

# Elliott School of International Affairs

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

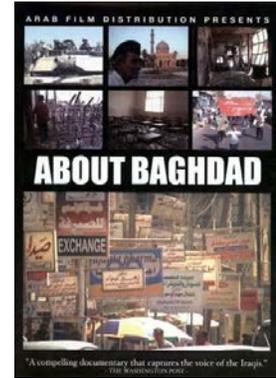
## Institute for Middle East Studies: Film Library Guide

### \*About Baghdad

**Film Synopsis:** In July 2003 Sinan Antoon, an exiled Iraqi writer and poet, returned to Baghdad to see what has become of his city after wars, sanctions, decades of oppression and violence, and now occupation. Antoon takes us on a journey exploring what Iraqis think and feel about the post-war situation and the complex relationship between the US and Iraq.

**Additional Information:** *About Baghdad* seeks to move beyond media sound-bites and privilege the complexity of Iraqi voices and perspectives that are usually marginalized and simplified in mainstream (mis)representations. The film's structure reflects the chaos and violent disorder that has engulfed the lives of Iraqis and fractured their spaces and psyches.

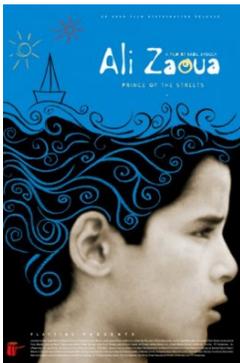
**Suggested Classroom Use:** This film would work well in a high school setting in a journalism or social studies classroom focusing on Iraq. The film is 90 minutes long but could be used in segments to highlight a range of Iraqi voices and/or members of the US military as interviewed by Iraqis. The DVD also features PDF files: Iraq One Year Later, 1990-2003 Sanctions Factsheet, US & Saddam Hussein Factsheet, and "The Economic Colonization of Iraq: Illegal and Immoral". MA15+



### Against The Government

**Film Synopsis:** The movie tackles the widespread of corruption in the Egyptian society for victims to handle their cases in return for a cut out of the compensation. Mostafa Khalaf & Ahmed Zaki is one of those lawyers who by coincidence tries to convince the mother of a young athlete, suffering from a traffic accident to handle his compensation case, to find out later that she was his ex-wife and the boy was his son. From this point on, more shocking and surprising events takes place. MA15+

### Ali Zaoua: Prince of the Streets



**Film Synopsis:** *Ali Zaoua: Prince of the Streets* is a 2000 Moroccan crime drama film that tells the story of several homeless boys. Ali, Kwita, Omar, and Boukber are a group of street urchins living on the hard streets of Casablanca. Their everyday lives are filled with violence, begging, and indifference. In order to survive they create a bond of friendship and family between them. The bond is cut short when Ali is senselessly killed at the beginning of the film by a blow to the head; his life taken by a single act of a rival gang. Ali's friends decide not to report his death to the police, who would have the boy buried in a potter's field. Instead they decide to give him a worthy burial, to bury Ali on the private island he so often dreamed of. *Ali Zaoua* captures the power of dreams and presence of hope in the harshest of circumstances.

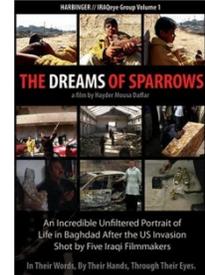
**Additional Information:** It was awarded in the 2000 Stockholm Film Festival and in the 2000 Amiens International Film Festival.

*Film synopses were compiled using the film's website or other available online sources. The "Suggested Classroom Use" section provides recommendations and resources, but educators should preview films to ensure suitability for the needs of their individual classroom. Films of particular interest for high school classrooms are denoted with an asterisk\*.*

**Suggested Classroom Use:** This film could be used in an 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade English class during a unit on magical realism as the film utilizes elements of the genre. It could also be used in a world history course to provide a glimpse into street life in Morocco. PG-13

### The Dreams of Sparrows

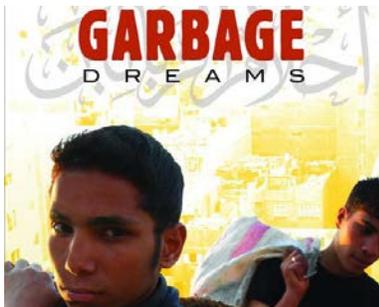
**Film Synopsis:** Shortly after the capture of Saddam, Daffar and his crew gather the reactions of Iraqis from all walks of life. Baghdadi painters, writers and filmmakers deliberate over the events of recent years and the Iraq they live in today. As the filmmakers delve deeper into the politics of occupation and resistance, the crew encounter not only the horrors in Fallujah, but also a personal tragedy that forces them to rethink their own beliefs on the situation in Iraq and what, if anything, might be done to improve it.



