

Interdisciplinary Programmes

Academic year 2021 - 2022

Screening the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. Competing and Complementary Narratives through Cinematic Representations

MINT 220 - Spring 2022 - 6 ECTS

Course Description

A consistent body of knowledge about the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been produced by several social science disciplines. However, to date, few attempts have been made to combine that knowledge with the narratives produced on the conflict by films, both fictions and documentaries.

Audio-visual materials related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are 'constructions' and interpretations of 'realities' at different levels, and constitute an important (memory and documentary) archive which can complement and accompany the work of research in human and social sciences.

This seminar will therefore aim at examining, in a socio-political and historical perspective, the role of film directors –Israeli and Palestinian in particular- as artists and social actors, who contribute to (re)shape national and local narratives, in supporting or challenging official histories and collective memories.

A selection of films produced over a time span of 15 years will be studied: from those related to the Second Intifada (2000-2005) and its immediate aftermath, to those covering the ongoing conflict during the past decade.

Interestingly, the Israeli and Palestinian cinematic narratives produced during these two periods show important aspects of convergence and complementarity in addressing peace and conflict dynamics in both societies. And gendering the approaches of film directors to the chosen movies' topics will be part and parcel of the overall endeavour.

> PROFESSOR

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By appointment

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Syllabus

Since the late 1940s, a number of key events have kept feeding the Israeli and Palestinian official national narratives in order to assert the respective claims to political legitimacy and/or victimhood. On the Israelis' side, the 1948 War, namely the 'War of Independence' fought in the immediate aftermath of the British Mandate, materialized in the creation of the new Jewish State.

On the Palestinians' side, the same war ushered into a *Nakba*, i.e. a 'catastrophe'. Not only they lost 78% of their homeland to the new Israeli State, but the *Nakba* meant as well a huge population displacement -the beginning of the Palestinian refugees' plight-, the annexation of the West Bank by Jordan and the Egyptian military administration over the Gaza Strip. By the early 1950s, the very name of Palestine was erased from geographical maps...

Almost 20 years after the *Nakba*, the second Arab-Israeli conflict in 1967 materialized into the *Naksa* (i.e. the defeat). Among others, that meant a second refugee flow, and the Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, an occupation which has been lasting until today. During the 1970s, the Fedayyin (the *Palestinian Freedom Fighters*) of the PLO were among the symbols of a new form of 'international terrorism' in the Cold War context.

In 2018, the Israelis celebrated the 70th anniversary of their State independence, while the Palestinians have been commemorating seven decades of the *Nakba* and more than half a century of military occupation on 22% of historic Palestine. The past three right-wing Israeli governments under the premiership of B. Netanyahu have witnessed an increased militarization of the society and the State; a radicalization of discriminatory policies towards the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, but in Israel as well; the military resistance of Hamas in Gaza has given way to three major wars in the Strip, with a catastrophic outcome for the local population; the fracture inside the Palestinian National Movement is unprecedented and the horizon for a peaceful settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict seems more gloomy than ever.

During the seminar and in parallel to the reading of a number of texts, we will screen and analyze a selection of films produced over a time span of almost 15 years and related to a number of transversal items from 2005 onwards.

The evolving political contexts of the past decade have contributed to shape, on the one side, the subjectivities of the Jewish filmmakers in Israel and from the diaspora; on the other side, the same contexts have also largely influenced the Palestinian film directors residing in Israel, in the West Bank and Gaza, or from the Palestinian diaspora in the Middle East, Europe and North America.

The filmic narratives produced during the past decade by Jewish (Israeli) and Palestinian film directors are not always conflictive, actually they are often complementary in challenging the political narratives about the past (the 'official histories') and the present (the media narratives), put forward by their respective governments. Furthermore, many cinematic representations are instrumental as well to 'echo or give voice' to the silenced memories of members of both the Israeli and Palestinian national communities.

The social science literature related to the the 'Peace Process', to the ongoing military occupation and their consequences on both societies –on which the student will work- mirrors as well the filmic representations in terms of complementarity of the Israeli and Palestinian narratives.

Finally, and through a bottom-up approach, the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, its past evolutions, and its present dynamics also allow for reading a larger 'globalized' world. A world entangled with crises linked to complex armed conflicts and their humanitarian pitfalls, with new visions of security and surveillance embedded in neoliberal approaches which, among others, have created the bed for increased forms of exclusion, marginalization and poverty.

1. ORGANIZATION

During the Spring 2022, the seminar will take place each Wednesday from 4.15 pm to 6.00 pm, starting on the 23rd of February.

Attendance to the sessions of the seminar is compulsory. Students are required to read the compulsory texts and watch the movies before each session.

The seminar is taught primarily in English. Questions and oral presentations, as well as the final papers, may be formulated/written in English or in French.

2. SESSIONS OF THE SEMINAR WITH READINGS AND FILMS

The list of the compulsory readings will be available on the support material webpage, and the movies will be accessible on line on a Vimeo website.

PART 1 – CINEMA, HISTORY AND POLITICS

Session 1 - 24th February

Introduction to the problematic of the seminar and its sessions

Readings:

BEININ, Joel and HAJJAR, Lisa, 2014, *Palestine, Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*. Washington, MERIP, 14pp.

KIMMERLING, Baruch, 2001, « Building an Immigrant Settler State », in : *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness. State, Society and the Military*. Berkeley, University of California Press, pp. 56-88.

Film :

Palestine : histoire d'une terre de S. Bitton et J.-M. Meurice, 1993, Partie 1 (1880-1950), 58mn. Audio : Français

Résumé: De la fin du XIXe siècle à 1950, l'histoire d'une terre, la Palestine où, en 1948, Israël a été créé, une terre revendiquée par Israéliens et Palestiniens. Un récit historique à partir d'archives rares.

3rd March – NO SESSION

Session 2 – 10th March

On Memory, History and Conflict through Cinema

Readings :

AL ZOBAIDI, Sobhi, 2009, "Memory, Documentary and History", in: *I would have smiled: Photographing the Palestinian Refugee Experience*, I. Nassar and R. Salti (eds.). Beirut, Institute of Palestine Studies, pp. 101-119.

