

FILM 168: National Cinema & Culture
Gender & Sexuality in Arab Film
Summer 2020 (2nd session)

Tues/Thu 10:00 am - 1:00 pm, On Zoom (online attendance mandatory)

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Office hours (via zoom or email): Wed 11:00 am – 1:00 pm, or by appt.

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Introduction:

The Arab region is a vast entity with a plethora of climates, geographies, cultural practices, social formations, histories, languages, habits, ethnicities and religious affiliations. This class pries open a window into the many ways that gender and sexuality are understood, imagined, embodied and practiced in the Middle East and North African region. Rather than arriving at totalizing definitions, the class explores how filmmakers and artists from various Arab countries and throughout different periods have adopted a multitude of approaches and strategies in tackling questions of gender and sexuality in realist, allegorical and fantastical ways.

We will consider how filmic and artistic expressions of gender and sexuality have responded to major overarching political, social and religious contexts. We will watch diverse types of audio-visual works (documentary, fiction, essay films, video works, and music videos!) that vary in genre, nationality, form and content. We will unpack the films using textual analysis but also other analytical tools like affect theory and queer theory. In addition to scholarly articles in film studies, we will read a variety of texts, including poetry and autobiographical essays.

As you've probably experienced during the spring quarter, online courses present us all with a set of challenges. We are aware of the difficulties you might face in an online environment. Your lecturer and TA will be available to support you and make this experience as enriching, informative and pleasant as possible. But the success of this class, which has no discussion sections, requires your cooperation to create a forum in which vibrant, but respectful, dialogue and learning can take place.

Texts:

There are no required textbooks for this class, only articles from scholarly journals and other sources, as well as chapters and excerpts from a variety of books. All required texts will be uploaded as pdf documents to Canvas (under Files). The required films will be available for streaming via the McHenry library's resources or the online platform, YuJa.

Please make sure, every week, to read all required texts and watch required film(s) by Tuesday's class. Have the week's reading ready for consultation during our online class. During lecture, we

will reference passages from the week's texts or scenes from the week's films and ask you to comment on them.

Assignments:

Attendance & Participation (in-class discussions): 10%

Even though class is online, it will be built around more discussion and dialogue than in traditional lectures, and thus preparation and participation are essential.

Weekly Reading/Viewing Quizzes: 40%

Every week, a take-home quiz on the film(s) and reading of the week will be posted on Canvas.

Final Paper Proposal: 15%

You will submit a detailed proposal and bibliography for your final research paper. More details in class. Due Friday, August 14 by midnight.

Final Research Paper: 35%

This paper will explore a theme or question related to gender and sexuality in Arab cinema by unpacking films that we have seen in class and/or others that you have gained access to. It should involve significant original research. More information will be given in class and on Canvas.

Due Friday, August 28 by midnight.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING

All assignments must be completed to pass the course.

Late work will not be accepted.

More than two unexcused absences from class will result in failure of the course.

Important Summer Session Remote 2020 Deadlines:

Drop: Monday, August 3

Request for "W": Friday, August 14

Summer is unique. **You will not be dropped for non-attendance or non-payment.** You must drop yourself. Dropping before the deadline results in a full-tuition reversal/refund. Withdraw posts a W for the grade and full tuition is charged (no refund). For all dates and deadlines, including 'change of grade option' (P/NP) and grades due, here is the summer academic calendar: <https://summer.ucsc.edu/studentlife/index.html>

For questions about dropping, requesting a W grade for a course, or withdrawing from the summer quarter, email summer@ucsc.edu.

DRC Remote Accommodations:

The Disability Resources Center reduces barriers to inclusion and full participation for students with disabilities by providing support to individually determine reasonable academic accommodations. Operations continue via remote appointments. If you have questions or concerns about exam accommodations or any other disability-related matter, email the DRC Schedulers at drc@ucsc.edu for an appointment.

