Course Description
Post-revolutionary Iranian Cinema has been a regular feature at major film festivals around the globe. Iranian directors and actors have won prestigious awards at Sundance, Cannes, Venice, and Berlin film festivals among others. Artistic Iranian Cinema has been influenced by the French New Wave and Italian neorealist styles but has its own distinctly Iranian style of visual poetry and symbolic language, bringing to mind the delicate patterns and intricacies of much older Iranian art forms, the Persian carpet and Sufi mystical poems. The many subtleties of Iranian Cinema has also stemmed from the filmmakers’ need to circumvent the harsh censorship rules of the state and the financial limitations imposed on independent filmmakers. The minimalist Art Cinema of Iran often blurs the borders between documentary and fiction films. Directors employ non-professional actors. Male and female directors and actors daringly explore the themes of gender inequality and sexual exploitation of women in their work, even though censorship laws forbid female and male actors from touching one another. In the process, filmmakers have created aesthetically sublime metaphors that bypass the censors and directly communicate with a universal audience. This course is an introduction to contemporary Iranian cinema. Special attention will be paid to how Iranian Realism has developed a more tolerant discourse on Islam, culture, gender, and ethnicity for Iran and the Iranian plateau, with films about Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asia.

REQUIRED TEXTS


**ADDITIONAL REQUIRED READINGS ARE SCANNED AND AVAILABLE AT:**

http://www.religion.ucsb\#120571

**SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS**


**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. You will see selections of films in class and are expected to watch the entire film either online or in the library. For additional information see the section below, “WHERE TO VIEW FILMS ON DVD IN THE LIBRARY.”

2. GROUP PRESENTATIONS (20%):
   Groups of 4-5 students will be responsible for a 30-minute presentation on a particular director. Read the assigned essays several times and take good notes. Look up the director’s films in the library (many are on reserve) or can be found on web and find appropriate clips for your presentation. **Produce a power point and be creative with your presentation.** It is best to use the class computer for your power point and bring a personal computer for clips of the videos you show in class. **Please give the students and the instructor a copy of the outline you have produced.** The entire class is expected to do the readings and take notes from each presentation.

3. INDIVIDUAL ESSAYS (30%): *One week after your group presentation, each student should hand in an essay on the significance and contribution of the director they had selected. Each essay must focus on a different theme. Some possible topics are: Attitudes about faith and religion, gender concerns with an emphasis on women, constructions of masculinity, role of children, ethics and morality, documentary vs. fiction, or various schools of realism in Iranian cinema. Read widely on the subject and try to watch most of the director’s films. Give direct examples from dialogues in the films.*
4. WEEKLY PAPERS (30%):

All the other students are expected to turn in a weekly two-page essay on the director/s whose work was discussed the previous week. Combine your observations of the films with assigned readings. Please provide footnotes for all the texts you use. Since you are expected to use your weekly paper in composing your final project, try to focus on a particular theme in all your papers.

5. FINAL PROJECT (20%):

The final project will be similar to the Individual Essay except broader in scope. You are expected to use segments of your weekly papers for this project. Focus on a particular theme in the works of TWO OR THREE directors we have discussed in class. For example, you could focus on the theme of gender and sexuality in the works of Mehrjui, Milani, and Bani’Etemad; or you could examine the theme of war in the films of Makhmalbaf and Beizai.

Final Project is due June 6.

Attendance Policy: More than (2) excused or unexcused absences might bring your grade down

Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses and will not be tolerated. They are violations of university regulations. Please note the following: Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, presenting another author’s ideas or words as one’s own (this includes but is not limited to the worldwide web), or tampering with the academic work of other students. Such actions will be subject to disciplinary action. If you have any questions about academic integrity, please consult the instructor. A single act of cheating or plagiarism will result in a failing grade on that assignment. Depending on the severity of the case, further disciplinary actions may be taken based on University policy.

Class Schedule

Week I: (March 29-31) The New-Wave Iranian Cinema: Blending Documentary and Narrative Styles
Tuesday March 29: Introductions

Thursday March 31: Lecture
Dabashi, “Forough Farrokhzad: The House is Black” in Masters, 39-70 (WEB)

Screening: The House is Black

Supplementary Readings:

Weeks II and III (April 5-7, 12-14): Dariush Mehrjui: Contentious Heterosexuality
Dabashi, “Dariush Mehrjui: The Cow,” in Masters, 107-134

Screening: Gav [The Cow] and Santuri

Weeks IV and V (April 19-21, 26-28): Abbas Kiarostami, Jafar Panahi, Bahram Ghobadi: Elyptical Cinema with Moral Ambiguity
Dabashi, “Kiarostami” in Close Up, 33-75
Saeedvafa & Rosenbaum, Abbas Kiarostami

Supplementary Readings:
Williamson, “Art Matters: The Films of Abbas Kiarostami” 90-104 (WEB)
Elena, The Cinema of Kiarostami
Dabashi, “Abbas Kiarostami: Through the Olive Tree” Masters, 283-324

Screening: Taste of Cherry, Circle

Week VI (May 3-5): Bahram Bayzaie & Majid Majidi: Children in New Iranian Cinema
Rahimieh, “Making Gender and Difference,” in The New Iranian Cinema, 238-253