BELL, Duncan. 2009, « Introduction: Violence and Memory » in : *Millennium*, vol. 38, pp. 345-360.

KRASNY, Elke, 2014, "Memory", in: *Public Art Vienna, 2010-2013*. Vienna, Verlag für Moderne Kunst, pp. 15-19.

RICOEUR, Paul, 2011, « Memory-History-Forgetting », in : *The Collective Memory Reader*, J.K. Olick, V. Vinitzky-Seroussi and D. Levy (eds.). Oxford University Press, pp. 475-480.

ROSENSTONE, Robert, 1995, « The Historical Film as Real History », in : *Film Historia*, vol. 5, n°1, pp. 5-23.

STAMBOLIYSKA, Rayna, "Our Otherness : Imagining Balkan and Mid-Eastern Identities", in *Open Democracy*,

Films :

Occupation 101 by Sufyan & Abdallah Omeish, 2006, 90mn.

Synopsis : A thought-provoking documentary film on the current and historical root causes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, presenting a comprehensive analysis of the facts and hidden truths surrounding the never ending controversy and dispelling many of its long-perceived myths and misconceptions. The film also details life under Israeli military rule, the role of the United States in the conflict, and the major obstacles that stand in the way of a lasting and viable peace. The roots of the conflict are explained through first-hand on-the-ground experiences from leading Middle East scholars, peace activists, journalists, religious leaders and humanitarian workers whose voices have too often been suppressed in American media outlets. The film covers a wide range of topics -- which include -- the first wave of Jewish immigration from Europe in the 1880's, the 1920 tensions, the 1948 war, the 1967 war, the first Intifada of 1987, the Oslo Peace Process, Settlement expansion, the role of the US Government, the second Intifada of 2000, the separation barrier and the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, as well as many heart wrenching testimonials from victims of this tragedy.

Palestine: A People's Record by Kays al Zobaidi, 1984, 110mn.

Synopsis : Explores Palestine in archive footage dating from 1917 to 1974, bringing together valuable rare footage in an historic account of Palestinian nationhood. The archive material is in itself remarkable and al Zobaidi's knowledgeable editing renders the film an enthralling visual and historical document.

The Oslo Diaries by Mor Loushy and Daniel Sivan, 2018, 97mn.

Synopsis: in 1992, with Israeli-Palestinian relations at an all-time low and any communication between the two sides punishable by jail time, a select group of Israelis and Palestinians gathered secretly in Oslo for a series of clandestine meetings that would dramatically change the political landscape of the Middle East. Chronicling their journey towards peace, *The Oslo Diaries* features rare, never-before-seen archival footage and diary entries of key negotiators on both sides, providing an inside look at the immense pressure faced by the architects of what came to be known as the Oslo Accords. A comprehensive, dramatic account of the negotiations, this geopolitical story draws on previously unseen footage shot from 1992 to 1995, as well as excerpts from and re-creations based on the negotiators' diaries, which are the only available accounts of what happened behind closed doors. Many of those involved openly and emotionally recount the political intrigue, fiery rhetoric, unlikely friendships and overwhelming desire for peace at the heart of the negotiations. This illuminating and poignant documentary sheds new light on these secret talks, featuring exclusive interviews, including former Israeli president and foreign minister Shimon Peres in the last recorded interview before his 2016 death. Spotlighting the very human personalities behind this extraordinary peace process, *The Oslo Diaries* includes interviews with key players on both sides, among them Ron Pundak, Abu Ala, Uri Savir, Hanan Ashrawi, Yossi Beilin, Joel Singer, Daniel Kurtzer, Nabil Shaath, Dennis Ross and Saeb Erekat.

Session 3 – 17th March

How to 'read' a documentary

Screening in class of the movie:

The Gatekeepers (Israel Confidential) by Dror Moreh, 2013, 95mn.

Synopsis : For the first time ever, six former heads of the Shin Bet, Israel's secret service agency, agree to share their insights and reflect publicly on their actions and decisions. Intimately interviewed, they shed light on the controversy surrounding the Occupation in the aftermath of the Six Day War.

Followed by a lecture by **Gabriella ZALAPI** (writer and painter, founder of the project "Screenings and Words" for detainees in Geneva prisons) and a debate.

Session 4 – 24th March

On Israeli and Palestinian cinema(s)

Readings on Israeli cinemas:

BEN-ZVI-MORAD, Yaël, « Borders in Motion: the Evolution of the Portrayal of the Israeli Palestinian Conflict in the Israeli Cinema », in : M. Talmon and Y. Peleg (eds.), *Israeli Cinema. Identities in Motion*. Austin, Texas University Press, pp. 276-293.

MUNK, Yaël (2012) « Revisiting the Seventh's Art Contribution to the Birth of the Israeli Nation », in : H-Net Reviews, 3pp.

NEWMAN SMULDERS, Kirkland (2013) "The Battle for Victimhood: Roles and Implications of Narrating of Suffering in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict". In: *Narrating conflict in the Middle East: discourse, image and communications practices in Lebanon and Palestine*. London, IBTauris.

SHOHAT, Ella (2010) *Israeli cinema: East/West and the politics of representation*. Library of modern Middle East studies 78. [New ed.]. London, IBTauris. (available at the Institute's library)

Readings on Palestinian cinemas:

ALEXANDER, Livia (2005) Is there a Palestinian cinema? The National and Transnational in Palestinian Film Production. In: Rebecca L. Stein & Ted Swedenburg (eds.). *Palestine, Israel, and the Politics of Popular Culture*. Duke University Press.

BRESHEET, Haïm (2007) The continuity of Trauma and Struggle. Recent Cinematic Representations of the Nakba. In: Aḥmad Sa'adī & Lila Abu-Lughod (eds.). *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the claims of memory*. Cultures of history. New York, Columbia University Press.

DABASHI, Hamid (2006) "Introduction". In: *Dreams of a nation: on Palestinian cinema*. London, Verso. pp. 7–22.

