

**Israeli Society Via the Arts**  
**SOC 178**  
American Jewish University Campus in Israel  
Young Judaea Year Course

Introduction:

One of major contributions of the Zionist movement is the development of “Hebrew Culture” - artistic expressions of a people returning to their land and language, while simultaneously forging a new society. Hebrew Culture attempts to blend the ancient with modern, the secular with religious; using both native and Diaspora influences. This course will explore the development of Hebrew (Israeli) music/poetry, visual arts, film/television, dance and theatre from the 1870’s to the present through lectures, visits, screenings and performance. The student will be exposed to a variety of artistic expressions and delve into the historical events that surrounded them. Several key questions will be posed throughout the course, including: What is Hebrew culture and how has it helped shape Israeli society? Does Hebrew Culture differ significantly from ‘Jewish’ Culture? What is the future of Hebrew Culture in the age of globalization?

Format:

Students are required to attend classes, participate in discussions and to be present at selected evening performances (details to be provided)

Required Readings (Selected chapters):

- Kronish, A. (1996). *World Cinema: Israel*.  
Ofrat, G. (1998). *One Hundred Years of Art in Israel*.  
Oren, T. (2004). *Demon in the Box: Television and Israeli Society*.  
Regev, M. (2004). *Popular Music and National Culture in Israel*.  
Taub, M. (2004). *Modern Israeli Drama*.  
Loshitzky, Y. (1997). *Identity Politics on the Israeli Screen*.  
Hertzerg, H. & Ben-Rafael, E. (2000). *Language and Communication In Israel*.

Evaluation:

The final grade for this course will be determined by the following methods:

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| - Attendance and participation  | 15% |
| - Bi-weekly reading reviews:  | 30% |
| 1 page critical reviews of selected source book articles will demonstrate proficiency with regular readings |     |
| - Mid-term test   | 25% |
| - Artist Profile:   | 30% |
- Students will select an Israeli artist from any of the disciplines (i.e. music, film, etc.) and make an oral presentation on their life and work.

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## Schedule of Classes:

### WEEK 1

1. Socio-Cultural Overview of the Yishuv: Yishuv society, Colonial experience, European influence, developing Hebrew language, the Holocaust, Arab-Jewish Tensions, the War of Independence.
2. Art of the Yishuv : Overview of artistic activities and institutions in pre-State Israel: Habima Theatre, Bezalel Art School, religious/political arts, Tel Aviv café society.
3. Artists of the Yishuv: Bialik, Agnon, Argov, Raban, Lillien, Bahuas architects, pre-state film makers.

#### READING:

OFRAT, Chapters 2,3,5,7  
REGEV, Chapters 3,4

### WEEK 2

4. Socio-Cultural Overview of the 1950's: New-state tensions, massive immigration and the Ma'abrot, city v. country settlement. The psychology of "we" and its influence on Israeli music and visual art.
5. A Closer Look—The Art of State: Poster art and public relations, Rubín and Gutman—the "official artists", the art and design of a state, coin, currency and stamps.

#### READING:

OFRAT chapters 9,11  
Donner, Batia: *Hebrew Graphic Design*. In Donner, Batay (editor) Shamir Brothers Studio, Tel Aviv Museum of Art (1999). Pp. 65-76.  
Azrayahu, Maoz: *On Currency Notes*: In Donner, Batay (editor) Shamir Brothers Studio, Tel Aviv Museum of Art (1999). Pp. 60-65.

### WEEK 3

6. Socio-Cultural Overview of the 1960's: The emergence of the individual, the six day war, folk music—Israeli style, the army culture and the army bands.
7. Art & Artists of the 1960's: The birth of the Israeli film industry, Naomi Shemer and the music of victory, Haim Guri and the Eichman Trial,
8. A Closer Look—Comedy, Israel Style: Ephraim Kishon, Uri Zohar, Hagashash Ha Chiver and Shiake Ofir, masters of a new medium.

READING:

KRONISH Chapters 2,3,4

REGEV, Chapters 1,

WEEK 4

9. Socio-Cultural Overview of the 1970's: The art and psychology of the Yom Kippur War, Culture wars—Mizrachi style, Disco society of the late 70's, the birth of the Israeli musical film.

10. Art & Artists of the 1970's: Television takes its first steps, Poogie/Kaveret and the rock revolution, Eurovision—Israeli music wins international recognition, “Bourekas” Films—films for the masses.

11. A Closer Look—Art on a Massive Scale: War/Shoa memorials, State buildings, Tel Aviv the White City (possible siyyur).

