

**San José State University
School of Journalism & Mass Communication,**

Telling Our Story: Israeli Society in Documentary Filmmaking

JWSS 111

Fall Semester, 2020

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Anat Balint

Office Location: Online meetings

Telephone: Please contact me by email

Email: anat.balint@sjsu.edu

Office Hours: Wednesday 4:30 PM (by appointment on email)

Class Days/Time: Monday and Wednesday 3:00-4:15 PM

Classroom: Online (synchronous)

Zoom Link:

<https://sjsu.zoom.us/j/94596442620?pwd=NE11cXZGd2JiTHM3NXdOTGRZN0RLZz09>

Password: 41906j

Course Description

In this course, we will explore Israeli society and its historical roots by looking into its vibrant scene of documentary filmmaking.

Israeli society has rapidly developed from a highly consolidated socialistic society into a fractured one, dominated by the logic of capitalism. Within just a few decades, multiple social fissures have emerged, revealing underlying ethnic, religious, and racial tensions, mainly between Arabs and Jews, Ashkenazi and Mizrahi Jews, white and Ethiopian Jews, and secular and religious Israelis. These forced Israelis to re-think their national identity and understanding of the Zionist idea about a national home for the Jewish People.

Documentary films serve as a building block in societies' collective memory: they allow establishing shared narratives about the past as well as challenging such narratives and push for a change.

By dissecting selected Israeli documentaries and talking to their creators, we will dive into key elements in the "Israeliness": the Holocaust, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the Kibbutz, Israeli army, LGBT rights, and Jewish religious life.

Course Format

This is an online class. The course will be conducted twice a week synchronously on Zoom, through a recurring link (see above).

Course materials such as the syllabus, announcements, reading assignments, writing assignment instructions, and Zoom link and schedule topics will be posted on the course Canvas page.

We will alternate between different online formats: lectures, co-watching films, discussions and guest lectures. In all of these, students are expected to take an active role by asking questions, answering questions, sharing their analysis, presenting their short essays, responding on live chat (co-watching), engaging with guest speakers etc.

Some classes (co-watching and guest lectures) maybe be open to other students and faculty at SJSU, as visitors in the course. This will be announced ahead.

Zoom Classroom Etiquette

- **Open your cameras during all sessions.** Please use laptops and make sure you have a good connection and a quiet learning environment with no background distractions. Avoid using mobile phones for online sessions.
- **Mute your Microphone:** To help keep background noise to a minimum, make sure you mute your microphone when you are not speaking.
- **Position Your Camera Properly:** Be sure your webcam is in a stable position and focused at eye level.
- **Limit Your Distractions/Avoid Multitasking:** You can make it easier to focus on the meeting by turning off notifications, closing or minimizing running apps, and putting your smartphone away
- **Use Appropriate Virtual Backgrounds:** If using a virtual background, it should be appropriate and professional and should NOT suggest or include content that is objectively offensive or demeaning.

Recording Zoom Classes

This course or portions of this course (i.e., lectures, discussions, student presentations) will be recorded for instructional or educational purposes, **dependent on all students consent**. The recordings will only be shared with students enrolled in the class through Canvas. The recordings will be deleted at the end of the semester.

Students are not allowed to record without instructor permission. Students are prohibited from recording class activities (including class lectures, office hours, advising sessions, etc.), distributing class recordings, or posting class recordings. Materials created by the instructor for the course (syllabi, lectures and lecture notes, presentations, etc.) are copyrighted by the instructor. This university policy (S12-7) is in place to protect the privacy of students in the course, as well as to maintain academic integrity through reducing the instances of cheating. Students who record, distribute, or post these materials will be referred to the Student Conduct and Ethical Development office. Unauthorized recording may violate university and state law. It is the responsibility of students that require special accommodations or assistive technology due to a disability to notify the instructor.

Course Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course:

- Students will demonstrate familiarity with the notion of **collective memory**; the social institutions that shape it how it reflects contemporary tensions within a local political landscape.
- Students will dissect the **role of the media** in shaping collective memory.
- Students will **critically analyze historical narratives** presented in the media, particularly in documentary films.
- Particularly, students will recognize and dissect themes and narratives in documentary filmmaking which reflect **ethnic, religious and national tensions**, through the **case of the Israeli society**.
- Students will demonstrate familiarity with the development of the **Zionist movement** and the history of **Israeli Society**.
- Students will **analyze reports on Israel, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Middle East** based on their knowledge of the history of the country and the region and current Israeli media, culture and society.

