

The Israeli-Arab Conflict on Stage and Screen

Prof. Roy Holler | Email: royholler@ufl.edu | Walker Hall 200

Office Hours: Thursday 11:00am – 12:50pm and by appointment



Tuesday 11:45 AM - 1:40 PM | Thursday 12:50 PM - 1:40 PM

Classroom: [MAT 0105](#)

The stage and the cinema have long been venues for fictional and documentary portrayals of the conflict, offering rich, nuanced perspectives that challenge and critique the narratives presented by official state ideologies. Through screenings, readings, and discussions, we will engage with a variety of visual and literary works that interrogate the complex and often contentious relationship between Israelis and Palestinians.

Students will analyze how theatrical productions and films challenge national myths and confront issues of identity, displacement, and resistance, and how these works reflect the realities of war, occupation, and cultural conflict. By examining these representations, students will deepen their understanding of the historical, political, and social dynamics at play in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The course will provide a platform for critical thinking on how media can act as a tool for social change and dialogue, allowing students to explore the intersection of art, politics, and social history.

This course encourages students to consider the diverse ways in which narratives are constructed and contested, both in the Israeli and Palestinian contexts, and equips them with the tools to engage critically with the world of theater and film as they pertain to complex geopolitical conflicts.

Required Course Materials

I will provide you with all readings through the course site. These texts must be brought to class. Failure to come in with the assigned readings will result in removal of student from session.

Movies and Documentaries: Students will view films during the semester. Some films will be screened in class. Others will be available through streaming services or via direct link. Students must see required films no later than they are assigned.

List of Graded Assignments:

Assignment	Description	Requirements	Points
Reading Journal	In class. Self-reflective responses to assigned readings.	Weekly. Two paragraphs min.	30%
Essay	A response paper analyzing course themes through literary analysis of two texts from syllabus, of different cultures.	In Person, in Class	30%
Final Project	A segment in the class project – a videotaped interview.	Audio Visual interview/narrative (3 min in total length. 1 hour to interview, 2 hours to write script, 2 hours to edit)	20%
Participation + Preparation	The class is discussion based, meaning you shouldn't expect hour long lectures. The success of our class is based on your active discussion and group work!	Active participation and demonstrated preparation	20%

Writing Grading Rubric(s)

Writing Assessment	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit at least some evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide at least an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off-topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit at least some identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement but may require readers to work to follow progression of ideas.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical sentence structure. At a minimum, documents will display a less precise use of vocabulary and an uneven use of sentence structure or a writing style that occasionally veers away from word choice or tone appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, papers may contain some spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive so they do not muddy the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.

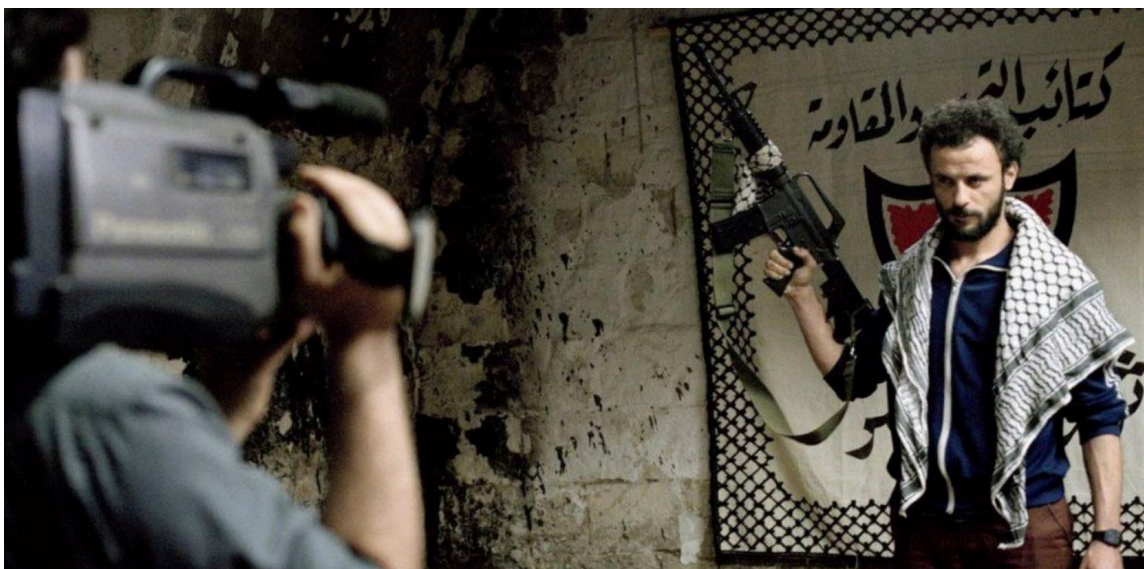
Participation Grading Rubric: (10 points, 10%)

	High Quality	Average	Needs Improvement
Informed: Shows evidence of having done the assigned work.	Student shows convincing range and quality of knowledge, having thoroughly read the assigned material in preparation for class discussion. (9-10 pts.)	Student seems informed on the subject, having done minimal preparation for class discussion. (6-8 pts.)	Student is almost never prepared for class, exhibits very little or no knowledge of the assigned material/topics covered. (1-5 pts.)
Thoughtful: Shows evidence of having understood and considered issues raised.	9 – 10 pts.	6 – 8 pts.	1 – 5 pts.
Considerate: Takes the perspective others into account.	Student listens when others talk, both in groups and in class. Student incorporates or builds off of the ideas of others. (9 – 10 pts.)	Student listens when others talk, both in groups and in class. (6 – 8 pts.)	Student does not listen when others talk, both in groups and in class. Student is distracted, overuses laptops/electronics or interrupts when student speak. (1 – 5 pts.)

