

Bogazici University
FA 49G Special Topics in Cinema: Cinema and Nation

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1- Course Description

The aim of this course is to examine the location of mainstream and independent filmmaking in a national/transnational context. How do films help to construct/reconstruct/deconstruct the nation as an 'imagined community'? How can films challenge or reinforce the grand narrative of a nation? How are the stylistic elements of a film interpreted in its national/transnational context? While exploring this path the topics that will be discussed in class include the concept of national and transnational cinema, diasporic and minority filmmaking, auteur theory and nation.

Films to be discussed and analyzed in class are as follows:

Ben Affleck, *Argo* (2012)
Leni Reifenstahl, *Triumph of the will* (1935)
Lars Von Trier – *Europa* (1991)
Hany Abu Assad – *Paradise Now* (2005)
Fatih Akin, *Head on* (2004)
Vincent Paronnaud – Marjane Strapi, *Persepolis* (2007)
Bahman Ghobadi, *Turtles Can Fly* (2005)
Jehane Noujaim, *Al Midan* (2013)
Yilmaz Guney, *Yol* (1982)
Emin Alper, *Frenzy* (2015)

2- Course Requirements and grading

10% - Regular attendance and consistent class participation
30% - 2 Mid-term exams
20% - 500 word response papers
40% - Final paper

2.1 – Attendance and class participation

As this class is a film based discussion class it is crucial that you attend the class regularly and take part in class discussions. It is not enough to come and sit in the class but rather I need to and I want to hear your thoughts.

2.2 – The midterm

The midterm exam dates are March 21 and May 2.

2.3 – Weekly 500 word response papers

You are required to submit 2 response papers (each of which should be min 500 words) during the semester for the films indicated in the class schedule. Please turn in your response papers after the week we watch the films.

In your response papers, you are required to analyze the film from your own perspective and integrate some of the theories that you can find in the readings specified for each film.

2.4 – Final paper

A final paper of 7 to 10 pages is due in class on the final exam date. The topics for the final paper will be announced later but you are encouraged to find your own topic by yourselves, which should be in line with the issues discussed in this class. In this case, please turn in a one page abstract of your paper.

3- Disclaimer

Some of the materials in this class may be considered offensive and / or obscene, your continued registration in this class constitutes your acceptance, willingness and agreement to read and view this material.

No cheating and plagiarism will be tolerated.

4- Class Schedule

The following schedule is not intended to be binding, but only to give you a rough idea of what we will be reading and watching when, and approximately how long we will be spending on each film.

February 8: Introduction – Syllabus

February 15: Mette Hjort & Scott MacKenzie – “Introduction” in *Cinema and Nation*

Andrew Higson “The limiting Imagination of National Cinema” in *Cinema and Nation*

Susan Hayward “Framing National Cinemas” in *Cinema and Nation*

Benedict Anderson, “Imagined Communities”

February 22: Ben Affleck, *Argo* (2012) – “Neo-Orientalist Perspective on Iran, India, and East: Case Study of Oscar Winners *Argo*, *Slumdog Millionaire*, and *Avatar*”

February 29: Leni Reifenstahl, *Triumph of the will* (1935) - Susan Sontag, “Fascinating Fascism”

March 7: Lars Von Trier – *Europa* (1991) Rosalind Galt, “Back Projection: Visualizing Past and Present Europe in Zentropa”

March 14: Hany Abu Assad – *Paradise Now* (2005) - Nouri Gana, “Reel Violence: Paradise Now and the Collapse of the Spectacle” **1st Response paper due!**

March 21: 1st Mid-term Exam

March 28: Fatih Akin, *Head on* (2004) – Daniela Berghahn, “No place like home? Or impossible homecomings in the films of Fatih Akin” **Abstracts of the final paper due!**

April 4: Vincent Paronnaud – Marjane Strapi, *Persepolis* (2007) - Amy Malek “Memoir as Iranian Exile Cultural Production: A Case Study of Marjane Strapi’s *Persepolis* Series” & Bahman Ghobadi, *Turtles Can Fly* (2005) - Slavoj Zizek, “The Iraqi MacGuffin”

April 11: *The Square* (2013) Dir. Jehane Noujaim. Gregory Stephens, “Recording the rhythm of change: A rhetoric of revolution in “The Square”

April 18: Spring Break

April 25: Yilmaz Guney, *Yol* (1982) - Hamid Naficy, “Phobic spaces and liminal panics: Independent transnational film genre”& Emin Alper, *Frenzy* (2015) **2nd Response paper due!**

May 2: 2nd Mid-term Exam

May 9: Conclusion and 5 min. presentation of final papers