

Office of Interdisciplinary Studies
<http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca>

Middle Eastern and African Studies Program
MEAS 300: Fall Term 2013
Arab Cinema

Instructor: Iman Mersal
Office: Arts 242-C

Time: Tues & Thurs, 3:30 to 4:50 PM
Place: HC L 4

Fax: 780-492-9787

Office Hours: Mondays 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM or by appointment

E-mail: imersal@ualberta.ca

Course website: <http://bit.ly/arabcinema>

Course Prerequisite: none

Course-based Ethics Approval: not required

Community Service learning component: none

Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material available: representative exam material to be distributed in class.

Course Description and Objectives:

This course offers an introduction to the history and development of Arab cinema from its emergence in the 1920s to the present. It also explores various aspects of modern Arab history, culture, and society as they are illustrated in films. During the course of the semester you will watch 13 Arab films, either at the ARC (Old Arts building room 135), or online, as explained in the course schedule below.

Class lectures and discussions aim to introduce you to a variety of topics, theories, and debates within the field of Middle Eastern studies. The focus will be on five central themes and their implications for Arab identity formation:

1. Cosmopolitanism in the colonial era.
2. Adaptation and realism (Egypt).
- 3- Nationalism and ideology (Egypt).
4. Narrating the struggle for liberation (Palestine).
5. Saving the memory of cities from war and displacement (Lebanon and Iraq).

The films have been selected not only on the basis of their cinematic and artistic value, but also for their textual, cultural and historical engagement with the five themes. These films offer a source of representations of society, social class, gender, ideology, and politics in Arab culture. Filmmakers include Ahmad Badrakhan, Henri Barakat, Hassan al-Imam, Tawfik Saleh, Youssef Chahin and Marwan Hamed (Egypt); Michel Khaleifi, Elia Sulieman and Hani Abu-Assad (Palestine); Ziad Douerie (Lebanon); Samir (Iraq).

Students are expected to complete required readings and watch films prior to the class for which they are assigned, attend every class, and participate in classroom discussions in order to receive

the maximum participation grade. All readings are drawn from required texts, available in the SUB bookstore, or online, as explained below.

Text available in the SUB bookstore:

- 1- Viola Shafik, *Popular Egyptian Cinema: Gender, Class, and Nation*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2007.
- 2- Hamid Dabashi, *Dreams of a Nation: On Palestinian Cinema*. London: Verso, 2006.
- 3 - Lina Khatib, *Lebanese Cinema: Imagining the Civil War and Beyond*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2008.

Required Readings (on course website):

- Rebecca Hillaur 2005. *Encyclopaedia of Arab Women Filmmakers*. (5 pages).
- Youssef Chahine and Joseph Massad 1999. *Art and Politics in the Cinema of Youssef Chahine*. (16 pages).
- *Islamists in Egyptian Cinema*, by Walter Armbrust. (10 pages).
- *Unlocking the Arab Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in Egyptian Film* by Garay Menicucci (6 pages).
- *Egypt's Tortured Present*, by Saad Eddin Ibrahim. (3 pages).
- *The representation of Sephardim/Mizharim*, by Ella Shohat. (50 pages).

Required films at ARC Each film is available at ARC from 8 am to 3 pm during the week (Monday to Friday) in which it is assigned according to the course schedule below- note that during every other week, throughout the semester, all of these films (except for #1) is available on Reserve.

- 1- *Dananeer*: Feature Film (1940). Director: Ahmad Badrakhan. Time: 90 minutes.
- 2- *Nightingale's Prayer: Feature Film* (1959). Director: Henri Barakat. Time: 126 minutes.
- 3- *Midaq Alley*: Feature Film (1963). Director: Hassan al-Imam. Time: 105 minutes.
- 4 -*The Yacoubian Building*: Feature Film (2006). Director: Marwan Hamed. Time: 161 minutes.
- 5 -*The Dupes*: Feature Film (1972). Director: Tawfik Saleh. Time: 107 minutes.
- 6 -*Wedding In Galilee*: Feature Film (1987). Director: Michel Khleifi. Time: 113 minutes.
- 7- *Divine Intervention*: Feature Film (2002). Director: Elia Suleiman. Time: 92 minutes.
- 8 - *Forget Baghdad*: Documentary. (2004). Time: 111 minutes.