**Additional Information:** The film was produced by digitally sending footage to the United States via e-mail where it was assembled in rough sequences and posted on the internet.

**Suggested Classroom List:** This film would work well in a high school setting in a journalism or social studies classroom focusing on Iraq. The film is 1 hour & 14 minutes long but could be used in segments to highlight a range of Iraqi voices. MA15+

### \*Garbage Dreams



**Film Synopsis:** In the outskirts of Cairo lies the world's largest garbage village. A labyrinth of narrow roadways camouflaged by trash, the village is home to 60,000 *Zaballeen* — Arabic for "garbage people." The *Zaballeen* have survived for centuries by recycling Cairo's waste. Members of Egypt's minority Coptic Christian community, these entrepreneurial garbage workers recycle nearly all the trash they collect, maintaining what could be the world's most efficient waste disposal system.

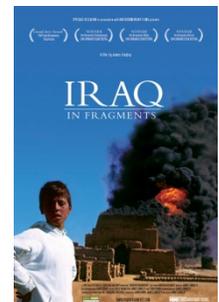
Filed over four years, *Garbage Dreams*, follows three teenage boys born into the *Zaballeen*'s trash trade: 17-year-old Adham, 16-year-old Osama, and 18-year-old Nabil. Laila, a community activist who also teaches the boys at their neighborhood Recycling School, guides the boys as they transition into adulthood at a time when the *Zaballeen* community is at a crossroads.

**Additional Information:** You can find a wealth of resources about the film at <http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/garbage-dreams/index.html> including lesson plans for grades 6-12, behind the scenes, information about recycling, and additional resources.

**Suggested Classroom Use:** *Garbage Dreams* is perfect for the classroom. It can be used in a 6-12 science, social studies, or ELA classroom. The lesson plans on PBS's website are aligned NSTA, NCSS, NCTM, NCTE, and NETS standards. It could also be used as part of an Earth Day celebration or an environmental/sustainability club event. PG

### Iraq in Fragments

**Film Synopsis:** James Longley's haunting, oblique film presents a collage of images, sounds and characters in an intimate, partial portrait of an unraveling nation. Filmed during trips to Iraq between February 2003 and April 2005, it offers no ready answers, nor does it argue for a particular point of view. Since the film was finished, the fragmenting of Iraq appears to have accelerated, but the film is not easily summarized as a text of hope or a brief for despair. It is instead an invitation to look again and afresh at a country many Americans may be tired of thinking about, and to be reminded of the complicated human



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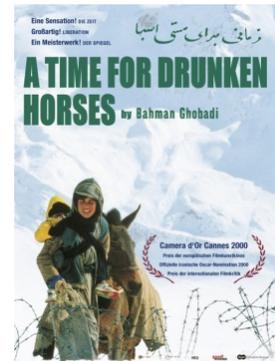
reality underneath the politics.

**Additional Information:** The film premiered at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival where it won three awards: "Directing Award Documentary", "Editing Award Documentary" and "Excellence in Cinematography Award Documentary". The film is also a part of the Iraq Media Action Project film collection. It was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature.

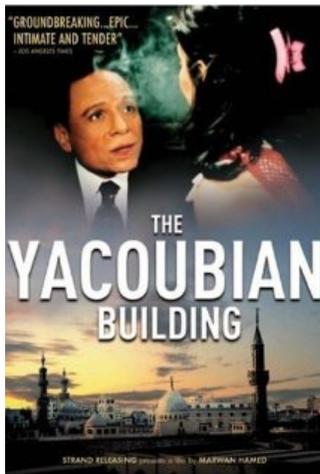
**Suggested Classroom Use:** This documentary provides aspects of interest for students studying film, media, citizenship and religious studies at a high school level. The three different stories present different features of life in Iraq, highlighting aspects of everyday life for those individuals and their communities that are often absent from news media. PG-13

### A Time for Drunken Horses

**Film Synopsis:** Former assistant director to Abbas Kiarostami and star of Samira Makhmalbaf's *Blackboards*, Bahman Ghobadi makes his directorial debut with this gritty, documentary-like look at Kurdish orphans struggling to survive. Shot in the village where the filmmaker grew up, the film unsentimentally depicts how children are packed in trucks and driven to the city to perform such menial jobs as wrapping parcels or, more likely, carrying large boxes like pack mules. Though Ayoub is all of 12 years old, he has become the head of the household, which includes his severely disabled older brother -- who is also deathly ill. In order to pay for an operation that might prolong his life, Ayoub joins a group of smugglers who traffic truck tires to Iraq. Negotiating landmines and dodging border guards, they struggle to get their overburdened mules through snow covered mountains by plying them with alcohol. Later, the eldest sister agrees to marry an Iraqi Kurd, under the belief that the groom's family will pay for the operation.



