

**JST 4936**

**Introduction to Jewish-American Cinema, Spring 2017**

**Instructor: Professor Dragan Kujundzic**

**Seminar Room, Center for Jewish Studies, Walker Hall 201**

**Tuesday, 7 (1:55-2:45)**

**Thursday, 7-8 (1:55-3:50)**

**Office Hours, Th 13:00-2:00 and TBA**

The course will introduce students to the rich history of Jewish American cinema and the latest critical and theoretical literature about it. It will be organized thematically, and chronologically, starting with the topics of Jewish Diaspora, emigration to the US and integration, and then films about the Holocaust, comedy, Israeli Cinema. During the course, we will screen and discuss films involved with the representation of the Jews (not necessarily made by Jewish American cineasts; thus a screening and discussion of Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* and *Inglorious Basterds* by Quentin Tarantino are anticipated) and those of course made by prominent Jewish American filmmakers. The course will cover the screening and discussion of classics such as *Fiddler on the Roof*, or Barbara Streisand's *Yentl* (together with reading the novel by Sholem Aleichem and the story by Isaac Bashevis Singer on which each film was respectively based); the extensive analysis of the first sound movie, *The Jazz Singer* with Al Jolson, including critical and theoretical responses by Irvin Howe and Susan Gubar; *Schindler's List* by Steven Spielberg and *The Pianist* by Roman Polanski. The second part of the course will be dedicated to screening films reflecting Jewish humor by Ernest Lehman (*Portnoy's Complaint*, based on the novel by Philip Roth), Woody Allen (*Hannah and Her Sisters* and Allen's latest film *Whatever Works* with Larry David), and films by Paul Mazursky, Sidney Lumet, David Mamet (a selection), Billy Wilder and Mel Brooks—*The Producers*, *Blazing Saddles*). The course will conclude by the screening and discussion of recent TV series, such as *Curb Your Enthusiasm* (Larry David), and *Bored to Death* with Jason Schwartzman, and the latest film by the Coen Brothers, *Serious Men*. This list is not exhaustive, and may change during the course to include, for example, documentaries about Israeli cinema or filmmakers' biographies.

The course will also make use of the Israel Film Festival organized by the Center for Jewish Studies in the Spring of 2015 and screen and discuss the current Israel Film Production. **7th Annual Gainesville Jewish Film Festival March 19-30, 2017.**

Students will be expected to write written summaries of each film screened, which will count towards their class participation (30% of the grade). There will be a mid-term (30%) and a final paper (40%). Collective class presentations will be assigned. Attendance is obligatory. The Honors Code and the Flu Policy of the University of Florida will be observed. The syllabus is not final, and may be changed during the course of the semester according to the needs of the class and the benefit of the students. Any changes will be sent duly ahead of time in writing via the class listserve.

Week one: Introduction

Week two

Dragan Kujundzic: *Cinemuse: Selfie With Sokurov and Aleksander*

Sokurov: *Francofonia*

**Tuesday, January 10, 2017, 4 p.m.-7:30p.m, at the Harn Museum Auditorium**

Film screenings and discussion of the work of Russian filmmaker Alexander Sokurov, including an interview and Sokurov's *Francofonia*. Discussion with Professor Dragan Kujundzic, UF.

*Teveye the Milkman (Library of Yiddish Classics Edition)* by Sholem Aleichem; *Fiddler on the Roof*.

Week three, *The Jazz Singer*

Week four, The Coen Brothers, *A Serious Man*

Week four, Charlie Chaplin, *The Great Dictator*;

Week five, Quentin Tarantino, *Inglorious Basterds*

Week Billy Wilder, *Some Like It Hot*

**"The Mysterious Mr. Šlomović" a documentary film screening Sunday, February 12, 2017 at 2pm at the Harn Museum Auditorium.**

Week seven, Mel Brooks, *The Producers*

Week eight, Woody Allen, *Hannah and Her Sisters*

SPRING BREAK

Week nine, Mel Brooks, *Blazing Saddles*

**Week ten, Israeli Cinema TBA intro, screen film**

**Week eleven; 03/19-30/17, 7th Annual Jewish Film Festival, more info TBA**

**Week thirteen; Israeli Cinema TBA film student presentation**

Week fourteen: Israeli Cinema festival reports

Week fifteen, Final Paper Due end

**Selected Literature** (selected chapters to be distributed in the class)

Bartov, Omer. *The "Jew" in Cinema: From The Golem to Don't Touch My Holocaust*. (2004)

Bial, Henry. *Acting Jewish. Negotiating Ethnicity on the American Stage and Screen*. (2005)

Buhle, Pauul. *From the Lower East Side to Hollywood: Jews in American Popular Culture*. (2004)

Desser, David. *American Jewish Filmmakers*. Second Edition (2003)

Doneson, Judith, E. *The Holocaust in American Film. (Judaic Traditions in Literature, Music and Art)*. (2002)

Gabler, Neil. *An Empire on Their Own. How the Jews Invented Hollywood*. (1989)

Mintz, Allan, L.. *Popular Culture and the Shaping of Holocaust Memory in America (Samuel and Althea Stroum Lectures in Jewish Studies)* (2001)

Samberg, Joel. *Reel Jewish*, (2000)