READING:

REGEV, Chapters 5,7,8

KRONISH Chapters 4,5,7

LOSHITSKY, Chapters 2,3

WEEK 5

12. MID TERM TEST

13. Socio-Cultural Overview of the 1980's: The Peace Process, the Mizrachi music and culture revolution, the Battle of the Divas, the Lebanon war and the new protest art in song, film and literature.

14. Art & Artists of the 1980's : The New Age Trubadors: Shalom Hanoch, David Broza, Shlomo Artzi and Yehudit Ravitz, Yehuda Polliker—from hard rock to Holocaust. Television breaks the colour barrier, the New Wave Music—Hebrew style, the “Shell Shock” movies of the post Lebanon War era.

READING:

REGEV, Chapter 6

WEEK 6

15. A Closer Look—Israeli Theatre: Hanoch Levin and political theatre, regional theatre and the traveling shows. Better than football—the popularity of theatre in Israeli society.

16. Socio-Cultural Overview of the 1990's: Mass Russian Immigration and its cultural impact, Gulf War Syndrome, Rabin, Peace and Murder, Children of the Candle, CNN and the cable revolution, Hippy Jews sing and dance.

17. Art & Artists of the 1990's: Eytan Fox and the “Florentine” TV series showcase a new generation of youth, “Viva La Diva”—an Israeli transgender pop-icon makes waves at home and abroad, Art and Occupation: Assi Dayan and the film “Agfa”. Puppets, dogs and a woman named Limor—a New wave of TV Humor.

READING:

TAUB, Chapters 1,4,6

KRONISH, Chapters 9, 11

WEEK 7

18. A Closer Look—Identity politics and art in Israel: ethnicity, religion, secularity, gender, sexuality and politics as personal art.

19. A Socio-Cultural Overview of the 00's (so far!): The 2<sup>nd</sup> Intifada and the “take-away” culture, Israeli film goes international, Reality and reality TV, Nostalgia, the Israeli music revival and “Kochav Nolad (A Star is Born)”, stand up comedy comes to Israel, Hebrew Soap Operas, real and imagined, “celeb” culture hits Tel Aviv.

20. Art & Artists in the 2000's: The new film makers, Hip Hop and Rap, Etgar Keret and the “Lost Generation” of writers, Aviv Geffen, Muki and Dag Nachash, the new voice of protest.

READING:

LOSHITSKY, Chapters 4,5,7

WEEK 8

21. The Evolution of Broadcast Media in Israel

22. The Giants of Israeli Music: Naomi Shemer, Ehud Manor, Haim Hefer, Sasha Argov and Natan Alterman.

23. “Jerusalem VS. Tel Aviv”: Israel's two Major Cities and their Artistic Differences

WEEK 9

24. Hora, Hip-Hop and everything in Between: The powerful Dance Tradition in modern Israel.

25. The Visual Arts in Israel: Are Jewish and Israeli art really that different?

READING:

OREN, Chapters 5-8

OFRAT, Chapter 15

## WEEK 10

26. “I have a Holiday Everyday”: Why Israel has more arts festivals than Jewish holidays and what they say about Israeli society.

27. Artist Profiles I—Student Presentations

28. Artist Profiles II—Student Presentations

### **Bibliography**

- Baigell, M. (2006). American Artists, Jewish Images.
- Blatter, J & Milton, S. (1982) Art of the Holocaust.
- Epstein, M. (1997). Dreams of Subversion in Medieval Jewish Art and Literature.
- Goldhill, S. (2005) The Temple of Jerusalem.
- Gordis, R. & Davidowitz, M. (editors). (1975). Art in Judaism: Studies in Jewish Artistic Expression.
- Gutman, J. (1975). The Synagogue : studies in origins, archaeology.
- Lamberti, M.(1995). Making Art in the Terezin Concentration Camp. New England Review, 17 (4). Pp. 104-112.
- Landsberger, F. (1973). A History of Jewish Art
- Levinger, E. (1993). Socialist-Zionist Ideology in Israeli War Memorials of the 1950s . *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Oct., 1993), pp. 715-746
- Ibid, (1995). Women and war memorials in Israel. *Woman's Art Journal*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Spring - Summer, 1995), pp. 40-46.
- Morgenstern, J. (1945). The ark, the ephod and the "tent of meeting"
- Ofrat G, (1998). One Hundred Years of Israeli Art.
- Orlinksky, H. (editor). No Graven Images.
- Richardson, P. (2004). New sacred architecture.
- Roth, C. (1971). Jewish Art: An Illustrated History.
- Shealtiel, S. (1999). Art in the Service of Ideology.
- Wigoder, G. (1986). The story of the synagogue.