SYLLABUS

Representation of the Other is a central part in the construction of self-identity. In conflict our subjective construction of the Other becomes a rallying cry. In contemporary war the Other is viewed not only as an enemy to be fought but, often, as one to be eliminated. This Other is not passively perceived but actively represented. How do filmmakers fight against or, alternately, reinforce, such deadly representations?

This class will focus primarily on one of the world’s most conflict-ridden regions – the Middle East. The class will also explore films from Russia, Germany, France and the US. Through readings and film screenings, we will investigate how the Other is constructed: politically, aesthetically and ethically.

Our exploration will concentrate on the relationship between Form and Content. In our discussions on Form we will study variations in the use of cinematic elements such as sight and sound, montage and point of view, in order to achieve a subjective portrayal of the Other. In our discussions on Content we will explore specific political conflicts presented in each film or group of films.

This class is designed for anyone interested in filmmaking and film criticism, contemporary politics and history (especially those of the Mid-East), cinema of conflict and violence, and the ethical questions associated with them.

Writing Assignments:

a) Three writing assignments (500-750 words) on selected films presented in class. These should include your analysis of the cinematic depiction of the film’s specific political conflict--that is, how does the film do what it does-- as well as a “feeling-thought” analysis, in which you document your subjective (emotional) reaction to the film, your intellectual analysis of it, and the border-line between the two.

b) Final written essay (2,500 words); topics to be discussed in class.

Reading List:
1. PALESTINE AND THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT by Charles Smith (ISBN: 0-312-20828-6) *(Chapters 1-11, documents and supplements are optional)*

2. ISRAEL AND PALESTINE: A BRIEF HISTORY PART I and SINCE OSLO by Ami Isseroff (http://www.mideastweb.org/briefhistory.htm) and (http://mideastweb.org/briefhistory-oslo.htm) *(Optional)*


Films:

(Schedule is subject to changes pending availability of films.)

Class 1: **Gaza Strip**, by James Longley
Screening and discussion: Born into victimhood.

Class 2: **Close, Closed, Closure** by Rami Loevi
Screening and discussion: Identities marked by victimhood.

Class 3: **Wedding in the Galilee** by Michel Khleifi
Screening and discussion: Orientalism, one side.

Class 4: **The Syrian Bride** by Eran Riklis
Screening and discussion: Orientalism, the other side.

Class 5: **The Battle of Algiers** by Bruno Pontecorvo.
Screening and discussion: The politics--and ethics--of terrorism.

Class 6: **Paradise Now** by Hany Abu-Assad
Screening and discussion: Victim as aggressor.

Class 7: **Hot House** by Shimon Dotan
Screening and Discussion: Listening to “the other.”
Class 8:  **The Triumph of the Will** by Leni Riefenstahl  
Screening and discussion: Aesthetics as politics.

**Battleship Potemkin** by Sergei Eisenstein  
Screening and discussion: Politics as aesthetics.

Class 9:  **Divine Intervention** by Elia Suleiman  
Screening and discussion: “Poor Cinema” and the purity of expression.

Class 10:  **Waltz With Bashir** by Ari Fulman  
Screening and discussion: Memory and History.

Class 11:  **Fog of War** by Errol Morris  
Screening and discussion: Guilt, Responsibility, Judgment.

Class 12:  **No End In Sight** by Charles Ferguson  
Screening and discussion: Challenge authority, always.

Class 13:  **The Inner Tour** by Ra’anah Alexandrowich  
Screening and discussion: “The other” among us.

Class 14:  **Promises** by Justin Shapiro  
Screening and discussion: Innocence corrupted.

**Student evaluation:**  
Class participation: 30%  
Short written assignments: 30%  
Final written assignment: 40%