

History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict through Film

HIS 082

Thinking Historically & Thinking Globally GE course
"film in Context" for the Film Studies Minor

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Office Hours:

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict is a topic that can easily raise tensions and voices and often people are not even conscious of why they respond as they do. We all have an opinion about the Conflict, some may hold theirs more passionately or purposefully than others, but we all have one just the same. This makes things tricky. Without belittling the suffering experienced by others, we must aspire to listen carefully and openly. Our goal is understanding not neutrality. But for most of us it is not our struggle so let's be wary of a cheap self-righteousness or a smug sense of superior insight. We all see through a glass dimly. We acknowledge our partial and limited understanding while striving to understand more clearly and deeply. It is natural and commendable to have a point of view on the Conflict. I merely ask that it be a point of view that has passed through a mind and through a heart. Anyone can have an opinion, we want to have informed and well supported opinions. It is ok to have a particular point of view at the end of this class, whether it be the same or different than the one you came in with. But each of you should understand more why you hold the position you do, be able to explain your position to others, and be able to explain with respect why someone would hold a different view. You will have many more questions at the end of this course than you do now. But they will be higher order questions.

Film is a powerful medium of communication. You are all aware of this. While analyzing the craftsmanship of a film engages our minds, the primary purpose of films is to transcend the strictly analytical and appeal to our emotions or our gut. This does not mean the movie makers do not want to make a point. One of the things that makes film such a powerful medium is the ways in which it can appeal "over the head" of argument and evidence. At the same time, the visual image carries a sense of veracity or truthfulness and fact (however much we may be trained to be skeptics), which gives films a great deal of power.

In this course we will use narrative and documentary movies to tell the story of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. We will analyze both the story and the storytelling. The subject of each film will have corresponding primary and secondary source readings to help us evaluate the message of the film.

Many narrative movies and documentaries have been made about the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. This is testament to the emotional and moral dimensions of the Conflict. While the Conflict could be seen as a fight between two peoples over one piece of land, it has become a

Conflict between two different stories about the significance of the land, and injustices perpetrated on the land since the Conflict started.

Since the sense of who is “right” in the Conflict rests on which version of events, or which story you hear, see, and believe, movies as story-telling vehicles become very important. It is not surprising then that there are so many narrative and documentary movies about the Conflict. This also points to the ways that the Conflict is shaped by the actions and attitudes of a wider international public, especially Americans and American Christians. It is important that we go into the material of the course recognizing this fact. We are not objective or insignificant bystanders or mere viewers. We are involved in the Conflict and the movies we will watch are trying to inform us, but also to persuade us.

This course is about “**film in context.**” Our context is the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. We will not do “formal analysis” of the technical aspects of making movies, but rather “cultural analysis.” We will focus on:

- the messages in the movies and their cultural resonances;
- who is making the films and who are the intended audiences;
- how they seek to inform and persuade us.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Thinking Historically GE: Courses satisfying this requirement develop students’ awareness and appreciation for the particularities of time and place, a sense of the complex process of change and continuity over time, and the ability to work critically with a range of primary and secondary historical texts.

In relation to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict students will learn the particularities of the Jewish and Palestinian nationalist movements and the historical contexts from which they emerged and came into conflict. Students will also learn how the Conflict has evolved over the past century, paying special attention to enduring dynamics and surprising new developments, and the contextual explanations for both. Finally, students will compare a secondary source textbook, primary source documents, narrative movies, and documentary movies to help distinguish between events and the interpretation of those events.

Students will be able to:

- Compare narrative and documentary movies as primary and secondary sources with written primary and secondary sources
 - *Assessed through participation in class discussions, quizzes & exams*
- Identify the arguments and use of evidence in movies and written sources
 - *Assessed through participation in class discussions, quizzes & exams*
- Articulate responsibly how the history of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict shapes the present attitudes and actions of Israelis and Palestinians -- and now the students themselves.

