Major Themes in Contemporary Iranian Cinema (01:685:330)

Fall 2015, Meets Once a Week for 3 Hours

Dr. Fakhri Haghani, CMES, LSH – B304  M 5:00-8:00pm
Email: (fhaghani@rcit.rutgers.edu), Tel: (848)445-8444 X7

Course Description
Having gained a significant place in the wide success of world cinema on the international scene, Iranian cinema has opened a window of spectatorship into the culture, society, and politics of Iran. Its visual language, although non legible by Hollywood’s tradition, has made its poetic, theoretical and social discourses concerning the nature of human experience, knowledge, history, value, reality, and representation on a wider level accessible and understandable to an extended international audience. By showcasing major themes central to the history and society of Iran, such as war, revolution and displacement, women and gender issues, children and poverty, city, rural and tribal spaces, artistic and intellectual negotiations, political participation, youth and the quest for socio-cultural change, domestic and diasporic genres, citizenship rights and ethnic diversity, and cultural customs and religion in the lights of modernity, Iranian filmmakers have transgressed the intellectual boundaries of the nation-state to disseminate a vision of universal humanity in struggle.

We use Iranian cinema in a historical, cultural, aesthetic, and technological context as a key to the learning process of a wide range of theoretical and philosophical perspectives in film to represent issues of a broader world. They include theories of representation, post modernism, neo-realism, cultural identity, feminist film theory, public sphere, gender and performance, spectatorship, politics of location, orientalism, and national identity. The assigned readings were selected among a wide range of academic disciplines to develop an interdisciplinary critical approach to film. The course ultimately discusses the use of cinema, as aesthetic, creative, and technological means, in telling stories about how art and technology are able not only to reexamine, explore and restore histories, identities, languages, and cultures but also to address social justice issues and the need for transformative social change. The course intends to engage students in group-discussion by regular class participation and discussion (15 points) and weekly class presentation (15 points). There will be one screening per each class followed by class discussion of the assigned readings posted on Sakai.

Two group projects (20 points each) and short writing assignments (20 points) intend to encourage students to reach out to their creative and artistic skills and imagination to produce cinematic works.

Sample Films:

*Children of Heaven* by Majid Majidi, 1997
*Divorce Iranian Style* by Ziba Mir-Hosseini and Kim Longinotto, 1998
*Baran* by Majid Majidi, 2001
*Marmulak (The Lizard)* by Kamal Tabrizi, 2004
*Offside* by Jafar Panahi, 2006
*Khaneh Pedari (The Paternal House)* by Kianoosh Ayyari, 2010
*Jodat-e Nader az Simin: A Separation* by Asghar Farhadi, 2013
*Asabani Nistam! (I Am Not Angry!)* by Reza Dormishian, 2014