DUBUISSON, François, 2015, « Le conflit israélo-palestinien : une saga cinématographique », in : *Du droit international au cinéma*, Corten et F. Dubuisson (eds.). Paris, Editions Pedone, pp. 135-185.

GINSBERG, T., (2009) Review of "Palestinian Cinema (by N. Gertz and G. Khleifi)", in: *Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication*, vol. 2, pp. 315-321.

HEDGES, Inez (2015) "Performance Memory: The Nakba and the construction of identity in Palestinian film". In: *World Cinema and Cultural Memory*. Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 65–82.

TAWIL, Helga (2013) "Coming Into Being and Flowing Into Exile: History and Trends in Palestinian Film-Making". In: *Nebula*. 2 (2), 113–140.

Films:

Une histoire du cinéma israélien de Raphaël Nadjari, 2009, 209mn. (Hebrew subt. Français)

Résumé : la première partie (1932 - 1978) s'attache au mouvement sioniste et à l'existence même d'un état en perpétuelle quête d'identité et de reconnaissance, la seconde période (1978 - 2007) présente un cinéma plus politique et plus polémique, reflet d'une société civile multiforme et non consensuelle. Le documentaire contient d'innombrables extraits de films et d'entretiens avec d'éminents spécialistes (réalisateurs, auteurs, écrivains, critiques, journalistes...).

Cinema Palestine, Tim Schwab, 2013, 78mn.

Synopsis : "What does it mean to be a Palestinian filmmaker in the context of national struggle?" *Cinema Palestine* asks how "Palestinian cinema" has been understood by prominent directors. Canadian filmmaker and academic Tim Schwab's feature-length documentary explores the life and work of several generations of Palestinian filmmakers. *Cinema Palestine* presents excerpts from signal works alongside in-depth interviews with directors living in the Middle East, Europe, or North America (including Hany Abu-Assad, Azza el-Hassan, Sobhi Zobaidi, Mai Masri, Tawfik Abu Wael, Annemarie Jacir, and many more). Despite their diverse biographical experiences and their varying artistic or political concerns, are these filmmakers expressing a particular 'national' cinema?

Gaza 36mm, Khalil Al Mozayen, 2012, 52mn.

Synopsis : In words and images, the film tells the story of cinema in Gaza since the 1940s. Its subjects, including Palestinian directors Arab and Tarzan Nasser, bear witness to the influence of Islamism on the gradual closure of all Gaza cinemas. It is a film not only about cinema in Gaza, but also about Gaza itself, it is an act of resistance against the uniformity imposed by the Islamist regime in power in Gaza.

On Israeli and Palestinian Cinema : 2011 video-conference by Ella SHOHAT and Rasha SALTI

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikxZ_Yg2u_U&list=PLo50nocDy3TTusS4U07ZQ9UIQSE34EtZ

Session 5 – 31st March

Presentation of the topics for students' papers

Readings: compulsory for all the students preparing their oral presentation and written works

COWIE, Elizabeth, 2011, « Narrating the Real : The Fiction and the Nonfiction of Documentary Storytelling », in: *Recording Reality, Desiring the Real*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, pp.

PEREBOM, Maarten, 2011, *History and Film. Moving Pictures and the Study of the Past*. Boston, Prentice Hall.

- Chapter 1 – Moving Pictures as a Historical Resource
- Chapter 3 – The Sum of its parts : Understanding the Medium
- Chapter 4 – Assessing a Film's Historical Account

JACQUINOT, Geneviève, 1994, "Le documentaire: une fiction (pas) comme les autres", in: *Cinémas: revue d'études cinématographiques*, vol. 4, n°2, pp. 61-81.

PART 2 – THE ROLE AND EVOLUTION OF 'NATIONAL' NARRATIVES AND PRACTICES

Session 6 – 7th April

Negotiating National Histories

Readings:

BROWN, Nathan (2006) "Contesting National Identity in Palestinian Education", in: *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict: History's Double Helix*, R. I. Rotberg (ed.), Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp.

NAVEH, Eyal (2006) "The Dynamics of Identity Construction in Israel Through Education and History", in: *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict: History's Double Helix*, R. I. Rotberg (ed.), Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp.

FIERKE, K. M. (2008) "Review: Memory and Violence in Israel/Palestine", *Human Rights and Human Welfare* 8, pp.33-42

HILAL, Jamil (2010) "Reflections on Contemporary Palestinian History", in: *Across the Wall: Narratives of Israeli-Palestinian History*, I.Pappé, & J.Hilal (eds.), Library of Modern Middle East Studies

HOVSEPIAN, Nubar (2013) "Review: Palestine in Israeli School Books: Ideology and Propaganda in Education by Peled El-Hanan", *The Journal of Palestine Studies* 42(3) pp.112-14.

Films:

Izkor. Slaves of Memory by Eyal Sivan, 1990, 97mn.

Synopsis : his documentary is a portrait of the Israeli society, thirty days in the life of a state that lives to the rhythm of its memory. "Izkor" means "remember" in Hebrew and this film looks in depth at this imperative that is imposed on the children of Israel. In Israel during the month of April feast days and celebrations take place one after another. School children of all ages prepare to pay tribute to their country's past. The collective memory becomes a terribly efficient tool for the training of young minds. The author of the film is an Israeli. By going to rediscover the myths and symbols that have contributed to the making of his own identity, as well as that of every Israeli, he is bringing into play his own personal experience.

Memory of the Cactus : A Story of three Palestinian Villages, Hanna Musleh, 2008, 42mn.

Synopsis : Five decades ago, the three Palestinian villages of 'Imwas, Yalo and Beit Nouba in the Latroun enclave of the West Bank were razed to the ground after Israel occupied the territory. Today, the residents of those villages remain displaced and barred from returning, while Israel treats the land as if it were part of Israel and refuses to acknowledge the Palestinian history of the area. Israeli citizens enjoy barbecues and picnics in the Jewish National Fund's "Canada Park", oblivious to the crimes

perpetrated in their names on that very land. Musleh's documentary traces the buried histories of these Palestinian villages through oral histories, archive film and photography, and expert testimonies.