### The Yacoubian Building



**Film Synopsis:** The lives and loves of a handful of Egyptian aristocrats -- some flush, others living in shabby gentility -- set the stage for this epic-scale drama, based on a best-selling Egyptian novel. The Yacoubian is a luxury apartment building which was built in Cairo in the late '30s. At the dawn of the 21st century, the Yacoubian still has charm and a reputation for elegance, but is beginning to show clear signs of decay, and the rooftop laundry facilities now double as flats for the less fortunate. Among the residents of Yacoubian are Haj Azzam, a self-made business tycoon noted for his strict religious views. However, Azzam's public morality is a far cry from his private life, in which he uses his fortune to buy both political influence and the hand of a beautiful widow. Hatem Rasheed is a respected newspaper editor who has a shocking secret -- he's gay, and is romantically involved with handsome young soldier. Zaki Pasha is an aging self-styled lady killer who has long lived at the Yacoubian off the largesse of his family. When his sister kicks him out of their flat, he is forced to move into the office he used for his trysts. Zaki turns to his former girlfriend Christine for help, but she can do nothing for him.

Meanwhile, Bosnaina, who lives in one of the rooftop apartments and cleans Zaki's room, has grown tired of her relationship with her boyfriend, Taha, who has developed a troubling interest in Muslim extremism.

**Additional Information:** *The Yacoubian Building* is based on a successful book by the same

**Suggested Classroom Use:** This film works well in a high school world cultures/history, a world language course, as well as a film and media studies classroom. There are a number of resources available for the book which could easily be adapted for classroom film discussions. MA15+

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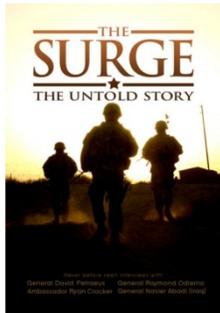
## \*Words and Deeds: Freedom of Expression and Arab Youth

**Podcast Synopsis:** A generation ago, young Arabs went to the streets to protest repressive governments. Now, they hop on the information highway – blogging and tweeting their discontent. They upload music, download protests. But this generation is up against rulers who know a thing or two about staying in power – and they are keeping the kids in check. It's an old battle on new ground – young activists fight to express themselves as Arab governments find better ways to outflank them.

**Additional Information:** This is an audio-only CD-ROM resource.

**Suggested Classroom Use:** This podcast works well in a technology, film, music class. It also provides aspects of interest for current event classes.

### The Surge: The Untold Story



**Film Synopsis:** *The Surge: the Untold Story* is the only documentary of its kind offering audiences a look into the real story of the Surge in Iraq, as told by top U.S. military commanders. These never-before-seen interviews move beyond Washington politics to tell the ground truth of a failing mission transformed into one of the most successful military operations in a generation of war fighting. This documentary honors the sacrifice, courage and ingenuity of military members in nearly impossible circumstances.

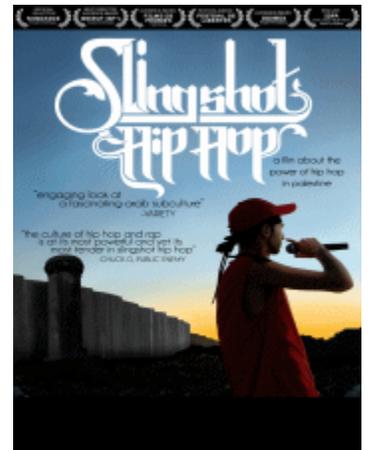
**Suggested Classroom Use:** This film would work well at the high school level in a military studies classroom, recent American history, or government class. It is only 34 minutes long which can be easily adapted into a larger lesson. PG-13

### \*Slingshot Hip Hop

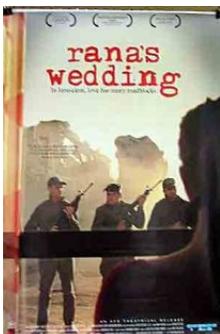
**Film Synopsis:** *Slingshot Hip Hop* braids together the stories of young Palestinians living in Gaza, the West Bank and inside Israel as they discover Hip Hop and employ it as a tool to surmount divisions imposed by occupation and poverty. From internal checkpoints and Separation Walls to gender norms and generational differences, this is the story of young people crossing the borders that separate them.

