen Makhmalbaf): Wounds
of War and the Betrayal of the Revolution," Gugler, 75-84
- T 4/23 **Film:** *Under the Skin of the City* [Iran 2001]
Dir. Rakhshan Bani-Etemad (93 min)
- Readings:** Cobbey, "*Under the Skin of the City* (Rakhshan Bani-Etemad):
Under the Surface Contrasts, in Gugler, 63-74.
- Th 4/25 **Film:** *A Separation* [Iran, 2011] Dir. Asghar Farhadi (123 min)
- T 4/30 **Film:** *Capernum* [Lebanon, 2018] Dir. Nadine Labaki (121 min)
- Th 5/2 **Film:** *Wadjda* [Saudi Arabia, 2013] Dir. Haifaa al-Mansour (98 min)
- T 5/7 TBA

Bibliography of Texts on Blackboard

- Armes, Roy. *Omar Gatlato*. Trowbridge, Wiltshire, England: Flicks Books, 1998.
- Arslan, Savaş. *Cinema in Turkey: A New Critical History*. London: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Dönmez-Colin, Gönül, ed. *Cinema of North Africa and the Middle East*. London: Wallflower Press, 2007.
- Talmon, Miri and Yaron Peleg, eds. *Israeli Cinema: Identities in Motion*. Austin: University of Texas Press: 2011.