Required Readings

Textbooks (please follow the specific reading items from these books on Canvas)

- Shapira, A., (2012) *Israel, A History*, New England: Brandeis University Press.
- Engel, D., (2009) *Zionism*, Harlow: Pearson/Longman
- Zerubavel, Y.,(1995) *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press

Other Readings

Please follow reading items on Canvas.

All texts will be available as PDF files on Canvas or online.

Library Liaison

Please contact Silke Higgins: silke.higgins@sjsu.edu

Course Requirements and Assignments

Attendance is mandatory

- You can miss no more than three classes a semester.
- Absence from eight classes or more will not allow credit for the course.

Participation: 10%

- Students are strongly encouraged and take active role in online discussions and all other online group activities (such as discussion on Canvas).

Semester assignments: 40%

- Eight small assignments to submit online during the semester (a choice of eight from overall ten assignments).
- Each assignment is 5 points (8X5=40 points for the final grade).
- In most of these assignments, students will write short reflection essays following documentary films presented in class (co-watching) or viewed independently.
- These assignments should be 1-2 pages long, font 12, 1.5 spacing. Please follow the specific instructions for each assignment on Canvas.
- When asked to refer to scholarly texts, a reference list should appear at the end, APA style recommended, but any other systematic referencing style is acceptable.

Reading Quizzes: 30%

- Three multiple-choice reading quizzes will be given on reading materials (see course schedule).
- Each quiz is 10 point (3X10=30 for the final grade)
- Quizzes will be given online on Canvas during Zoom sessions.

Final Essay: 20%

- **Deadline:** December 10th (On Canvas, no late submission).
- The final assignment is an eight pages essay: an analysis of a documentary film (or a number of films) which relate to certain aspects in American or Israeli collective memory.

- Students can choose their own topic (subject to Dr. Balint's written approval) or follow the topic offered by the Dr. Balint.
- The essay must include a reference list at the end (APA style recommended)
- Font 12, 1.5 spacing.

“Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.”

Grading Information

	Grading per assignment	Assignment	Points in final grade
Participation	10	<u>Active participation</u> in all Zoom sessions (no more than 3 times absent)	10%
Quizzes	10 (X3)	<u>3 reading quizzes</u>	30%
Semester Assignments	5 (X8)	Of 10 assignments, students <u>must submit on Canvas 8 assignments</u> . You can submit all 10 to maximize grade (best grades counted). Assignments should be 1-2 pages (font 12, 1.5 spacing). Follow instructions on Canvas and in class for each assignment.	40%
Final Essay	20	Final essay (8 pages, font size 12, 1.5 space) Topic given by Dr. Balint or by choice of students, subject to approval by Dr. Balint. Deadline: December 10th	20%
Final Grade	100		100%

Determination of Grades

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A plus</i>	<i>96 to 100%</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>93 to 95%</i>
<i>A minus</i>	<i>90 to 92%</i>
<i>B plus</i>	<i>86 to 89 %</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>83 to 85%</i>
<i>B minus</i>	<i>80 to 82%</i>
<i>C plus</i>	<i>76 to 79%</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>73 to 75%</i>
<i>C minus</i>	<i>70 to 72%</i>
<i>D plus</i>	<i>66 to 69%</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>63 to 65%</i>
<i>D minus</i>	<i>60 to 62%</i>

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/>". Make sure to visit this page, review and be familiar with these university policies and resources.

JWSS 111

Telling Our Story: Israeli Society in Documentary Filmmaking

Fall Semester, Mon/Wed. 3:00-4:15 PM

Course Schedule*

*Course schedule is subject to change, updates will be available on Canvas and on live Zoom sessions.

Class	Date	Topic & Reading	Assignment
Collective Memory			
Week 1			
1	August 18 th (Wed)	Introduction: Telling my story, telling yours	
Week 2			
2	August 24 th (Mon)	Collective Memory: From Our Story to Multiple Stories (<u>Reading on Canvas:</u> Collective Memory)	
3	August 26 th (Wed)	Film: <i>The Photohouse</i> (Tamar Tal, 2011)	
Week 3			
4	August 31 st (Mon)	Discussion: following <i>The Photohouse</i> + presenting assignments on collective memory	Assignment 1: Collective Memory and Self Presentation Assignment 2: Reflection on <i>The Photohouse</i> + questions for guest speaker
5	September 2 nd (Wed)	Guest Speaker: Director Tamar Tal (<i>The Photohouse</i>)	
The Birth of a Nation			
Week 4			
No Class	September 7 th (Mon)	Labor Day	
6	September 9 th (Wed)	The Birth of a Nation (1) (<u>Reading on Canvas:</u> The Zionist Idea)	
Week 5			