**Additional Information:** The film premiered at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival and was later shown on the Sundance Channel and has won over 13 awards

**Suggested Classroom Use:** Art with Impact has created an educational guide for the film located at [http://www.artwithimpact.org/sites/default/files/SSHH\\_Guide-sm.pdf](http://www.artwithimpact.org/sites/default/files/SSHH_Guide-sm.pdf). It would work well in a high school music class as well as an ELA or social studies course. PG-13



### Rana's Wedding



**Film Synopsis:** *Rana's Wedding* tells the story of a Palestinian girl of 17 who wants to get married to the man of her own choosing. Rana wakes up one morning to an ultimatum delivered by her father: she must either choose a husband from a preselected list of men, or she must leave Palestine for Egypt with her father by 4:00 that afternoon. With ten hours to find her boyfriend in occupied Jerusalem, she sneaks out of her father's house at daybreak to find her forbidden love.

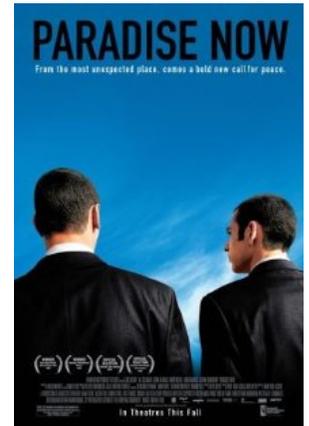
**Suggested Classroom Use:** *Rana's Wedding* presents a vivid image of Palestinian daily life and therefore can be incorporated into a high school classroom studying the

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Israeli-Palestinian conflict in addition to those studying Arab cinema, media, and journalism. MA15+

### Paradise Now

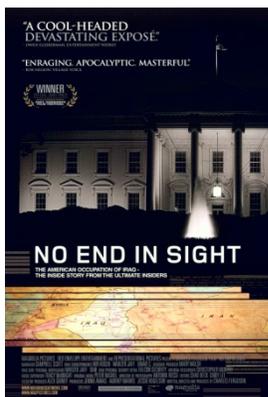
**Film Synopsis:** Two men, best friends from childhood, are summoned to fulfill their agreement to be suicide bombers for the Palestinian cause. Khaled and Said believe fervently in their cause, but having a bomb strapped to your waist would raise doubts in anyone--and once doubts have arisen, they respond in very different ways. *Paradise Now* is gripping enough while the men are preparing for their mission, but when the set-up goes awry and Khaled and Said are separated, it becomes almost excruciatingly tense. The movie passes no judgment on these men; impassioned arguments are made for both sides of the conflict. This is a work of remarkable compassion and insight, given the shape and sharpness of a skillful thriller. Its psychological portrait goes beyond the Palestinian/Israeli conflict and resonates with fanaticism and oppression throughout the world, be it related to a religious, nationalist, or tribal cause.



**Additional Information:** *Paradise Now* won a Golden Globe for best foreign language film and was nominated for an Academy Award in the same category.

**Suggested Classroom Use:** *Paradise Now* is rated PG-13. It has strong language and graphic talk about suicide and murder. This feature film provides areas of interest for coursework on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, world history, media, film, and journalism students. MA15+

### \*No End in Sight: Iraq's Descent into Chaos



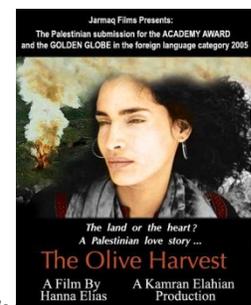
**Film Synopsis:** The first film of its kind to chronicle the reasons behind Iraq's descent into guerilla war, warlord rule, criminality and anarchy, *No End in Sight* is a jaw-dropping, insider's tale of wholesale incompetence, recklessness and venality. Based on over 200 hours of footage, the film provides a candid retelling of the events following the fall of Baghdad in 2003 by high ranking officials such as former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, Ambassador Barbara Bodine (in charge of Baghdad during the Spring of 2003), Lawrence Wilkerson, former Chief of Staff to Colin Powell, and General Jay Garner (in charge of the occupation of Iraq through May 2003) as well as Iraqi civilians, American soldiers, and prominent analysts. *No End in Sight* examines the manner in which the principal errors of U.S. policy – the use of insufficient troop levels, allowing the looting of Baghdad, the purging of professionals from the Iraqi government, and the disbanding of the Iraqi military – largely created the insurgency and chaos that engulf Iraq today.

