

## SOCIOLOGY 389

### MIDDLE EAST ON FILM: ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Fereydoun Safizadeh

Boston College, Fall 2007

**Class: Monday 10:15-1:00, O'Neill Library Room 211, Office: McGuinn Hall 426D**

**Office Hours: Monday 2:00-3:00 and by Appointment, Tel. 617-552-4287, Email: Safizadf@bc.edu**

This course seeks to expand the student's understanding of the Middle East, its peoples and cultures through national (indigenous) and international (Hollywood, European, other) filmmaking traditions. Critical examination of a number of fiction and non-fiction films from Egypt, Palestine, Israel, Syria, Turkey, Iran, as well as from Europe and North America allows the students to develop a more fine-grained understanding of Middle Easterners' view of self and society. Topics considered include: colonialism, nationalism, occidentalism, question of women, secularism, modernity, religious resurgence, conflict, democracy, human rights, as well as portrayal of Islam and Middle Eastern peoples and cultures in Western media and cinema.

#### **Required Books: (available at BC Bookstore and on reserve at O'Neill Library under SC 389)**

Bates, Daniel G. and Amal Rassam 2001. *Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall Publishers.

Khatib, Lina 2006. *Filming the Modern Middle East: Politics in the Cinemas of Hollywood and the Arab World*. New York: I. B. Taurus Publishers.

Shafik, Viola 1998. *Arab Cinema: History and Cultural Identity*. Cairo: American University Press.

Satrapi, Marjane 2003. *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*. New York: Pantheon Books.

Tapper, Richard, ed. 2002. *The New Iranian Cinema: Politics, Representation and Identity*. New York: Palgrave/I. B. Taurus Publishers.

#### **Recommended Books: (available at O'Neill Library)**

Armes, Roy 2005. *Postcolonial Images: Studies in North African Film*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Dwyer, Kevin 2004. *Beyond Casablanca, M. A. Tazi and the Adventure of Moroccan Cinema*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Hentsch, Thierry 1992. *Imagining the Middle East*. Montreal: Black Rose Books.

Hillauer, Rebecca 2005. *Encyclopedia of Arab Women Filmmakers*. Cairo: The American University of Cairo Press.

Naficy Hamid 2001. *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

**Requirements:**

1. Consistent class attendance, careful reading, and participation in the class discussions.
2. Students will be organized into groups of four to present a biography/summary/reaction/critique on the films and the readings (20-30 mins.) at least twice during the semester. There will be a group grade and an individual grade, and each student will hand in a written 1.5-2 pages for their segment of the group presentation.
3. There will a final research paper (12 pages) based on class presentation topic/s or on topic/s that I will provide about the central issues in the course. If you would like to write on other topics consult with me. The final paper will be due in class on **December 10<sup>th</sup>**.
4. There will be mid-term examination on **October 29<sup>th</sup>**.
5. No midterm make-up or late acceptance of the final research paper without a documented medical or family emergency.
6. All written work should be typed, double spaced and footnoted or endnoted according to the MLA or APA formats. Keep a copy of **everything** you hand in.

**Grades and Evaluation:** Regular class attendance, reading and participation in class discussions 10%, summary/reaction/critique papers 25%, mid-term exam 30%, final research paper/examination 35%.

(R) = the item is on reserve at the O'Neill Library. (\*) = other recommended reading or viewing material.

### Week 1. (Sept. 10) Cinema of Iran

Film: Majidi, Majid 1999. *The Color of Paradise (Ragh-e Khoda)* 90 mins., Miramax Films, Burbank, CA: Buena Vista Home Entertainment. (PN1993.5 .I7 C45 2002)

### Week 2. (Sept. 17) Cinema of Iran

Film: Ghobadi, Bahman 2001. *A Time for Drunken Horses*. 80 mins., New Vision Films. (PN1993.5 .I7 Z36 2001)

Reading: Bates, Daniel G. and Amal Rassam 2001. *Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East*. Introduction & Chapter 1 (pp. ix-xvii & 1-29).

Tapper, Richard, ed. 2002. *The New Iranian Cinema: Politics, Representation and Identity*, pp. 1-116.

- \* Dabashi, Hamid 1998. *Close Up: Iranian Cinema, Past, Present, and Future*. London: Verso.
- \* Dabashi, Hamid 2007. *Masters and Master Pieces of Iranian Cinema*. Washington: Mage Publishers.
- \* Fischer, Michael M. J. 2003. "Filmic Judgment and Cultural Critique: Iranian Cinema in a Teletechnological World." In Michael M. J. Fischer 2003. *Emergent Forms of Life and the Anthropological Voice*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 61-89.
- \* Saaed-Vafa, Mehrnaz, Jonathon Rosenbaum 2003. *Abbas Kiarostami*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- \* Elena, Alberto 2005. *The Cinema of Abbas Kiarostami*. London: Saqi Books.

### Week 3. (Sept. 24) Cinema of Turkey

Film: Ustaoglu, Yesim 1999/2001. *Journey to the Sun*. 104 mins. Turkey/Netherlands/Germany. Chicago: Facet Video (PN1993.5 .T87 J68 2004)

Bates, Daniel G. and Amal Rassam 2001. *Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East*. Chapters 2 & 3 (pp. 30-89).