On the side of the road by Lia Tarachansky 2013, 83mn.

Synopsis: Former West Bank settler Lia Tarachansky looks at Israelis' collective amnesia of the fateful events of 1948 when the state of Israel was born and most of the Palestinians became refugees. She follows the transformation of Israeli veterans trying to uncover their denial of the war that changed the region forever. Tarachansky then turns the camera on herself and travels back to her settlement where that historical erasure gave birth to a new generation, blind and isolated from its surroundings. Attempting to shed a light on the country's biggest taboo, she is met with outrage and violence.

Session 7 – 14th April

Rethinking the Past in a Tumultuous Present

Readings:

SVIRSKY, Marcelo & BEN-ARIE, Ronen (2018) "Settler Colonialism and the Logic of Double Elimination", in: *Interventions* 0(0) pp.1-23.

SANTOS, Madalena (2013) "Relations of Ruling in the Colonial Present: An Intersectional View of the Israeli Imaginary", *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 38(4) pp. 509-532

RASTEGAR, Kamran, 2015, « The Time that is Lost : Cinematic Aporias of Palestine », in : *Surviving Images. Cinema, War and Cultural Memory in the Middle East*. Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. 93-122.

GORDON Neve (2019) "Review: Traces of Racial Exception: Racializing Israeli Settler Colonialism", in: *Irish Journal of Sociology* 0(0) pp.1-4.

HOCHBERG, Gil (2015) "The (Soldier's) Gaze and the (Palestinian) Body: Power, Fantasy, and Desire in the Militarized Contact Zone", in: *Visual Occupations: Violence and Visibility in a Conflict Zone*. Duke University Press.

Films:

1948 : Creation and Catastrophe by Andy Trimlett and Ahlan Muhtased, 2017, 85mn.

Synopsis: Through riveting and moving personal recollections of both Palestinians and Israelis, the film reveals the shocking events of the most pivotal year in the most controversial conflict in the world. It tells the story of the establishment of Israel as seen through the eyes of the people who lived it. It is simply not possible to make sense of what is happening in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict today without an understanding of 1948. This documentary was the last chance for many of its Israeli and Palestinian characters to narrate their first-hand accounts of the creation of a state and the expulsion of a nation.

Censored Voices by Mor Loushy, 2015, 87mn.

Synopsis: the film reveals audio-recorded, intimate conversations with Israeli soldiers fresh from the battlefield after Israel's victory of 1967's Six-Day War. These provocative tapes, censored until now, are the core of the film about the tragic paradox of Zionism and the contradictions that arise when a people seeking freedom turn occupier, when David becomes Goliath. As they wrestle with the systemic excision of Palestinians, the dehumanizing nature of war, and echoes of the Holocaust, we listen as these men, now almost 50 years older, hear the recordings for the first time, and the past erupts, presciently, into the present. As the film director put it: "*Censored Voices* tells the painful story of the Israeli occupation at the historic moment that it began, it tells the story of men at war who thought they were going to be defending their lives and their family's lives, and instead come back as conquerors. Because the film is composed of secret conversations that took place only a week after the war it provides a unique glimpse into these men at war. These conversations are revealed in our film for the first time. These voices have never been heard in Israel. They are very radical voices. The Israeli state had censored these conversations, so it also tells the story of fear. We have, as a society, silenced and denied other voices. If only these conversations were to have gone public in the 1960s, maybe the Israeli reality would look different today".

This is My Land by Tamara Erde, 2013, 89mn.

Synopsis : How do the Palestinian and Israeli (Arab and Jewish) education systems teach the history of their nations? The film follows several Israeli and Palestinian teachers over one academic year. Through observing their exchanges and confrontations with students, debates with the ministries curriculum, and its restrictions, the viewers obtain an intimate glimpse into the profound and long lasting effect that the Israeli/Palestinian conflict transmits onto the next generation. Through intimate portraits of history teachers and close observations of their pupils, the film reveals the different approach of the two public education systems to teach the complex and charged narrative of their country's history. The chosen schools are set in locations that emphasize the changing daily life of the conflict – in Jerusalem, The North of Israel, Nablus, Ramallah and a colony. The film interweaves the stories of the teachers and their classes in parallel, constructing for the viewer the different and sometimes opposing universes of the teachers and their schools.

Easter Holidays – April 21st

Session 8 – 28th April

Soldiering the Occupation

Readings:

GRASSIANI, Erella (2009) Chapter 4. *Morality and Normalcy in A-Symmetrical Conflict: Distancing, Denial and Moral Numbing among Israeli Conscripts in Everyday Practices of Occupation*, Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

GRASSIANI, Erella (2016) "When Soldiers Explain: Discursive Strategies Used by Israeli Conscripts When Recounting Their Experiences in the Field", in: *Violence Expressed: An Anthropological Approach*, Six-Hohenbalchen, M. and Weiss, N. (eds.), London and New York: Routledge

SHARONI, Simona (2015) "Review: Wrapped in the Flag of Israel: Mizrahi Single Mothers and Bureaucratic Torture". In: *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 44(3) pp. 67-68.

KUNTSMAN, Adi (2016) "Review: Wrapped in the Flag of Israel: Mizrahi Single Mothers and Bureaucratic Torture". In: *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 12(2) pp.264-266.

KHALIDI, Muhammad Ali (2010) "The 'Most Moral Army in the World': The New "Ethical Code" of the Israeli Military and the War on Gaza", in: *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 39(3) pp. 6-23.

FELDMAN, Keith (2018) "Review of Smadar Lavie's book: *Wrapped in the Flag of Israel: Mizrahi Single Mothers and Bureaucratic Torture*", revised edition, University of Nebraska Press.

BREAKING THE SILENCE, *Occupying Hebron: Soldiers' Testimonies from Hebron 2011-2017*

Films:

Foxtrot by Samuel Maoz, 2017, 112mn.