**Additional Information:** *No End in Sight* won awards at the Sundance Film Festival and was nominated for an Academy Award.

**Suggested Classroom Use:** *No End in Sight* provides aspects of interest for students in recent American history courses, government, military, media, journalism, and film. PG-13

### The Olive Harvest

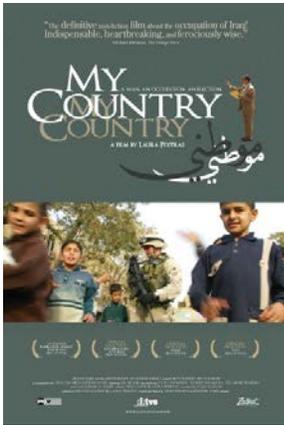
**Film Synopsis:** The Olive Harvest is a contemporary Palestinian drama exploring the complex love triangle between two brothers, Mazen and Taher, and their childhood friend, Raeda. Upon his release from an Israeli prison, older brother Mazen develops romantic feelings for Raeda, who is already engaged to Mazen's younger brother Taher. The two brothers become estranged soon after reuniting as they struggle to win over Raeda's heart. Each of the three central characters find themselves painfully torn



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between conflicting choices in this tale of love and loyalty to family, to those that they love, and to the land to which they are connected. MA15+

### \*My Country My Country



**Film Synopsis:** Working alone in Iraq over eight months, director/cinematographer Laura Poitras creates an extraordinarily intimate portrait of Iraqis living under U.S. occupation. Her principal focus is Dr. Riyadh, an Iraqi medical doctor, father of six and Sunni political candidate. An outspoken critic of the occupation, he is equally passionate about the need to establish democracy in Iraq, arguing that Sunni participation in the January 2005 elections is essential. Yet all around him, Dr. Riyadh sees only chaos, as his waiting room fills each day with patients suffering the physical and mental effects of ever-increasing violence. Dramatically interwoven into the personal journey of Dr. Riyadh is the landscape of the US military occupation, with Australian private security contractors, American journalists and the UN officials who orchestrate the elections. Unfolding like a narrative drama, *My Country, My Country* follows the agonizing predicament and gradual descent of one man caught in the tragic contradictions of the U.S. occupation of Iraq and its project to spread democracy in the Middle East.

**Additional Information:** Nominated for an Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature.

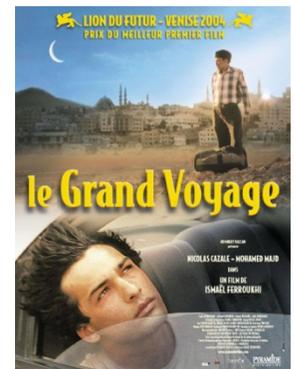
**Suggested Classroom Use:** This film provides natural aspects of interest for a civics course, as well as world history, politics and government courses. You can find a wealth of resources about the film at <http://www.pbs.org/pov/mycountry/> including a guide for educators. PG-13

### Le Grand Voyage

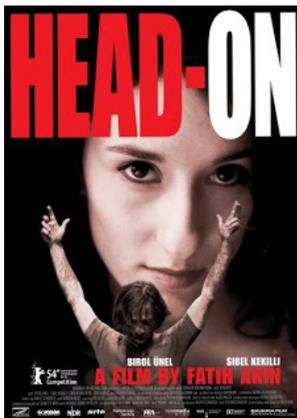
**Film Synopsis:** Reda, a handsome young man living in France, embarks on the trip of a lifetime as he drives his father to Mecca, experiencing exotic towns, breath taking landscapes and life-changing adventures.

**Additional Information:** While the Saudi Arabian government had previously permitted documentary crews to shoot in Mecca, this was the first fiction feature permitted to shoot during the Hajj.