Class	Date	Topic & Reading	Assignment
7	September 14 th (Mon)	The Birth of a Nation (2)	Reading Quiz 1
8	September 16 th (Wed)	Film: Ben Gurion-Epilogue (Yariv Mozer, 2016)	
Week 6			
9	September 21 st (Mon)	Discussion: following <i>Ben Gurion-Epilogue</i> (Watch at home: <i>Ben-Gurion, Epilogue - The story behind the making of the documentary film</i>)	Assignment 3: Reflection on <i>Ben Gurion-Epilogue</i>
10	September 23 rd (Wed)	Film: Pillar of Fire: A Nation Re-born (IBA, 1981)	
The Melting Pot			
Week 7			
No Class	September 28 th (Mon)	Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)	
11	September 30 th (Wed)	The "New Jew": from Immigrants to Israelis (<u>Reading on Canvas:</u> The Melting Pot Ideology)	Assignment 4: Reflection on <i>Pillar of Fire: A Nation Re-born</i>
Week 8			
12	October 5 th (Mon)	Film: Tkuma: The Ingathering (IBA, 1998)	
13	October 7 th (Wen)	The Transit Camps: Temporary Solutions, A Permeant Problem (<u>Reading on Canvas:</u> "First" and "Second" Israel)	
Week 9			
14	October 12 th (Mon)	Film: Ma'abarot (2019, Dina Zvi-Riklis)	
15	October 14 th (Wen)	The Kibbutz: A New, Better, Society (<u>Reading on Canvas:</u> The Kibbutz)	Assignment 5: Reflection on <i>Ma'abarot & The Ingathering</i> Reading Quiz 2
Week 10			
16	October 19 th (Mon)	Film: Children of the Sun (2012, Ran Tal)	
17	October 21 st (Wed)	Guest Speaker: Dina Zvi Riklis, director <i>Ma'abarot</i> / Shimrit Braum-Kamin, Kibbutz native.	Assignment 6: Reflection on <i>Children of the Sun</i> + questions for guest speaker
The Holocaust			
Week 11			
18	October 26 th (Mon)	The Holocaust and Israeli Identity: Those who Came from "There"	Reading Quiz 3

Class	Date	Topic & Reading	Assignment
		(<u>Reading on Canvas</u> : The 2 nd Generation of Survivors) (<u>Watch at home</u> : <i>Pillar of Fire: Holocaust</i> (1981, IBA))	
19	October 28 th (Wen)	Film: <i>Pizza in Auschwitz</i> (2008, Moshe Zimerman)	
Week 12			
20	November 2 nd (Mon)	Discussion: Following <i>Pizza in Auschwitz</i> + towards final essay	Assignment 7: Reflection on <i>Pizza in Auschwitz</i>
The Conflict			
21	November 4 th (Wed)	The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: What is it All About? (<u>Reading on Canvas</u> : Israel Post Six Days War) (<u>Watch at home</u> : <i>Tkuma: The Conflict</i> (1981, IBA)) (<u>Watch at home</u> : <i>The Settlers</i> (2016, Shimon Dotan))	
Week 13			
22	November 9 th (Mon)	Film: <i>Precious Life</i> (2010, Shlomi Eldar)	Assignment 8: Reflection on <i>The Conflict</i> and/or <i>The Settlers</i>
No Class	November 11 th (Wed)	Veteran's Day	
Week 14			
23	November 16 th (Mon)	Guest Speaker: Shlomi Eldar, director <i>Precious Life</i>	Assignment 9: Reflection on <i>Precious Life</i>
24	November 18 th (Wed)	Film and Discussion: <i>A Victory Image</i> (2019, Adi Mishnayot)	
Week 15			
25	November 23 rd (Mon)	Guest Speaker: Adi Mishnayot, director <i>A Victory Image</i>	Assignment 10: Reflection on <i>A Victory Image</i> + questions to the director
No Class	November 25 th (Wed)	Thanksgiving	
Week 16			
26	November 30 th (Mon)	Film: <i>Women in Sink</i> (2017, Iris Zaki) (<u>Reading on Canvas</u> : Palestinians Citizens of Israel)	
27	December 2 nd (Wed)	Discussion: Following <i>Women in Sink</i> + Towards Final Essay	
Week 17			
28	December 7 th (Mon)	Epilogue	

Class	Date	Topic & Reading	Assignment
Final Essay	December 10th		Final Essay: Deadline: <u>December 10th</u> 8 pages, font 12, 1.5 space. Topic given by Dr. Balint or by choice of students, subject to approval by Dr. Balint. Detailed instructions on Canvas.