Synopsis: Michael and Dafna Feldmann, an affluent Tel Aviv couple, learn that their son, Jonathan, a soldier, has died in the line of duty. The Israeli military authorities refuse to inform the distraught parents where and how Jonathan died, or if his body had been recovered. Several hours later, they are notified almost matter-of-factly that there has been a mix-up, and that it was some other Jonathan Feldman who has been killed. An angry Michael demands that the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) allow Jonathan to return home. The film then follows Jonathan's experiences during his military service as one of four soldiers manning a desolate checkpoint under primitive conditions. Late one night, the soldiers kill a group of four young Palestinians after they mistake a beer can that rolled out of the Palestinians' car for an explosive device. The soldiers arrange for a bulldozer to bury the car with its deceased occupants inside, and are warned by a senior IDF officer not to disclose this. Later, while Jonathan is being driven back to Tel Aviv, the military vehicle in which he is riding on a narrow, rutted desert road swerves to avoid a camel and rolls down an embankment. The final scenes follow Michael, Dafna and Alma, Jonathan's younger sister, six months after his death.

The Alpha Diaries by Yaniv Berman, 2007, 69mn.

Synopsis : An unprecedented, groundbreaking, and voyeuristic look into military reserve life in Israel, this film was shot over a 5-year period in director and reserve soldier Yaniv Berman's life. A soldier in

the Israeli army reserves, Alpha Company, Berman had unparalleled access and filmed the soldiers as they went about their military service, day and night. Crossing over to the Palestinian border, the camera captured remarkably every movement of the soldiers from the frenetic night-time house arrests to the quiet moments of self-reflection and despair. Capturing the humiliation of both the Palestinians who are subject to the house arrests as well as the Israeli soldiers who had to carry them out, this documentary is the unique story of those who, 30 days every year, drop their normal lives and, under the guise of the olive-green uniform, perform the toughest, most unsettling tasks in the heart of an urban Palestinian town. The camera penetrates the steely barriers of the military barracks and gains fresh insight into the views of the soldiers who speak frankly and uncompromisingly on a range of issues including the occupation, the conflict, and the Army. A sensitive exploration of the conflict done firsthand by an individual caught in the midst of the action, Berman's film leaves us with no doubt that war leaves scars and victims on both sides of the camp.

To See if I Am Smiling by Tamar Yarom, 2007, 59mn.

Synopsis: Six Israeli women give a personal account about their life in the Israeli Army, in the Occupied Territories. A female point of view on the drama of an unending war, on the moral challenges the soldiers faced at the encounter with the Palestinian population. The women look back critically at the way they handled the power that was placed in their hands at the young age of eighteen. Questions that were not dealt with during the service are raised today with great pain.

Session 9 – 5th May

Non-Violent Resistance

Readings:

SCHOCK, Kurt (2013) "The practice and study of civil resistance", in: *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 50(3), pp. 277-290.

AFSC Middle East Resource series (2005). "FACES OF HOPE A Campaign Supporting Nonviolent Resistance and Refusal in Israel and Palestine" Palestinian Nonviolent Resistance to Occupation Since 1967. in: Middle East Task Force.

CALABRESE, Cristiana (2013) "In God's Name: Jewish Religious and Traditional Peace and Human Rights Movements in Israel and in the Occupied Territories", in *Quest. Issues in Contemporary Jewish History*. Journal of Fondazione CDEC," n.5, pp.101-123.

GORDON, Uri (2010) "Against the Wall: Anarchist Mobilization in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict", in *Peace History Society and Peace and Justice Studies Association*, 35(3) pp.412-433.

Rijke, Alexandra & van Teeffelen, Toine (2014) "To Exist is to Resist: Sumud, Heroism, and the Everyday" *Jerusalem Quarterly* 59, pp.86-99.

Films:

5 Broken Cameras, Emad Burnat & Guy Davidi, 2011, 94mn.

Synopsis: Palestinian farm laborer Emad has five video cameras, and each of them tells a different part of the story of his village's resistance to Israeli oppression. Emad lives in Bil'in, just west of the city of Ramallah in the West Bank. Using the first camera, he recorded how the bulldozers came to rip the olive trees out of the ground in 2005. Here, a wall was built directly through his fellow villagers' land to separate the advancing Jewish settlements from the Palestinians. In the first days of resistance to the Jewish settlers and the ever-present Israeli soldiers, Emad's son Gibreel was born. Scenes shift from the infant growing into a precocious preschooler to the many peaceful acts of protest, and the steady progress of the construction of the dividing wall. Sympathizers from all over the world, including from Israel, provide help as resistance develops, but when the situation intensifies, people are arrested and villagers are killed. Emad keeps on filming despite pleas from his wife, who fears reprisals. It makes for an intensely powerful personal document about one village's struggle against violence and oppression.

In the Image: Palestinian Women Capture Occupation by Judith Montell and Emmy Sharlatt, 2014, 60mn.

Synopsis: the focus is the award-winning *Camera Project*, created in 2007 by Jerusalem-based human rights watchdog group B'Tselem, to provide Palestinians living in the West Bank or in the Gaza

Strip with inexpensive video cameras and the training to use them. The project aims to empower Palestinians to document human rights violations and to provide evidence both to the public and to Israeli authorities. Cameras are an apt tool for this 25-year-old organization, since the Hebrew word B'tselem means "in the image of." *Camera Project* footage from three Palestinian women volunteers, together with the women's discussion of their film work and their interactions with Israeli settlers and authorities, are paced by black-and-white animated drawings. B'Tselem staff offer commentary, including the film co-director's daughter Jessica Montell, the executive director for 12 years. *Camera Project* creator explains the impact of watching footage of settlers harassing Palestinians. And B'Tselem spokesperson declares herself "all right" after being shot just above the knee. In her hands: not a weapon, but a camera.

The Wanted 18, Amer Shomaly, 2014, 75mn.

Synopsis: The first Intifada, 1987. Palestinian leaders urge communities to develop alternatives to Israeli products. In response, a group of Palestinian activists start a collective dairy farm with 18 head of cattle. Once their "Intifada milk" gains popularity, the Israeli army orders the farm's closure, declaring the cows a threat to national security. The activists persevere, hiding the cows in caves and continuing to produce Palestinian milk. This is the story of the most powerful army in the Middle East chasing 18 cows.