Commented [MOU1]: Analysis of primary and secondary sources is a PLO for the history department

Commented [MOU2]: Also a history dept PLO

- *Assessed through “movie pitch” project*

Thinking Globally GE: “To think globally is to understand how experiences or processes occurring in one part of the world carry immediate and lasting implications across vast distances. The study of these implications, in turn, fosters a reflexive awareness of our situatedness in a given context. Global thinking should rigorously examine multiple perspectives and multi-directional influences – not simply Western perspectives of ‘others’ or the impact of the West on the rest. Fully appreciating global connections and their impact on the lived experience of people requires knowing something about the places being connected and the people being impacted.”

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict has been one of the thorniest Conflicts of the last century. This Conflict draws in and impacts the Arab world, the Muslim world, the Christian world, the Developing world, Europe and North America. This course focuses primarily on the lived experiences and perspectives of the main actors and sufferers in the Conflict, the Israelis and the Palestinians. We will work hard to see the world and the issues at stake in the Conflict from their points of view. We will also study how the course of the Conflict has been shaped by outside actors and international power politics including European imperialism, anti-imperialist national movements, the Cold War, jihadi networks, evangelical Christian Zionism and the Holy Land tourism industry, the development “industry,” and branches of the UN addressing refugees and human rights. The use of films in the course is one way we can hear Israelis and Palestinians tell their own story. In addition, analyzing film can make us more cognizant of the international flows of capital and concern that impact the conflict. For example, when European NGO backers and Palestinian and Israeli actors make films designed primarily for North American viewers. In many cases North American Protestant Christians are the target audience of such a film because of the disproportionate influence they have on the Conflict. Consequently, students will reflect on the impact their own actions and attitudes have on the lives of Israelis and Palestinians.

Students will be able to:

- *Explain* how the I-P Conflict impacts the Middle East and draws together a range of global economic, political, and religious networks
 - *Assessed through participation in class discussions, quizzes & exams*
- *Reflect on* the human costs of war, dispossession, and occupation and Christian responses
 - *Assessed in class discussions & “movie pitch” project*
- *Reflect on* the effectiveness of movies to inform and persuade as a medium of global communication
 - *Assessed in class discussions & “movie pitch” project*

ASSIGNMENTS/RESPONSIBILITIES

20% Participation:

Participation is not the same as attendance. Participation means coming to class on time, having done the required reading and viewing, ready to *contribute* to class discussions and activities. If you miss class, you are responsible to find out what material and announcements you missed.

Do not: use cell phones, computers, or other electronic devices during class, unless specified by the professor

Do not: have your underwear or sleepwear visible in class

Do: take notes on everything said by everyone -- including yourself

Do: practice deep and respectful listening; try to refer to others in the class by name

Do: Come talk to me (sooner rather than later) if you are feeling lost or overwhelmed

Will: Present to the class the background (date, director, producer, distribution, audience, reception, etc) of one of the course films.

10% Quizzes: short quizzes on the reading and viewing

20%: Midterm: short answer and short essay on the History of the Israeli Palestinian Conflict, essay comparing narrative and documentary film treatment of a subject.

20%: Final Exam: short answer and short essay on the History of the Israeli Palestinian Conflict, essay comparing narrative and documentary film treatment of a subject.

30%: Movie pitch & Plot Summary Project: (Essay or Portfolio?)

Present the a) subject matter of your film, b) rationale, c) reflection on role of film in a controversial subject like the I-P conflict, d) likely audience, e) likely financial investor, f) whether intended to entertain, inform, or persuade, g) whether a narrative or documentary movie and why. If narrative then, plot summary and desired impact on audience, possible drawbacks or pitfalls. If documentary: how situated, who you would need to participate and how, possible drawbacks and pitfalls.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Kirsten Schulze, *The Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 3rd edition. New York: Routledge, 2017

Salim Munayer and Lisa Loden, *Through My Enemies Eyes: Envisioning Reconciliation in Israel-Palestine*. Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2013

Side note on integrity and plagiarism... or “intellectual property”