**Suggested Classroom Use:** This feature film provides aspects of interest for students studying religious studies, world history, film, or media studies at a high school level. PG-13



### Head-On



**Film Synopsis:** German-born Turkish filmmaker Fatih Akin writes and directs the drama *Gegen die Wand* (*Head-On*). Set in a working-class Hamburg neighborhood, the story follows two Turkish immigrants who get together in a marriage of convenience. Cahit Tomruk (Birol Ünel) is a heavy drinker and a fighter who crashes his car into a wall. While visiting his psychiatrist, Dr. Schiller (Hermann Lause), he meets fellow patient Sibel Guner (Sibel Kekilli). She's desperate to get away from her restrictive family, so she asks Cahit to marry her. Wanting to change his life anyway, Cahit agrees to the arrangement. After their wedding, Sibel celebrates her freedom by drinking, dancing, and having one-night stands. Meanwhile, Cahit carries on an intimate relationship with hair stylist Maren (Catrin Striebeck). Eventually, Cahit and Sibel learn to care for one another after a climactic trip to Istanbul. *Head-On* won the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival in 2004.

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## Once Upon a Time in Anatolia

**Film Synopsis:** Winner of the Grand Prize at the 2011 Cannes Film Festival, *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia* is the new film from Nuri Bilge Ceylan, the celebrated director of *Distant* and *Climates*. In the dead of night, a group of men- among them, a police commissioner, a prosecutor, a doctor and a murder suspect- drive through the Anatolian countryside, the serpentine roads and rolling hills lit only by the headlights of their cars. They are searching for a corpse, the victim of a brutal murder. The suspect, who claims he was drunk, can't remember where he buried the body. As night wears on, details about the murder emerge and the investigator's own secrets come to light. In the Anatolian steppes nothing is what it seems; and when the body is found, the real questions begin.

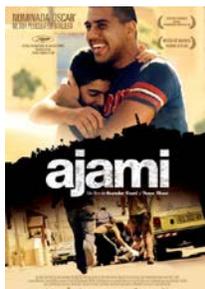
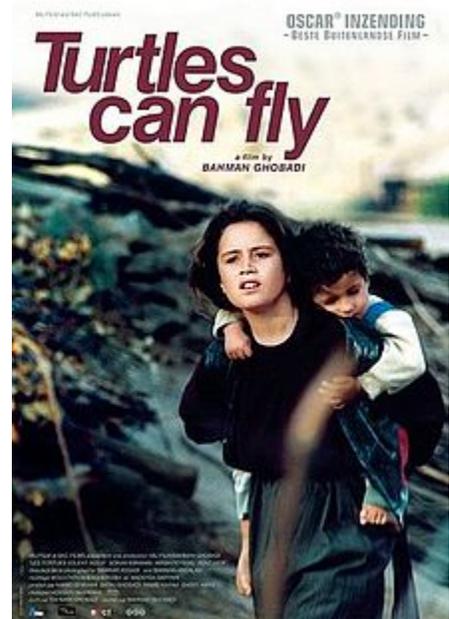


## The Edge of Heaven

**Film Synopsis:** There are six principal characters in "The Edge of Heaven": two mothers, two daughters, a father and a son, all arranged in more or less symmetrical pairs. In the course of this extraordinary film by the German writer-director Fatih Akin (which won the best screenplay award in Cannes last year) children are lost, lost parents are never found, and generational and geographical distances grow wider. Yet at the same time, as the lives of the characters cross and entwine, there is a sense of human connections becoming stronger and thicker, of a fragile moral order coalescing beneath the randomness and cruelty of modern life. And even as the movie bristles with violence — accidental and systematic, sexual and political — its tone is curiously gentle. MA15+

## Turtles Can Fly

**Film Synopsis:** *Turtles Can Fly* takes place in the days leading up to America's second war against Iraq, in a small village and refugee camp on the border of Iraq and Turkey. Soran Ebrahim stars as Satellite, a boy nicknamed for his obsession with technology. Satellite is also obsessed with the United States, and sprinkles bits of English throughout his speech. His strong personality and his resourcefulness have made him a leader among the younger children in the village. He even convinces the village elders to trade in their radios and purchase a satellite dish so they can watch news broadcasts on the upcoming war. Tension mounts as the village waits to hear when the U.S. will invade. For his part, Satellite finds himself smitten with an orphan girl, Agrin, who wanders into the refugee camp with her armless older brother, Henkov, and a little boy who is nearly blind. Henkov earns a meager living clearing minefields, like Satellite, so Satellite sees him, at first, as a rival. But his earnest desire to help Agrin eventually extends to her family. Satellite and his friends find moments of joy amid the chaos and destruction, but Agrin seems haunted by past events too painful to reconcile, and her brother Henkov derives no pleasure from his seeming ability to predict the future. *Turtles Can Fly* was shown by the Film Society of Lincoln Center in 2005 as a part of the Film Comment Selects series. MA15+



## Ajami

**Film Synopsis:** A powerful crime drama set on the streets of Jaffa's Ajami neighborhood- a melting pot of cultures and conflicting views among Jews, Muslims and Christians-and told through the eyes of a cross-section of the city's inhabitants: a young Israeli fighting a criminal vendetta against his family, a Palestinian refugee working illegally to finance a life-saving surgery, a Jewish police detective obsessed

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with finding his missing brother, and an affluent Palestinian dreaming of a future with his Jewish girlfriend. As their stories intersect-and the film's narrative shifts back and forth in time- we witness a dramatic collision of different worlds and the tragic consequences of enemies living as neighbors.