PART 3 – LOVE: INSIDE AND BEYOND BORDERS

Session 10 – 12th May

Affective Relationships as tools of resistance and subversion

Readings:

FORTIER, Corinne, KREIL, Aymon, MAFFI, Irene (eds.), 2018, 'Introduction', in: *Reinventing Love? Gender, Intimacy and Romance in the Arab World*. Bern, Peter Lang, pp. 9-32.

GASPAROTTO, Mariangela, 2018, "Practices of Love in Ramallah. Between Colonization, Norms and Individualism". in: *Reinventing Love? Gender, Intimacy and Romance in the Arab World*. Bern, Peter Lang, pp. 71-90.

LATTE ABDALLAH, Stéphanie (2009) Fragile Intimacies: Marriage and Love in the Palestinian Camps of Jordan (1948-2001) *Journal of Palestine Studies* 38 (4) pp.47-62.

SALIH, Ruba, 2017, Bodies that Walk, Bodies that Talk, Bodies that Love: Palestinian Women Refugees, Affectivity and the Politics of the Ordinary, *Antipode*, 49(3) pp.742-760.

STEPHAN, Rita, 2006, "Arab Women Writing Their Sexuality", in: *Hawwa*, vol.4 (2-3) pp. 159-180.

Films:

Divine Intervention, Elia Suleiman, 2002, 92mn.

Synopsis: the film director uses a mixture of romantic comedy and quirky humor to shed light on the problems of Palestinians. E.S. (Suleiman and his girlfriend Manal Khader), because they live in separate cities, must meet near an Israeli checkpoint. The film is more than a series of usually comic and poignant scenes in which Suleiman and others must confront any number of Israeli nemeses.

Habibi Rasak Kharban by Susan Youssef, 2011, 78mn.

Synopsis: *Habibi*, based on the Arabic folkloric story of Layla and Qays (the Arabic Romeo and Juliet) is re-told, and filmed, in modern day Gaza. The subjects of this tragic romance are two university students studying in the West Bank whose love story is abruptly interrupted after their student visas are revoked by Israel and they are forced to return to their families in Gaza. Desperate to be together, Qays requests to marry Layla but is refused by her middle-class family who feel he is too poor to support her. Trapped between political oppression and a patriarchal society, the young couple take matters into their own hands in order to be together.

The Olive Harvest by Elias Hanna, 2002, 83mn.

Synopsis: Mazen has just finished serving a 15-year sentence in an Israeli prison for setting a fire on a Jewish settlement. His younger brother Taher brings him back to the Palestinian countryside he

loves so dearly. There is a large and festive party for Mazen, but he is no longer animated by politics whereas his brother is enraged over the checkpoints and the new settlements that are being set up. Both men are unprepared for the conflict that will erupt between them from within the Palestinian community. And since their parents are dead, they are all they have in the world. Raeda, by far the most beautiful woman in the village, has never kissed a man and is quite unsure about her emotions. She is close to her older sister who has disappointed her authoritarian father by moving to the city. Knowing that his cancer is getting worse, he gets Mazen to promise that he will look after the 200,000-year old olive tree which is sacred to him and other elders in the community. On his death bed, the patriarch tries to exert his will over his daughter Raeda. The rift between the father and the two brothers proves to be a very painful process for everyone.

Wajib by Annemarie Jacir, 2017, 97mn.

Synopsis : architect Shadi returns to Nazareth from Rome to help with preparations for the upcoming wedding of his sister Amal. Together with his divorced father Abu Shadi, a teacher, the two men drive around the city in an old Volvo, delivering invitations to all the people who must be invited. The film's title 'Duty', and part of the tension between father and son comes from what this term really means. For the older man, the rituals of community are a duty to be performed in order to maintain cohesion and not lose traditions. His son finds the whole process meaningless, and gets especially angry when his father insists on inviting an Israeli whose job clearly is to act as a spy for the government. Shadi quickly tires of the whole invitation delivery ceremony, in which he's shown off as a prize catch for families with eligible daughters, even though he lives with his Palestinian girlfriend back in Rome. This too becomes a source of contention: Her father's position within the PLO makes her suspect, since Abu Shadi views the organization as an elitist club lacking a real understanding of what life is like for Palestinians living in Israel.

Session 11 – 19th May

Falling in love with the 'enemy'

Readings:

Yahya, Siham; Simon, Boag; Munshi, Anika & Litvak-Hirsch, Tal (2016) 'Sadly, Not all Love Affairs are Meant to Be...' Attitudes Towards Interfaith Relationships in a Conflict Zone, in: *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 37(3) pp. 265-285.

RAZ, Yosef, (2002) "Homoland: Interracial Sex and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict in Israeli Cinema", *A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 8(4) pp.553-579.

FOGIEL-BIJAU, Silvie (2003) "Why Won't There Be Civil Marriage Any Time Soon in Israel? Or: Personal Law -- The Silenced Issue of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict", *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues* 6 (Fall 5764) pp.28-34.

AL-SHAHAM, Abdullah (1988) "A Portrait of the Israeli Woman as the Beloved: The Woman-Soldier in the Poetry of Mahmud Darwish after the 1967 War", in: *Bulletin of the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies*, 15(1/2) pp. 28-49.

FISHER, Ian (2017) "It's Complicated: The Path of an Israeli-Palestinian Love Story", *New York Times Films* :

77 Steps, Ibtisam Mara'aneh, 2010, 56mn.

Synopsis : the film director, a Palestinian citizen of Israel, leaves her childhood village of Fureidis for an urban existence in Israeli-Jewish Tel Aviv. Filming her daily life, she breaks all taboos and starts dating Jonathan, a new immigrant from Canada. She also joins the Israeli Meretz party, dreaming of a future in politics. Life becomes increasingly untenable as Israel invades Gaza and Jonathan's Zionist grandfather arrives for a nostalgic visit to the kibbutz he helped establish. As this intimate, raw, nuanced, and thought-provoking *cinéma vérité* film reminds us, love can't always conquer all.