Plagiarism is claiming another’s work, ideas, or structure as your own. To avoid this you must cite (including page #) where you have acquired all of the above that is not genuinely your own. Putting everything in quotes is not a solution, but mere intellectual laziness. You can and should use the ideas of other people, but you need to acknowledge such usage in a footnote and ideally summarize the idea or information in your own words (rather than quote it) to indicate that you truly understand the point being made. Plagiarism is stealing intellectual property and is taken very seriously by the academy, this institution, and your professor. To

Commented [MOU3]: A brief history of the Conflict with accompanying primary documents. Emphasis on political history reflected in the documents and the role of treaties, Super-powers, and the UN in setting the terms of the Conflict and its resolution.

Commented [MOU4]: Munayer, a Palestinian Christian, Loden, a Messianic Jew, alternate chapters providing a Jewish and Palestinian narrative of the Conflict and possible Christian responses. Provides students evidence of use of evidence to support a narrative, and present different ways Christians, including the students, might respond to the Conflict.

avoid plagiarizing you should familiarize yourself with the Westmont policy statement:
http://www.westmont.edu/offices/provost/plagiarism/plagiarism_policy.html.

STUDENT WELFARE Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive in college. For helpful resources contact counseling center or a member of the student life team (such as your RA or RD).

Accessibility and Accommodations

Students who choose to disclose a disability are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) as early as possible in the semester to discuss possible accommodations for this course. Formal accommodations will only be granted for students whose disabilities have been verified by the ODS. Accommodations are designed to minimize the impact of a disability and ensure equal access to programs for all students with disabilities.

Please contact ods@westmont.edu or visit the website for more information <http://www.westmont.edu/offices/disability> . ODS is located upstairs in Voskuyl library 310, 311A

Writers' Corner, Westmont's writing center, is a creative space where student writers can find friendly "test readers" as they develop projects for professors, employers, and others. Tutors coach and collaborate with students as they mature into more skillful and confident writers. Come visit us in Voskuyl Library 215. Clients with appointments are given first priority; drop-in clients are also welcome. All tutorials are free of charge. Make an appointment here: <https://westmont.mywconline.com/>

COMMUNICATION

You can reach me by email or during the weekday in my office (x7148). I do not check emails on Sundays and cannot guarantee that I will read email on Saturday. I will send class emails through web advisor or post readings and notices on Canvas.

SCHEDULE

Week 1

Intro to course

Intro to film analysis

Reading: *Looking at Movies* chpt 1 & pages 66-75

Week 2 Intro to the I-P conflict

Movie: *Bethlehem*

Reading: Munayer & Loden, 1-35

Movie: *Omar*

Reading: [Israel and the Palestinians: Chronology of a Two-State Solution, Congressional Research Service 2019](#)

Commented [MOU5]: TGGE: one Israeli and one Palestinian film on almost the same subject. Explore Conflict from their perspectives and use of narrative (fictional) movies as story-telling vehicles.

Week 3: Origins of the Conflict

Movie: 1913: seeds of conflict

<https://www.pbs.org/show/1913-seeds-conflict/>

Reading: Schulze, chpt 1; docs: 1-6

Commented [MOU6]: THGE: Schulze provides comparison between written primary and secondary sources and the film is a documentary with interviews so also provides comparison between a secondary source film and the primary source of interviewees.

Movie: 1948: Creation and Catastrophe

https://www.amazon.com/1948-Creation-Catastrophe-Avi-Shlaim/dp/B0867LZC1R/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3OF0WF6PC82ZU&dchild=1&keywords=1948+creation+and+catastrophe&qid=1595447321&sprefix=1948+creation%2Caps%2C289&sr=8-1

Reading: Schulze, chpt 2; docs: 7-9

Commented [MOU7]: Same as above and TGGE: role of UN and new national and international order post WWII

Week 4:

Movie: Exodus

Readings: Schulze, chpt 3; docs 10-11;

Movie: Exodus

Reading: Munayer & Loden, 3

Commented [MOU8]: THGE: Schulze for primary and secondary sources. The film (1960) provides room to discuss its historical context and US attitudes towards the Jews and Israel at that time. TGGE: discussion of Hollywood treatment of the Conflict, US audience and impact of Paul Newman playing a Jewish freedom fighter.

