

Nour El Safoury
December 2020

Course Title An Introduction to Popular Egyptian Cinema: Youth!

A Course Description

This course is an introduction to popular Egyptian cinema from the post-1952 period until the turn of the millennium. The course aims to situate a selected number of films socio-historically and aesthetically. Participants will be able to gain fluency in the film's unique language, both from a historical and a genre viewpoint. Classes will alternate between weeks where we closely read and situate films within their time period and other weeks where we critique theoretical texts that analyze film form and language. Thematically, course participants will be able to trace changes in Egyptian cinema's portrayal of young people. By the end of the course, they will be able to describe and analyze formal choices made by filmmakers, understand film form's relationship to content, identify major social shifts that impacted narratives in Egyptian contemporary cinema, and consider changes in our film-watching experience.

Preliminary Reading and Watching List:

We will alternate between weeks when we closely analyze selected films and situate them historically and weeks where we critique and analyze key theoretical texts that give us analytical tools by which to understand the nature of cinema, film language and the spectatorial experience.

Week 1: Introduction

Read excerpts from *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall, Jessica Evans, Sean Nixon.

Week 2: Watch: *Fel Sayef Lazem Neheb* في الصيف لازم نحب (Mohammed Abd Elaziz, 1974)

Read: Viola Shafik, "The Allegorical Nation," *Popular Egyptian Cinema: Gender, Class, Nation*.

Week 3: **Cinema As Apparatus.**

Read: Jean-Louis Baudry "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus,"
Richard Dyer, "Entertainment as Utopia," *Only Entertainment*.

Week 4: Watch: *Shaaban Taht El-Sefer* شعبان تحت الصفر (Henry Barakat, 1980)

Read: Walter Armbrust, "Introduction," *Mass Culture and Modernism in Egypt*.

Week 5: **Narrative**

Read: David Bordwell, "Who Blinked First?" *Poetics of Cinema*,
Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"

Week 6: Watch: *Ice Cream Fe Gleam* أيس كريم في جليم (Khairy Beshara, 1996)

Read: Nouri Bouzid, Shereen el Ezabi, "New Realism in Arab Cinema: The Defeat-Conscious Cinema," *Alif*.

Raymond Baker, "Combative Cultural Politics: Film Art and Political Spaces in Egypt," *Alif*

Spring Break

Week 7: **Editing**

Read: Tom Gunning, "Griffith: The Frame, the Figure," ed. Thomas Elsaesser and Adam Barker
Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative

Sergei Eisenstein, "A Dialectic Approach to Film Form," and "Dramaturgy of Film Form" from
Film Form, 1929 Dziga Vertov, Kino Eye

Week 8: *Tito* (Tarik Alarian, 2004)

Read: Walter Amburst, "New Cinema, Commercial Cinema, and the Modernist Tradition in Egypt," *Alif*

Richard Dyer, "Stars as a Social Phenomenon" *Stars*.

Week 9: **Genre, what's common between action films?**

Read: Rick Altman, "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre"

Thomas Schatz, "Film Genre and the Genre Film"

Week 10: Watch *Poisonous Roses* (Fawzi Saleh, 2018)

Read: Excerpts from Chihab El Khashab's *Making Film in Egypt: How Labor, Technology and Mediation Shape the Industry*

Week 11: **Filmmaking as Industry, Filmmakers as Cultural Workers**

Guest Lecturer TBD

Readings TBD

Week 12: Closing Session