Required films on course website:

- 9 - *Cairo Station*. Feature Film (1958). Director: Youssef Chahin. Time: 92 minutes.
- 10 - *Saladin*. Feature Film (1963). Director: Youssef Chahin. Time: 145 minutes.
- 11 - *Alexandria ...Why?* Feature Film (1975). Director: Youssef Chahin. 1975. Time: 126 minutes.
- 12 - *Paradise Now*. Feature Film (2005). Director: Hani Abu - Assad. Time: 91 minutes.
- 13 - *West Beirut*: Feature Film (1998). Director: Ziad Doueiri. Time: 105 minutes.

Course Schedule:

	Tuesday	Thursday	Topic
Week 1		5-Sept	Introduction
<i>Unit one: Cosmopolitanism in the colonial era</i>			
Week 2	10 -Sept	12-Sept	<p>Required watching: <i>Dananeer</i>: Musical film. (1940). (at ARC from Sept 9- 13)</p> <p>Required reading: Viola Shafik, <i>Popular Egyptian Cinema: Gender, Class, and Nation</i>. pp. 13 -40.</p>
<i>Unit two: Adaptation and realism.</i>			
Week 3	17 -Sept	19-Sep	<p>Required watching: - <i>Nightingale's Prayer</i>: Feature Film (1959). Time: 126 minutes. (at ARC from Sept 16- 20).</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Viola Shafik, <i>Popular Egyptian Cinema: Gender, Class, and Nation</i>. pp. 241 - 280. - Rebecca Hillaur 2005. <i>Encyclopaedia of Arab Women Filmmakers</i>. pp. 27- 32. (Online)
Week 4	24 -Sept	26-Sep	<p>Required watching: <i>Midaq Alley</i>. Feature Film, (1963). Time: (105 minutes (at ARC from Sept 23- 27)</p> <p>Required Reading: Viola Shafik. <i>Popular Egyptian Cinema: Gender, Class, and Nation</i>. pp. 119 - 172.</p> <p>Optional reading: Interview with Mahfuz from <i>The Paris Review</i>, Summer 1992. (Online)</p>
<i>Unit three: Nationalism and ideology.</i>			
Week 5	1- Oct	3- Oct	<p>Required watching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Umm Kulthum, A Voice Like Egypt</i>. Director: Michal Goldman, 1996. 67 minutes. (In class). - <i>Cairo Station</i>. Feature Film (1958). Director: Youssef Chahin. Time: 92 minutes. (Online). <p>Required Reading: <i>Art and Politics in the Cinema of Youssef Chahine</i>. Interview with Youssef Chahine by Joseph Massad 1999. (16 pages - Online). # Guest Lecture on Oct 3d. TBA.</p>

