ISRAELI SOCIETY THROUGH FILM: CHILDHOOD AND ADULTHOOD ON THE ISRAELI SCREEN

Course Description:
Though it hardly equals the size of New Jersey and includes an infinitesimal fraction of the world’s population, the State of Israel has been consistently in the focus of world attention. Israeli film, from the collectivism and nationalism of the country’s early years through the individualism and alienation of recent years, offers unique perspectives on the history and society of the State of Israel.
The films and readings will allow students to engage with key social, political, and cultural issues and questions that are crucial for understanding Israeli society, past and present. The focus of this class will be on the experiences of children, teenagers, and young adults: how did the many religious, ethnic, and political divisions in Israeli society affect childhood and adulthood? How is it to grow up in a family of Holocaust survivors, or Jewish immigrants from the Arab World? How does childhood in a city different from growing up in a kibbutz? What are the experiences of Arab children and adolescents? What role does gender play in the unique life of adolescent Ultra-Orthodox girls? How does the military experience influence young Israelis? What place do non-Jews, such as African migrants, have in contemporary Israeli life?
The films will expose the students to the various divisions that have bedeviled Israeli society since its early years: the differences between Jews and Arabs, Ashkenazim and Mizrahim, secular and orthodox Jews, as well as class, gender and generational gaps. Each of those groups and the rifts between them are mirrored in the movies we will watch throughout the semester.

Dr. Gil Ribak
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Monday
4-6:30pm
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