Jaffa de Keren Yedaya, 2009, 102mn.

Synopsis : **Jaffa** is a mixed Arabic-Jewish seaside city near Tel Aviv, where Reuven Wolf has a garage for repairing cars. His wife Ossi, a vain, self-centered woman, just makes everybody's life difficult. The couple's daughter, Mali Wolf, has secretly fallen in love with her childhood friend, the young

Tawfik, a hard-working youth who has come as a helping hand to his Israeli-Arab father Hassan, a long-time mechanic working for Reuven. Meanwhile, Reuven's son Meir resents working in the garage and further resents the presence of Arab Palestinian Tawfik, and bullies him around. In a most tragic night, everybody's life is changed. Meir and his mother have a grave argument and she throws him out. Next morning, a crisis erupts between Meir and Tawfik with the latter fatally injuring Meir in an unfortunate accident. This cancels the plan the already pregnant Mali and her lover Tawfik had made to elope. Although she decides to have an abortion so as not to have a baby from her brother's killer, she eventually decides to keep the baby, concealing that the child is from Tawfik, and the devastated Wolf family moves to Ramat Gan. The story picks up after 9 years, when Tawfik is released from jail and Mali Wolf is torn between allegiance to her family who has helped her raise the illegitimate child Shiran and her lover Tawfik.

Would you Have Sex With an Arab? by Yolande Zauberman, 2001, 85mn.

Synopsis: A journey through the night, from encounter to encounter, from the bars of Tel-Aviv to the back-alleys of Jerusalem. We're embarking on a magic carpet. Inside night-clubs people dance, laugh, have fun. Dawn breaks to the sound of an outdoor rave party. And finishes with an incredible kiss on the beach. A first kiss. Jews, Arabs, all citizens of a same country. Israel. With no wall to separate them. One Israeli out of five is Arab... However... a simple question is enough to take everyone by surprise. To some: "Would You Have Sex With an Arab?". To others: "Would You Have Sex With An Israeli Jew?" They don't expect that. Unsettled, they laugh, hesitate, improvise, and are even surprised by their own reactions. Many hadn't even thought about it. To be together? An invisible barrier appears. But desire too. Maybe...

26th May – Ascension Day – No Session

CONCLUSIONS – TOWARDS A 'ONE' OR A 'TWO-STATE' SOLUTION?

Session 12 – 2nd June

Israeli and Palestinian options

Readings:

Bao, Hsiu-Ping (2018) "The One-State Solution: An Alternative Approach to the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict?", *Asian Journal of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies*, 12(3), pp. 328-341.

BEILIN, Yossi (2018) "Israel Faces Historic Decision as New Population Figures Emerge", in: *Al-Monitor*, Accessed on: <https://www.al-monitor.com/>

BOULOS, Sonia () "The Nation State Law and the Internal Right to Self-Determination of Palestinian Citizens of Israel",

HAWARI, Yara (2019) "Abbas and the Farce of Palestinian Democracy" *Al-Shabaka: The Palestinian Policy Network*, Accessed on: <https://al-shabaka.org/en/>

MASRI, Mazen (2014) "The Two-State Model and Israeli Constitutionalism: Impact on the Palestinian Citizens of Israel", in: *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 44(4) pp. 1-18.

TARTIR, Alaa (2015) "Securitized Development and Palestinian Authoritarianism under Fayyadism", in: *Conflict, Security & Development*, 15(5), pp. 479-502.

WILDEMAN, Jeremy (2019) "Neoliberalism as Aid for the Settler Colonization of the Occupied Palestinian Territories after Oslo", in: *Palestine and Rule of Power*, A. Tartir and T. Seidel. (eds.), pp.153-174.

Films:

Aid but no State. The EU'S role in the Middle East Conflict by Sabrina Dittus, 2015, 58mn.

Synopsis: Since the Oslo Accords of 1993 and 1995 over \$ 25 billion in donor aid went to Palestine. This is, per capita, one of the highest levels of aid in the world. Officially the funds are aimed towards the building of institutions of a future democratic, independent and viable Palestinian State, existing side by side and in peace with Israel. This mantra has been stated in thousands of documents and

brochures since 1993. Traditionally, the EU is the biggest donor to the Palestinian territories. But after 20 years the results are disastrous. The prospect of a Palestinian State is further away than ever, the situation in the Palestinian territories is in many respects worse than before Oslo: The economic situation is difficult, a quarter of the population lives in poverty, unemployment rate in the West Bank is at nearly 17%, in Gaza even at 43%, the highest in the world. Only 18% of the West Bank are under Palestinian control. And the amount of water that Palestinians can drill from their own water resources today is less than 20 years ago. Despite billions of dollars in donor aid that went into the water sector.

Etat Commun de Eyal Sivan, 2012, 123mn. Audio:

Synopsis : Au-delà de tout ce qui a pu être écrit, filmé, photographié sur le conflit Israëlo-Palestinien, ce documentaire propose un dispositif original et inédit pour mettre en avant un concept révolutionnaire. Vingt ans après les accords d'Oslo, « la solution des deux états » est dans l'impasse. Le concept d'État commun propose d'abandonner la notion de partition du territoire pour embrasser celle du partage. Par le truchement du montage se concrétise une rencontre que le conflit empêche depuis si longtemps. Des juifs israéliens et des arabes palestiniens d'Israël, des territoires occupés ou de la diaspora, des responsables politiques et des militants, des réfugiés et des colons, des jeunes et des vieux, des universitaires et des artistes : des fils et des filles de ce pays qui s'étend entre le Jourdain et la mer. Une conversation potentielle. L'un parle l'autre écoute.

Nation Estate, Larissa Sansour, 2012, 9mn.