Small Group Tutoring:

Small Group Tutoring (SGT) supports students academically to advance educational equity by designing inclusive learning environments outside of the classroom. In SGT, you can expect the

Tutor to facilitate cooperative group activities designed to have students work together on the course content and develop study skills for the course. SGT is offered at least three times each week for the entire quarter. The Tutor is an undergraduate student who took the class, did well, and is trained to facilitate group sessions to focus on students' needs to succeed in the course. SGT is open to all students enrolled in the class and they must sign up on our online system: TutorTrac. When students sign up for SGT, they are committing to attend every week. For Summer 2020, students can begin signing up for tutoring on **Monday, June 22nd** and tutoring will begin **Wednesday, June 24th**. Students only have to sign up once for tutoring and their appointments will repeat weekly. Sign-ups will close on **Friday, August 14th** for all Summer Session Sign-Ups. This means that after **August 14th**, no new students can sign up for tutoring. Want SGT to be successful for you? Bring your books, lecture notes, questions, and be open to working collaboratively with your peers. You can sign up using this link: <https://ucsc.redrock.com/tracweb40/NoAccess.4sp?errText=insufficient%20credentials%20to%20view%20content>. You can also find the link on our website: <https://lss.ucsc.edu/index.html>

Academic Dishonesty:

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of a university education. Academic dishonesty diminishes the university as an institution and all members of the university community. It tarnishes the value of a UCSC degree. All members of the UCSC community have an explicit responsibility to foster an environment of trust, honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. All members of the university community are expected to present as their original work only that which is truly their own. All members of the community are expected to report observed instances of cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty in order to ensure that the integrity of scholarship is valued and preserved at UCSC.

Acts of academic misconduct during the course, including plagiarism, will result in failure of the course. In the event a student is found in violation of the UCSC Academic Integrity policy, he or she may face both academic sanctions imposed by the instructor of record and disciplinary sanctions imposed either by the provost of his or her college or the Academic Tribunal convened to hear the case. Violations of the Academic Integrity policy can result in dismissal from the university and a permanent notation on a student's transcript. For the full policy and disciplinary procedures on academic dishonesty, students and instructors should refer to the [Academic Integrity page](#) at the Division of Undergraduate Education.

Title IX:

The university cherishes the free and open exchange of ideas and enlargement of knowledge. To maintain this freedom and openness requires objectivity, mutual trust, and confidence; it requires the absence of coercion, intimidation, or exploitation. The principal responsibility for maintaining these conditions must rest upon those members of the university community who exercise most authority and leadership: faculty, managers, and supervisors.

The university has therefore instituted a number of measures designed to protect its community from sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence, and other related prohibited conduct. [Information about the Title IX Office](#), the [online reporting link](#), applicable campus resources, reporting responsibilities, the [UC Policy on Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment](#), and the UC Santa Cruz Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Reports of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment can be found at titleix.ucsc.edu.

The Title IX Office is actively responding to reports and requests for consultation. If you are not currently working with someone in the office and want to make a report/request a consult, you can expect the fastest response by using our [online reporting link](#). For more information please visit the [Title IX Operations under Covid-19](#) page.

Difficult Material Statement:

In Film and Digital Media courses you will often be assigned films or other material that could contain difficult ideas, uncomfortable language, or graphic depictions of sex or violence. You will be asked to treat these portrayals critically, to consider what is being expressed by the maker, or to examine the potential social impact, and to evaluate the works in a given context. Instructors are always happy to speak with you about your work, and might direct you to CAPS (Counseling and Psychological Services <https://caps.ucsc.edu/>) at 831-459-2628 or the Disability Resource Center (drc@ucsc.edu or 831-459-2089) should you need additional support in order to do your best work.

Distribution of Course Notes:

Please note that selling, preparing, or distributing for any commercial purpose course lecture notes or video or audio recordings of any course is explicitly forbidden by campus policy, unless authorized by the University in advance – for instance, by the Disability Resource Center, which can assign students who need one a notetaker with a laptop or other recording device – and explicitly permitted by the course instructor in writing.

Please note this syllabus is subject to change during the quarter. It will always be updated (with a date at the top) on Canvas and Canvas modules will be current always.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week I (Tu July 28 & Th July 30)

Feminism, Nationalism & Melodrama: Gender in Egyptian Cinema

Film(s):

I am Free, dir. Salah Abu Seif (Egypt, 1958) 115min.