Tapper, Richard, ed. 2002. *The New Iranian Cinema: Politics, Representation and Identity*, pp.117-261.

- \* Ergan, Eric 2004. *The Films of Makhmalbaf: Cinema, Politics and Culture in Iran*. Washington: Mage Publishers
- \* Sadr, Hamid Reza 2006. *Iranian Cinema: A Political History*. New York: Palgrave/I. B. Taurus Publishers.
- \* Mirbakhtiyar, Shahla 2006. *Iranian Cinema and the Islamic Revolution*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co.

**Week 4. (Oct. 1) Cinema of Turkey**

Film: Turgul, Yavuz, 1996. *Eskiya* (The Bandit), 121 mins. Turkey: ArtCam

Bates, Daniel G. and Amal Rassam 2001. *Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East*, Chapters 5 & 6 (pp. 120-170).

Shafik, Viola 1998. *Arab Cinema: History and Cultural Identity*. Cairo: American University Press, pp. 1-213.

**Week 5. (Oct. 8) No Class Columbus Day**

**Week 6. (Oct. 15) Cinema of Egypt**

Film: Hamed, Marwan 2006. *The Yacoubian Building*. 161 mins., Cairo: Good News

Bates, Daniel G. and Amal Rassam 2001. *Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East*. Chapter 7 ( pp. 171-200).

\* Shafik, Viola 1998/2007. *Popular Egyptian Cinema: Gender, Class and Nation*.  
Cairo: The American University of Cairo Press.

**Week 7. (Oct. 22) Cinema of Egypt**

Film: Rached, Tahani 2006. *El Banat Dol* (These Girls). 68 mins., Cairo: Studio Misr.

Bates, Daniel G. and Amal Rassam 2001. *Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East*. Chapter 8 ( pp. 201-225).

Shafik, Viola 1998. *Arab Cinema: History and Cultural Identity*. Cairo: American University Press, pp. 121-213.

**Week 8. (Oct. 29) MID-TERM EXAMINATION**

**Week 9. (Nov. 5) Cinema of Lebanon**

Film: Chamoun, Jean Khalil 2000. *In the Shadow of the City*. 102 mins. Ciné-Sud Promotion.

Bates, Daniel G. and Amal Rassam 2001. *Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East*. Chapter 9 ( pp. 226-250).

Khatib, Lina 2006. *Filming the Modern Middle East: Politics in the Cinemas of Hollywood and the Arab World*. New York: I. B. Taurus Publishers, 1-62.

**Week 10. (Nov. 12) Cinema of Palestine/Israel**

Film: Avni, Ronit, Joline Makhlof, Nahanni Rous, Julia Bacha 2006. *Encounter Point*. 89 mins., Just Vision Films.

Bates, Daniel G. and Amal Rassam 2001. *Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East*. Chapters 4 & 10 (pp. 90-142 & 251-277)

Khatib, Lina 2006. *Filming the Modern Middle East: Politics in the Cinemas of Hollywood and the Arab World*. New York: I. B. Taurus Publishers, 64-164.

\* Dabashi, Hamid 2006. *Dreams of a Nation, On Palestinian Cinema*. London: Verso.

### **Week 11. (Nov. 19) Cinema of Iraq**

Film: Longely, James 2007. *Iraq in Fragments*. 94 mins. USA: Daylight Factory.  
<http://www.iraqinfragments.com/>

Bates, Daniel G. and Amal Rassam 2001. *Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East*. Chapter 11 (pp. 278-303).

Khatib, Lina 2006. *Filming the Modern Middle East: Politics in the Cinemas of Hollywood and the Arab World*. New York: I. B. Taurus Publishers, 165-209.

### **Week 12. (Nov. 26) Hollywood on Middle East**

Film: Media Education Foundation 200x. *Reel bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*. 50 mins. Northampton, MA: MEF

Shaheen, Jack 1997. *Arab and Muslim Stereotypes in American Popular Culture*. Washington: Center for Muslim and Christian Understanding. (R)

\* Bernstein, Mathew and Gaylyn Studler eds. 1997. *Visions of the East: Orientalism in Film*. Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

\* Caton, Steven C. 1999. *Lawrence of Arabia: A Film's Anthropology*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

\* Shaheen, Jack G. 2001. *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*. New York: Olive Branch

\* Semmerling, Tim Jon 2006. *"Evil" Arabs in American Popular Film: Orientalist Fear*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

### **Week 13. (Dec. 3) Cinema on the Islamic Revolution in Iran**

Film: Paronnaud, Vincent and Satrapi, Marjane 2007. *Perspolis*. 95 mins., 247 Films.

Satrapi, Marjane 2003. *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*. New York: Pantheon Books. (the whole book)

**Week 14. (Dec. 10) CONCLUSION - FINAL PAPER DUE - FINAL EXAMINATION, DEC. 17**

**FILMS/VIDEO LIST  
SOCIOLOGY 389  
FALL SEMESTER 2007  
CLASS in ROOM 211 O'NEILL LIBRARY**

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- Week 14. Dec. 10** **TBA**
- Week 15. Dec. 17** **EXAM**