Supplementary Readings:

Mottahedeh, “Bahram Beizai” (WEB)

Screening: Bashu: Gharibah-yi Kuchak

Week VII and VIII (May 10-12, 17-19): Moshen Makhmalbaf, Samira Makhmalbaf, and Kamal Tabrizi: Virtual Realism and Surrealism

Dabashi, “Mohsen Makhmalbaf” in Masters

Dabashi, “Interview with Makhmalbaf,” in Close Up

Supplementary Readings:

Egan, The Films of Makhmalbaf

Screening: The Moment of Innocence, Apple

Weeks IX and X (May 24-26, May 31-June 2): Bani E'Temad, Milani, Sadr Ameli, Farhadi: Social Realism and Gender

Whitaker, “Rakhshan Bani Etemad” (WEB)

Naficy, “Veiled Vision” (WEB)

Saeedvafa, Iran Behind the Screen,” (to be scanned) In These Times

Screening: Under the City’s Skin, I’m Taraneh 15

WHERE TO VIEW FILMS ON DVD IN THE LIBRARY?

There are two locations in the library where you can view films on dvd. Both are on a first come first served basis

1. The GIC (Government Information Center) on the 1st floor next to the East entrance and the Coffee Cart

2 carrels, each with a dvd player, located next to the GIC Information Desk. Headphones are checked out from the GIC Info. Desk. When the desk is closed, headphones can be checked out from the main Reference/Information Desk located across from the Circulation/Reserve Desk near the main entrance.

2. The Curriculum Lab on the 1st floor near the East entrance and down the hall from the GIC
There is a small room with a dvd player. This room can accommodate one person or a small group. You need to inquire at the Curriculum Lab Information Desk in order to use the room.

Please note the hours for the Curriculum Lab as it is not open at certain times. During the regular quarter it is open:
   Monday-Thursday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
   Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
   Saturday 1-5 p.m.
   Sunday closed
   Exception: Monday May 31st 1-5 p.m.

Online Articles
http://www.iranchamber.com/cinema/cinema.php
http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php/_c-544/i.html
http://iranianfilms.net/
http://archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/festivals/06/38/imagining_iran.html

women in Iranian cinema:
http://www.iran-bulletin.org/art/CINEMA2.html

Negar Motahedeh on Youtube:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iuoQMEyKmBk

latest Iranian film festivals
http://www.mfa.org/calendar/sub.asp?key=12&subkey=53
http://www.filmradar.com/calendar/item.php?id=7627

Moghsodloo: film on Iranian Cinema:

**Major Films (those with asterisks are available at UCSB Library):**

**Rakhshan Banietemad**
Under the Skin of the City
The Blue Veiled
*Nargess*
Canary Yellow
Off Limits
*May Lady
Our Times

**Bahman Beyzai**
*Bashu: The Little Stranger
*Travelers

**Masud Dehnamaki**
Ekhrajiha

**Mehdi Fakhimzadeh**
Hamsar

**Asghar Farhadi**
Fireworks Wednesday
The Beautiful City

**Bahman Ghobadi**
A Time for Drunken Horses (Netflix streaming)
Half Moon
Marooned in Iraq
No one Knows about Persian Cats (Netflix streaming)

**Ebrahim Hatamikia**
Glass Agency
From Kharkhe to Rhine
Minoo Tower
The Low Attitude

**Manijeh Hekmat**
Women's Prison (Netflix streaming)

**Varuj Karim Masihi**
The Last Act

**Abbas Kiarostami:**
Life Goes On
Through the Olive Trees
The Wind Will Carry US
*Close Up
*Where’s the Friend’s House
Ten (Netflix streaming)
Shirin (Netflix streaming)
Taste of Cherry
Tickets
Majid Majidi
The Songs of Sparrows
Baran
*The Children of Heaven
The Color of Paradise

Mohsen Makhmalbaf
*The Peddler
The Marriage of the Blessed
The Moment of Innocent
*Once Upon a Time Cinema
*Kandchar
Salaam Cinema
Gabbeh
*Bicyclerun
*Naşir al-Din Shah
*Silence

Samira Makhmalbaf
The Apple
Blackboards
Five in the Afternoon
Two-Legged Horses

Dariush Mehrjui
*The Cow (Netflix streaming)
*Santuri
*Leila (Netflix streaming)
*Hamoun (Netflix streaming)
Sara
Pari
*The Pear Tree
The Tenants
Mom’s Guests

Marzieh Meshkini
The Day I Became a Woman (Netflix streaming)
The Stray Dogs

Tahmineh Milani
Super Star
Cease Fire
*The Unwanted Woman
*Two Women

Jafar Panahi
The Circle
Offside
Crimson Gold
White Balloon

**Kiomars Pourahmad**
The Night Bus

**Kamal Tabrizi**
There’s Always a Woman in Between
*The Lizard
A Mother’s Love
Leili is With Me

**Documentary:**

**Mahnaz Afkhami**
The Ladies Room

**Maziar Bahari**
An Iranian Odyssey: Mossadegh, Oil, and the 1953 CIA Coup

**Ziba Mirhosseini-Longinotto**
Divorce Iranian Style

*Also:*

*Iran is Not the Problem*, Aaron Newman 79 min, 2008.