Reading:

Shafik, Viola. *Arab Cinema: History and Cultural Identity*. 1997. Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 2017. [Introduction: 1-8].

Shafik, Viola. *Popular Egyptian Cinema: Gender, Class, and Nation*. Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 2007. [Introduction: 1-10; Excerpts from Chapter 3 - Feminism and Femininity: 119-142, 158-165 (Gender Spatiality)].

Russel, Catherine. *Archiveology: Walter Benjamin and Archival Film Practices*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018. [Excerpts from Introduction to Archiveology: 22-25; Chapter 6 - Awakening of the Gendered Archive: 206-217 (The Disappearing Woman)].

Week II (Tu August 4 & Th August 6)

Gender & Sexuality in Times of War, Uprisings & Occupation

Films:

In the Battlefields, dir. Danielle Arbid (Lebanon, 2004).

Coma, dir. Sara Fattah (Syria, 2015).

Chic Point, dir. Sharif Waked (Palestine, 2003). (Screened online during class).

Suggested Film:

Civilized People, dir. Randa Chahal (Lebanon, 2000).

<https://www.randachahal.com/civilisees>

Reading:

Khatib, Lina. "The Voices of Taboos: Women in Lebanese War Cinema." *Women: A Cultural Review* 17, no. 1 (April 2006): 65–77. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09574040600628591>.

Sawalha, Aseel. "After Amnesia: Memory and War in Two Lebanese Films." *Visual Anthropology* 27, no. 1–2 (January 1, 2014): 105–16.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08949468.2014.852871>.

Dickinson, Kay. "Re-Citation and Resuscitation from the Archives of Arab Revolution." *Screen* 60, no. 1 (March 1, 2019): 46–69. <https://doi.org/10.1093/screen/hjy063>.

Hochberg, Gil. *Visual Occupations: Violence and Visibility in a Contact Zone*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press: 2015. [Chapter 3 - The (Soldier's) Gaze and the (Palestinian) Body: 80-95]

Suggested Reading:

Dyer, Rebecca. "Representations of the Migrant Domestic Worker in Hoda Barakat's "Harith Al-Miya" and Danielle Arbid's "Maarek Hob".." *College Literature*, Vol. 37, No. 1, Embargoed Literature: Arabic (Winter, 2010), 11-37.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/20642073>

Adnan, Etel. *The Arab Apocalypse*. Sausalito, CA: Post-Apollo, 2006. (Selected poems: [XLIV](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/53855/xliv-from-the-arab-apocalypse), [XXXIX](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/53854/xxxix-from-the-arab-apocalypse) and [XXXVI](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/53853/xxxvi-from-the-arab-apocalypse)).
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/53855/xliv-from-the-arab-apocalypse>
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/53854/xxxix-from-the-arab-apocalypse>
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/53853/xxxvi-from-the-arab-apocalypse>

Machado, Aditi. "On Etel Adnan's 'The Arab Apocalypse'." *Jacket* 2, 2016.
<https://jacket2.org/article/etel-adnans-arab-apocalypse>

Week III (Tu August 11 & Th August 13)

Veil, Pilgrimage & Sexuality: Questions of (Im)mobility

Films:

Wadjda, dir. Haifaa Al-Mansour (Saudi Arabia, 2012).

Reading:

- Hambuch, Doris. "Liberating Bicycles in Niki Caro's *Whale Rider* and in Haifaa Al Mansour's *Wadjda*." *Imaginations* 10, no. 2 (2019): 195–219.
(Focus on the sections related to *Wadjda*).
- O'Brien, Gabrielle, and Gabrielle O'Brien. "Pedal Power: Haifaa Al Mansour's *Wadjda*." *Metro*, no. 181 (January 1, 2014): 46–51.
- Shah, Omer. "Reading and Writing the Queer Haj." In *Islam and Homosexuality*, ed. Samar Habib (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010), 111–129.
- Tartoussieh, Karim. "Pious Stardom: Cinema and the Islamic Revival in Egypt." *The Arab Studies Journal* 15, no. 1 (2007): 30–43.
- Limbrick, Peter. *Arab Modernism as World Cinema: The Films of Moumen Smihi*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2020. [Excerpt from For a New Nahda - Gender, Sexuality & Freedom: 180-200 (Gender and Space & Gender and the Public Sphere)].