Week 6	8-Oct	10-Oct	<p>Required watching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Alexandria...Why?</i> Feature Film (1975). Director: Youssef Chahin. 1975. Time: 126 minutes. (Online). - <i>Saladin</i>. Feature Film (1963). Director: Youssef Chahin. Time: 145 minutes. (Online) <p>Required Reading:</p> <p>Viola Shafik. <i>Popular Egyptian Cinema: Gender, Class, and Nation</i>. pp. 41 – 64 and pp. 89 – 115.</p>
Week 7	15-Oct	17-Oct	<p>Required watching:</p> <p><i>Yacoubian Building</i>: Feature Film (2006). Time: 161 minutes. (at ARC from Oct 14 -18).</p> <p>Required Reading :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Islamists in Egyptian Cinema, by Walter Armbrust. (10 pages- Online). - Unlocking the Arab Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in Egyptian Film by Garay Menicucci.. (6 pages – Online). - Egypt's Tortured Present, by Saad Eddin Ibrahim. (3 pages- Online).
Week 8	22- Oct	24- Oct	General discussion and Midterm on Oct 24.
<i>Unit four: Narrating the struggle for liberation</i>			
Week 9	29-Oct	31-Oct	<p>Required watching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>The Dupes</i>: Feature Film (1972). Time: 107 minutes. (at ARC from Oct 28 –Nov1). <p>Required Reading:</p> <p>Hamid Dabashi. <i>Dreams of a Nation: On Palestinian Cinema</i>. pp. 32 – 69.</p>
Week 10	5- Nov	7- Nov	<p>Required watching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Wedding in Galilee</i>: Feature Film (1987). Time: 113 minutes. (at ARC from Nov 4- 8). - <i>Paradise Now</i>. Feature Film (2005). Director: Hani Abu - Assad. Time: 91 minutes. (Online) <p>Required Reading:</p> <p>Hamid Dabashi. <i>Dreams of a Nation: On Palestinian Cinema</i>. pp. 90 – 104.</p>
<i>Unit five: saving the memory of cities from war and displacement.</i>			
Week 11	12-Nov	14- Nov	<p>Required watching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Divine Intervention</i>: Feature Film (2002). Director: Elia Suleiman. Time: 92 minutes. (at ARC from Nov 11 - 15). - <i>West Beirut</i>: Feature Film (1998). Time: 105 minutes. (Online). <p>Required Reading:</p> <p>Lina Khatib. <i>Lebanese Cinema: Imagining the Civil War and Beyond</i>. pp. 21- 54 and pp. 153- 184.</p>
Friday, November 15: Individual meetings (to discuss papers and presentations.			
Week 12	19 - Nov	21 - Nov	<p>Required watching:</p> <p><i>Forget Baghdad</i>: Documentary. (2004). Director: Samir.</p>

			Time: 111 minutes. (at ARC from Nov 18 - Nov 22). Required Reading: <i>The representation of Sephardim/Mizharim</i> , by Ella Shohat. (50 pages - online). Optional Reading: Sargon Boulus: <i>Poems in Poetry International Web</i> . (10 pages – Online)
Week 13	26-Nov	28-Nov	Student presentations
Week 14	3 - Dec		General discussion

Grade Distribution:

Activity	%
Attendance and participation (including reading presentations)	20%
Midterm quiz (Oct 24)	30%
Oral presentation (Nov 26 and 28)	10%
Final Paper (Dec 10)	40%
Total	100%

Course requirements:

- Regular class attendance; active participation.
- Completing weekly watching and reading assignments on time, in order to participate in class discussions effectively.
- Every student will be responsible for presenting one of the readings (schedule TBA)
- Midterm quiz **Oct 24**.
- Individual meetings (to discuss papers and presentations), **November 15**.
- 10-15 minute oral presentation on your research paper topic. **Nov 26, 28**.
- Paper on your research topic (20 pages, double spaced, 12 pt, 1" margins) elaborating your presentation, based on class readings plus at least 5 additional scholarly sources relevant to your topic. **Due Dec 10**.

Required Notes:

"Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University calendar." (GFC 29 SEP 2003). "The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.ualberta.ca/secretariat/appeals.htm) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University." (GFC 29 SEP 2003)

"Plagiarism and Cheating: All students should consult the "Truth-In-Education" handbook or Website (<http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/>) regarding the definitions of plagiarism and its consequences when detected. Students involved in language courses and translation courses should be aware that on-line "translation engines" produce very dubious and unreliable "translations." Students in languages courses should be aware that, while seeking the advice of

native or expert speakers is often helpful, excessive editorial and creative help in assignments is considered a form of "cheating" that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences. An instructor who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. Before unpleasantness occurs consult <http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/TIE/>; also discuss this matter with any tutor(s) and with your instructor.

Grading:

Marks for assignments, tests, and exams are given in percentages, to which letter grades are also assigned, according to the table below ("OIS Undergraduate Grading Scale"). The percentage mark resulting from the entire term work and examination then produces the final letter grade for the course.

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value
Excellent	A+	4.0
	A	4.0
	A-	3.7
Good	B+	3.3
	B	3.0
	B-	2.7
Satisfactory	C+	2.3
	C	2.0
	C-	1.7
Poor Minimal Pass	D+	1.3
	D	1.0
Failure	F or F4	0.0