Grading Rubric:

A	94 - 100%		C	74 - 76%
A-	90 - 93%		C-	70 - 73%
B+	87 - 89%		D+	67 - 69%
B	84 - 86%		D	64 - 66%
B-	80 - 83%		D-	60 - 63%
C+	77 - 79%		E	<60

See: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>



This course complies with all UF policies. For information on those policies and for a list of campus resources, please see this page: <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>.

Tentative Reading/Viewing List – Fall 2025

Week 1

Thu. Aug. 21: Welcome and Course Overview

Week 2: Distant Reading

Tue. Aug. 26: Brecht, *Mother Courage* (Scenes 1–4).

Thu. Aug. 28: *Mother Courage* (5-7).

Week 3: National Narratives

Tue. Sep. 2: Scham, “Competing Israeli and Palestinian Narratives” + *Zionism: A Very Short Introduction* + Early Zionist films.

Thu. Sep. 4: *Hill 24 Doesn’t Answer* (1955). Discussion.

Week 4: Seeds of revolution in Palestinian Cinema

Tue. Sep. 9: Early Palestinian Cinema

Thu. Sep. 11: Zoom Session: *The Flower of All Cities* (1969) + *The Urgent Call of Palestine* (1973) + *They Don’t Exist* (1974) + *Zionist Aggression* (1973).

Week 5: “A Man is a Cause”

Tue. Sep. 16: Kanafani, *Returning to Haifa* + Barbara Harlow “Return to Haifa: ‘Opening the Borders’ in Palestinian Literature.”

Thu. Sep. 18: Finish *Returning to Haifa*.

Week 6: Israeli Reckonings

Tue. Sep. 23: Rosh Hashana (No Class).

Thu. Sep. 25: *Khirbet Khizeh* (1977).

Week 7: The Admission

Tue. Sep. 30: Lerner, *The Admission* (2010).

Thu. Oct. 2: Yom Kippur (No Class).

Week 8: Representations of the Arab in New Wave Cinema

Tue. Oct. 7: *Hamsin* (1982).

Thu. Oct. 9: *Wedding in Galilee* (1987) + Telmissany, "Displacement and Memory."

Week 9: Theater of Revolution

Tue. Oct. 14: Levin, *Murder* (Acts 1–2) + + "Narratives of Armed Conflict and Terrorism in the Theatre: Tragedy and History in Hanoach Levin's *Murder*" Freddie Rokem (2002).

Thu. Oct. 16: *Murder* (Act 3).

Week 10: Cinematic Responses to the Intifada

Tue. Oct. 21: Haim Buzaglo. *Fictitious Marriage* (1988) + Carol Bardenstein, "Cross/Cast : Passing in Israeli and Palestinian Cinema"

Thu. Oct. 23: *Paradise Now* (2005) + Yaqub, Nadia. "Paradise Now: Narrating a Failed Politics" *Film in the Middle East and North Africa: Creative Dissidence* (2011): 219-227.

Week 11: Shooting and Crying

Tue. Oct. 28: *Waltz with Bashir* (2008) + Benziman, Yuval. "Mom, I'm Home": Israeli Lebanon-War Films as Inadvertent Preservers of the National Narrative."

Thu. Oct. 30: In Class Writing Assignment

Week 12: Co-Existence?

Tue. Nov. 4: Junction 48 (2016) + “If I Could Go Back in Time’: Rethinking Popular Culture, Social Justice, and the Compassionate Gaze in Palestine,” Rebekah E. Moore (2023).

Thu. Nov. 6: The Bubble (2007) — Stein, Rebecca L. "EXPLOSIVE Scenes from Israel's Gay Occupation."

Week 13: Contemporary Palestinian Cinema

Tue. Nov. 11: Veterans Day (No Class).

Thu. Nov. 13: *No Other Land*

Week 14: Dance Me to the End of Love

Tue. Nov. 18: Kogen, *We Love Arabs*. Screening in class + Dance and Authenticity in Israel and Palestine. Performing the Nation. ElkeKaschl (2003) (1-31)

Thu. Nov. 20: Student Presentations

Week 15: Thanksgiving Break

Week 16: Wrapping up

Tue. Dec. 2: Student Presentations

UF Required Policies

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory, will be taken daily and recorded in the Canvas gradebook. You are allowed two “personal days” for the semester, after which each absence that does not meet university criteria for “excused” will result in a two-point deduction from your final grade.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. See “Get Started With the DRC” Disability Resource Center webpage (<https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways: [1] The email they receive from GatorEvals; [2] Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals; or [3] The central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluera.com>. Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at [https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/Links to an external site.](https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/Links%20to%20an%20external%20site). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at [https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/Links to an external site.](https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/Links%20to%20an%20external%20site)

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See the UF Conduct Code website (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>) for more information. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with me.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

The Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/Links to an external site.> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

In-Class Recordings

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.