Suggested reading/viewing:

- Fanon, Frantz. "Algeria Unveiled." In *Decolonization: Perspectives from now and then*, ed. Prasenjit Duara (London: Routledge, 2004), 42–55. (Excerpt)
- Al-Adeeb, Dena and Nada Shalaby. "*This Stays Between Us [Part I]*." Contemp+orary, 2016.
<https://contemporary.org>this-stays-between-us/>

Week IV (Tu August 18 & Th August 20)
(Homo)sexuality, Queer Imaginary & Exile

Films:

Salvation Army, dir. Abdallah Taïa (Morocco, 2013).

Deseos/ Desires, dir. Carlos Motta & Maya Mikdashi (Columbia/Lebanon, 2015).

Link: <https://vimeo.com/127254583>

Reading:

- Georgis, Dina. "A Muffled Scream: Queer Affects in Abdellah Taïa's *Salvation Army*." *Kohl: A Journal for Body and Gender Research* 2, no. 1 (December 2015): 56–65.
<https://doi.org/10.36583/kohl/1-2-7>.

DeVun, Leah, and Zeb Tortorici. "Interview with Maya Mikdashi and Carlos Motta on *Deseos*." *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (November 1, 2018): 648–57.
<https://doi.org/10.1215/23289252-7090115>.

Habib, Samar. "Some like it luke-warm: A Brief History of the Representation of (Homo)sexuality in Egyptian Film." *Female Homosexuality in the Middle East: Histories and Representations*. London: Routledge, 2007. 113–35.

Gopinath, Gayatri. "Queer Visual Excavations: Akram Zaatari, Hashem El Madani, and the Reframing of History in Lebanon." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, 13:2 (July 2017): 326.

Suggested reading/viewing:

- Limbrick, Peter. *Arab Modernism as World Cinema: The Films of Moumen Smihi*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2020. [Excerpt from For a New Nahda - Gender, Sexuality & Freedom: 200-211 (Sexuality and Desire)].
- Younes, Rasha. *Lebanon's LGBT People Reclaim Their Power: Videos, Report Highlight Coexistence, Solidarity, New Possibility for Rights*. Human Rights Watch, May 2020. <https://www.hrw.org/video-photos/interactive/2020/05/07/if-not-now-when-queer-and-trans-people-reclaim-their-power>. (Web feature & videos)
- Pomp, Joseph. "Translating Desire: The Multilingual and Inter-Artistic Practice of Abdellah Taïa." *French forum* 43, no. 3 (2018): 475–490. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/722370>.

Week V (Tu August 25 & Th August 27)

Bodies, Desire & the Gaze: Belly Dancing & Music Videos

Films:

Red Satin, dir. Raja Amari (Tunisia, 2002).

Reading:

- Martin, Florence. *Screens and Veils: Maghrebi Women's Cinema*. New Directions in National Cinemas. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011. [Excerpt from Overture & Chapter 4: Raja Amari's Screen of the Haptic: Red Satin)]
- Shomali, Mejdulene B. "Dancing Queens." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 15, no. 2 (July 1, 2019): 135–56. <https://doi.org/10.1215/15525864-7490939>.
- Elouardaoui, Ouidyane. "Contemporary Arab Music Video Clips: Between Simulating MTV's Gender Stereotypes and Fostering New Ones." *Imaginations Journal of Cross-Cultural Image Studies/Revue d'Études Interculturelle de l'Image* 4, no. 1 (August 27, 2013). <https://doi.org/10.17742/IMAGE.scandal.4-1.12>.

Suggested Film:

Kiss Me Not on the Eyes (Dunia), Jocelyn Saab (Egypt, 2005).
(Available on Yuja)

Suggested reading:

- Karena, Cynthia. "Grace and Ecstasy: An Interview with Jocelyn Saab." *Metro Magazine: Media & Education Magazine*, no. 152 (2007): 78–81.