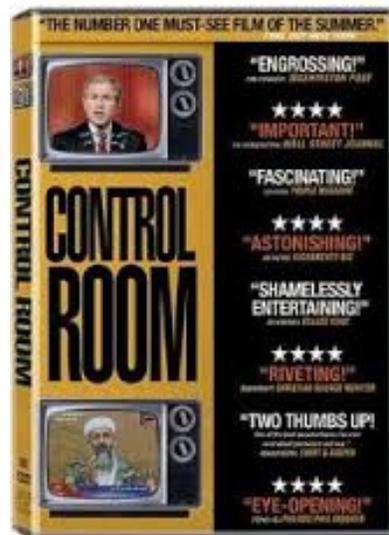
**Additional Information:** *Ajami* was the first predominantly Arabic-language film submitted by Israel for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, and it was nominated for the award.

**Suggested Classroom Use:** This film provides areas of interest for coursework on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, world history, media, film, and journalism students. MA15+

### Control Room

**Film Synopsis:** Egyptian-American filmmaker Jehane Noujaim (Startup.com) directs *Control Room*, a documentary investigating the ethics of media-managed wars. This film particularly focuses on the U.S.-led war in Iraq. Noujaim and her film crew travel to the headquarters of Al-Jazeera, the media leader in the Arab world, to find out what the news looks like in Iraq. She interviews several journalists and producers involved in war reporting for Al-Jazeera, including senior producer Sameer Khader, journalist Hassan Ibrahim, and producer Deema Khatib. Noujaim also interviews American correspondents David Shuster from NBC and Tom Mintier from CNN. *Control Room* premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2004 as part of the American Spectrum program.

**Suggested Classroom Use:** This film is suitable for high school media, journalism, or technology classes. It also fits well with a current events or contemporary world history course. PG-13



### The Band's Visit



**Film Synopsis:** When the Ceremonial Police Band of Alexandria, Egypt, journeys to a gig in Israel, they can hardly anticipate getting stuck in a rut. But upon arrival at the Israeli airport, their hosts and transportation fail to show. So begins first-time director Eran Kolirin's fish-out-of-water comedy *The Band's Visit*. Trapped in a middle-of-nowhere desert town, the group members try to figure out what to do and where to go. In desperation, two of the musicians -- conductor Tawfiq and playboy Haled -- accept an invitation from sexy café owner Dina to bunk at her residence, and seemingly within no time, the unlikeliest of interracial (Israeli-Palestinian) romances begin to blossom -- not only between Tawfiq and Dina, but between Haled and local wallflower Papi, whose night together at a roller disco turns into a veritable comedy of errors. Meanwhile, the remainder of the band members room with local resident Itzik's family, which produces overwhelming conflict and innumerable tensions. As the days roll on, the co-mingling of Egyptian band members and Israeli residents imparts each individual with insights into his cultural identity and that of the others.

**Suggested Classroom Use:** This film is suitable for a high school music class or world cultures course. *The Band's Visit* is a gentle film from a part of the world so often associated with conflict and discord. The film is also an observant and honest portrayal of small town life, as well as the challenges our comfort level faces when confronted with both unfamiliar surroundings and unfamiliar people. PG-13

### A Separation

**Film Synopsis:** Set in contemporary Iran, *A Separation* is a compelling drama about the dissolution of a marriage. Simin wants to leave Iran with her husband Nader and daughter

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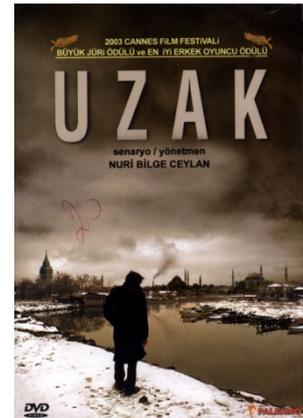


Termeh. Simin sues for divorce when Nader refuses to leave behind his Alzheimer-suffering father. Her request having failed, Simin returns to her parents' home, but Termeh decides to stay with Nader. When Nader hires a young woman to assist with his father in his wife's absence, he hopes that his life will return to a normal state. However, when he discovers that the new maid has been lying to him, he realizes that there is more on the line than just his marriage.