Week 5: 1967 War & East Jerusalem

Movie: *When I saw You* (1hr 40 min)

Reading: Schulze, chpt 4; docs 12-15

Movie: Jerusalem the east side story (55 min) (<https://vimeo.com/286856881>)

Reading: Daniel Seidemann, "East Jerusalem: the Myth of Benign Occupation Disintegrates," *Journal of Palestine Studies* (Winter 2016): 3-12

Commented [MOU9]: THGE: Compare a documentary film and a written academic treatment of the same subject. TGGE: Palestinian perspective in the film.

Week 6: 1970s

Movie: *Munich*

Reading: Schulze, chpt 5

Reading: Schulze, chpt 6; Munayer & Loden, 4

Commented [MOU10]: THGE: compare Film and textbook treatment of similar time period. TGGE: analyze Hollywood treatment of an aspect of the I-P conflict and audience impact

Week 7: Lebanon War

Movie: *Waltz with Bashir*

Reading: Schulze, chpt 7, doc 17-20

Reading: Munayer & Loden, 5

Commented [MOU11]: Graphic novel/film depicting Israeli military in Lebanon. THGE: the historical context portrayed in secondary and primary written sources as well as a film version based on a personal memory. TGGE: Israeli perspective and memory as well as global film audience. *Waltz with Bashir* was nominated for an Oscar.

Week 8: First Intifada & Oslo

Movie: Naila and the Uprising(PBS) <https://www.pbs.org/video/naila-and-the-uprising-hjcb1h/>
Reading: Schulze, chpt 8; doc: 23 & 24
Readings: Ramadan Abdallah Shallah and Khalid al-'Ayid, "The Movement of Islamic Jihad and the Oslo Process" *Journal of Palestine Studies* (1998), pg 61-73; Docs: 25-27; Edward Said on Oslo

Commented [MOU12]: THGE: Students will watch a documentary film, read a chapter from an introductory secondary source, as well as read a primary source printed in the news at the time along and another article that while written later is based on interviews with participants in the intifada.

Week 9: The Second Intifada

Movie: Arna's Children
Reading: Schulze, chpt 9

Commented [MOU13]: TGGE: Powerful documentary film that shows the human cost of war and occupation. Conveys Palestinian perspectives. Consider audience impact

Movie: Paradise Now (1hr 30min)
Reading: Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, "On Violence" pgs 1-7, 21-23 (1961)

Week 10:

Movie: The Gatekeepers (1 hr 40 min)
● Reading: Schulze, 10

Commented [MOU14]: TGGE: Israeli documentary film showing the range of perspectives on the Conflict within the Israeli security forces. TGGE seeing the conflict from their perspective while also considering the impact of the film on a global audience

Movie: Israel vs Israel

- Reading: Neve Gordon, "From Colonization to Separation: exploring the structure of Israel's Occupation," *Third World Quarterly* (2008): 25-44; [B'tselem](#); [ICAHD](#) Munayer & Loden, 6 & 7

Commented [MOU15]: Documentary film interviewing Israelis with different opinions on the expansion of checkpoints. TGGE: seeing the conflict from their perspective while also considering impact of the film on a global audience

Week 11: Gaza

Movie: Eyewitness Gaza <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CpLzZ0xxFFM>
Readings: Schulze, 11, doc 29
Ilana Feldman, "Gaza's Humanitarianism Problem," *Journal of Palestine Studies* (2009): 22-37

Movie: Born in Gaza

Reading: Stern-Weiner, *Moment of Truth: Tough Questions on Israel-Palestine* (2016) chapter "Can Armed Struggle end the Siege of Gaza?" pgs 131-146; Adam Hanieh, "Development as Struggle," *Journal of Palestine Studies* (2016) 32-47

Commented [MOU16]: TGGE: Powerful (read: disturbing) documentaries of the current situation in Gaza – compared with the tone and information found in academic articles provides scope for analyzing the power of information vs narrative, visual vs. written sources. Makes very clear the human cost of war and occupation . Perspective of Palestinian children. Journal article analyzes the global NGO industry and the NGO-ization of the I-P conflict.