Synopsis : The Nation Estate project consists of a 9-minute sci-fi short film and series offering a clinically dystopian, yet humorous approach to the deadlock in the Middle East. With its glossy mixture of computer-generated imagery, live actors and an arabesque electronica soundtrack, the Nation Estate film explores a vertical solution to Palestinian statehood. Palestinians have their state in the form of a single skyscraper: the Nation Estate. One colossal high-rise houses the entire Palestinian population - now finally living the high life.

Roadmap to Apartheid by Ana Nogueira & Eron Davidson, 2012, 95mn.

Synopsis : Ana Nogueira is a white South African and Eron Davidson a Jewish Israeli. Drawing on their first-hand knowledge of the issues, the producers take a close look at the apartheid comparison often used to describe the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Their film breaks down the rhetorical analogy into a fact-based comparison, noting where the analogy is useful and appropriate, and where it is not. There are many lessons to draw from the South African experience relevant to conflicts all over the world. This film is as much a historical document of the rise and fall of apartheid, as it is a film about why many Palestinians feel they are living in an apartheid system today, and why an increasing number of people around the world agree with them.

3. EVALUATION AND GRADING

The evaluation is based on regular attendance, participation in the debates, texts' and movies' critical presentations during the seminar, the pre-final oral presentation of the paper during the last session of the seminar, and the final written paper.

For the final group papers, students will work around a number of topics developed during the seminar. In principle, the final papers will be co-signed by groups of 3-4 students. Individual papers may be negotiated.

Students will be graded according to their presence, participation, class presentation (30%), on the one side, and for their final papers (70%) on the other side.

This course is granted 6 ECTS: attendance/participation (1 ECTS), presentations of texts and movies during the seminar (2 ECTS) and final paper (3 ECTS). Each ECTS is equivalent to 25-30 hours of work.

Academic Code of conduct

The written assignments must represent an original work, with the use of all resources properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating or violation of the academic honor code will NOT be tolerated, and will be dealt with according to Institute rules' policy. Student assignments will be randomly selected to be checked using software designed to identify academic plagiarism. Please, note that assignments that are confirmed to contain plagiarized material will be given a 'O' grade.

General Resources on Israeli and Palestinian cinemas and filmmakers

Written :

- ARMES, Roy, 2010, *Arab Filmmakers of the Middle East. A Dictionary*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.
- ARMES, Roy, 2015, *New Voices in Arab Cinema*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press.
- BRESHEET, Haïm and HAMMAMI, Haifa (eds.), 2006, *The Conflict and Contemporary Visual Culture in Palestine and Israel*. Special double-issue, No. 80/81, Vol. 20, issue 3-4, of 'Third Text' (London, Routledge)
- BURRIS, Greg, 2019, *The Palestinian Idea. Film, Media and the Radical Imagination*. Philadelphia, Temple University Press.
- DABASHI, Hamid (ed.), 2003, *Dreams of a Nation: on Palestinian Cinema*. New York, Verso.
- EUROMED AUDIOVISUAL, 2013, *Country Profile : Palestine*. Tunis.
- GERTZ, Nurith and KHLEIFI, George, 2008, *Palestinian Cinema. Landscape, Trauma and Memory*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.
- GINSBERG, Terri and LIPPARD, Chris, 2010, *Historical Dictionary of Middle Eastern Cinema*. Toronto, The Scarecrow Press.
- HALBREICH-EUVARD, Janine, et SHYMAN, Carol, 2015, *Israéliens, Palestiniens. Les cinéastes témoignent*. Paris, Editions Riveneuve.
- HILLAUER, Rebecca, 2005, *Encyclopedia of Arab Women Filmmakers*. Cairo, The American University of Cairo Press.
- SCHOUMANN, Hélène, 2012, *Dictionnaire du cinéma israélien*. Paris, Editions Cosmopole.
- SCHWEITZER, Ariel, 2013, *Le nouveau cinéma israélien*. Liège, Editions Yellow Now.
- SHAFIK, Viola, 2007, *Arab Cinema. History and Cultural Identity*. Cairo, American University Press.
- SHOHAT, Ella, 2010, *Israeli Cinema. East/West and the Politics of Representation*. London, I.B. Tauris.

Audio-visual :

UNE HISTOIRE DU CINEMA ISRAELIEN de Raphaël Nadjari, 2009, 209mn. (2 DVD – Hebrew subt. Français)

Résumé : la première partie (1932 - 1978) s'attache au mouvement sioniste et à l'existence même d'un état en perpétuelle quête d'identité et de reconnaissance, la seconde période (1978 - 2007) présente un cinéma plus politique et plus polémique, reflet d'une société civile multiforme et non consensuelle. Le documentaire contient d'innombrables extraits de films et d'entretiens avec d'éminents spécialistes (réalisateurs, auteurs, écrivains, critiques, journalistes...).

Ella SHOHAT and Rasha SALTI on Israeli and Palestinian Cinema :

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ikxZ_Yq2u_U&list=PLo50no-cDy3TTusS4U07ZQ9UIQSE34EtZ

Riccardo BOCCO sur 'Le Sionisme, l'Occident et la création de l'Etat israélien' :

<https://vimeo.com/337222781/1a7d19242e>

Websites :

<http://www.palestinefilm.org/>

<http://www.israelfilmcenter.org/israeli-film-database/filmmakers?onpage=10&type=directors&page=27>

<https://israelfilmcenterstres.org/films/directors/>

THE QARQ (Quote, Argument, Relation, Question) MODEL

Students introducing the texts and the films for the debate during the seminar's sessions will be invited to :

Quote – Cite a sentence or two from the text (and/or from the film) which reflects the authors' main argument(s).

Argument – synoptically present author's argument in your own language. If relevant, mention which thesis the author is defending and which one she is arguing against.

Relation – When possible, connect the argument of the text under discussion with those of the same sessions or texts previously discussed. Show how author's argument supports or undermines argument of other authors. Also, when pertinent, connect the argument of the texts with the discourse/analysis provided in the film.

Question –frame a question about the position or consistency of the argument: a) e.g., an issue which the author is silent about, and why this silence, and b) question about a dimension in the text that may not be amply addressed. Ideally, question should be internal to the text.