**Additional Information:** *A Separation* won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 2012, becoming the first Iranian film to win the award. MA15+

### Uzak (Distant)

**Film Synopsis:** Turkish filmmaker Nuri Bilge Ceylan writes and directs the taciturn drama *Uzak* (Distant). Following a major economic crisis, the young dreamer Yusuf leaves his small village in search of employment on a ship. He arrives in Istanbul to stay with his relative Mahmut. Living alone and working as a photographer, Mahmut's ordered life is disrupted by the presence of Yusuf. He is also disturbed when he learns that his ex-wife, Nazan, is moving to Canada with her new husband. Mahmut cannot speak with his mother, Yusuf cannot talk to a girl he likes, and the two men barely communicate with each other. *Uzak* won the Grand Jury Prize while both leads won Best Actor at the 2003 Cannes Film Festival. MA15+



### The Syrian Bride

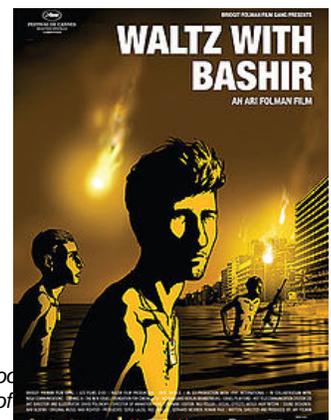


**Film Synopsis:** A family deals with the typical anxieties of a wedding day while also confronting the political turmoil of the Middle East in this drama, a collaboration between Israeli and Palestinian filmmakers. Hammed is a leading political figure in Majdal Shams, a Druze community that has been under Israeli occupation since the late '60s. Years ago, Hammed arranged for his daughter Mona to marry Tallel, who has since become a successful actor in Syria. Hammed has gathered the family together to see Mona off, but the occasion is a bittersweet one -- given the combative relationship between Israel and Syria, once Mona crosses the border with her husband, it's unlikely she will ever be able to return. Hammed's oldest son, Hattem, comes back from Russia, where he now lives with his wife, but his father still refuses to forgive him for leaving the land of his birth. Marwam, a younger son, is a businessman living in Italy who uses his visit home as an opportunity to visit Jeanne, an American United Nations representative he's been dating. And daughter Amal helps her sister Mona deal with the stress and details of her big day as she struggles to live as a modern woman while married to Amin, who wants his spouse to follow a more traditional

path. MA15+

### \*Waltz with Bashir

**Film Synopsis:** Based on a true story, *Waltz with Bashir* charts the journey of Ari, an Israeli Army veteran who is trying to recollect his experiences of the Lebanon War in Beirut. He visits a range of former comrades who recount their own stories, inevitably pushing Ari closer towards some devastating realizations. With the aid of a psychiatrist, Ari will recall stories full of daring escape, surreal humor, violence and inhumanity that he thought were long forgotten. The film uses real interviews combined with unique animation techniques to achieve its mesmerizing and groundbreaking effect.



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**Additional Information:** *Waltz with Bashir* premiered at the 2008 Cannes Film Festival where it entered the competition for the Palme d'Or, and since then has won and been nominated for many additional important awards while receiving wide acclaim from critics. It won a Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Language Film and was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

**Suggested Classroom Use:** This film is suitable for high school students in film/media studies, history, politics, and psychology. There are a number of educational resources available online, including one from Film Education found at: <http://www.filmeducation.org/pdf/film/WaltzWithBashir.pdf> PG-13

### Persepolis

**Film:** *Persepolis* is a 2007 French animated film based on Marjane Satrapi's autobiographical graphic novel of the same name. The film was written and directed by Satrapi with Vincent Paronnaud. The story follows a young girl as she comes of age against the backdrop of the Iranian Revolution. The story ends with Marjane as a 24-year-old expatriate. The title is a reference to the historic city of Persepolis.

**Additional Information:** The film was co-winner of the Jury Prize at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival and was released in France and Belgium on 27 June. The film was also nominated for the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature.



**Suggested Classroom Use:** This film is suitable for high school students studying art, history, world cultures, French, or film and media studies. There are a number of resources available online, primarily focused around the graphic novel. One such resource: <http://www.randomhouse.com/highschool/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780375714573&view=rg> PG-13