Week 12: Settlements

Movie: Thank God it's Friday
Reading: Schulze 12
Vox:

Commented [MOU17]: Documentary film that goes back and forth interviewing residents of an Israeli settlement and the Palestinian village next to it.

Movie: The Settlers (vudu)
● Readings: [ROOTS](#) (a newer group including "unsettled settlers") updates on Nabih Saleh (the village in "Thank God It's Friday")

Commented [MOU18]: TGGE: Analysis of impact of NGO networks and international journalism on the conflict and audience impact.

- ["Symbol of Palestinian Resistance in the Internet Age"](#) *The Atlantic*

- ["Nabih Saleh is where I lost my Zionism" +972 Magazine](#)
- ["the new face of Palestinian Resistance" alJazeera](#)

Week 13: Christian Zionism

Movie: With God on Our Side

Reading: Salim Munayer and Lisa Loden, 8

Poke around the websites below and get a sense of these organizations and what they are about, who is their likely supporter base and audience.

[International Fellowship of Christians and Jews](#)

[Christians United for Israel](#) (CUFI)

[Sabeel](#)

[Telos](#)

[International Christian Embassy Jerusalem \(ICEJ\)](#)

[Kairos Document \(posted at WCC\)](#)

[Churches for Middle East Peace](#)

Christ at the Checkpoint <https://christatthecheckpoint.bethbc.edu/about-christ-at-the-checkpoint/>; <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzHGnhkPptsSvRuicXkdMpQ>

Reading: Munayer & Loden, 9; Walter Wink, "Beyond Just War and Pacifism: Jesus' Non-Violent Way"

Commented [MOU19]: TGGE: Visual and written sources draw attention to the significant role played by American Christians in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Commented [MOU20]: TGGE: NGOs that lean more one way or the other – compare their webpages, videos, and marketing for message and audience – again drawing attention to the international dimension of the Conflict.

Commented [MOU21]: TGGE: Resources for students to respond responsibly to the Conflict and formulate their own positions.

Week 14:

Movie: Junction 48

- Reading: Mary Elizabeth King, "Palestinian Civil Resistance against Israeli Military Occupation" in *Civilian Jihad* (2009) pgs 131-156

Movie: Slingshot Hiphop <https://vimeo.com/195690477>

Reading: Broning, Michael, *The Politics of Change in Palestine* (2011) chapter "Beyond Terror: Politicising Non-Violent Resistance."

Commented [MOU22]: A narrative film and a documentary on Israeli and Palestinian underground music scene combined with readings on non-violent resistance. Engage human cost of war and occupation and Christian responses to conflict

Week 15:

Movie: Budrus

- Kaufman-Lacusta, Maxine. 2011. *Refusing to Be Enemies : Palestinian and Israeli Nonviolent Resistance to the Israeli Occupation*. Forward by Ursula Franklin
- Kaufman-Lacusta, Maxine. 2011. *Refusing to Be Enemies: Palestinian and Israeli Nonviolent Resistance to the Israeli Occupation*. Intro & Chpt 1 "Non-Violent Action: From Personal Choice to Political Strategy" (EXCERPTS TBD)

- [Combatants for Peace](#)

Review

Commented [MOU23]: TGGE: Non-violent resistance and Christian response to the Conflict. Analysis of impact of NGO networks and international journalism on the conflict

FINAL EXAM

Other possible films:
The Wanted 18,
Salt of this Sea,
The Advocate
the Law in the These Parts,
Dancing in Jaffa,
Mayor,
Disturbing the Peace,
A Bottle in the Gaza Sea