

ACCLAIMED AND AWARD-WINNING DOCUMENTARIES FOR

Middle Eastern & Islamic Studies



YOUTH BEHIND BARS: THE IRAN TRILOGY

Directed by Mehrdad Oskouei
2007-2016, Total running time: 181 minutes
Purchase of complete set: **\$875**
(a savings of 20% off individual titles)
DVD+Digital Site License: **\$1,850**

A groundbreaking, acclaimed and unforgettable documentary trilogy directed by Iran's most prominent documentary filmmaker Mehrdad Oskouei, *Youth Behind Bars: The Iran Trilogy* provides unprecedented access to Iran's imprisoned youth.

In this harrowing trilogy, Oskouei captures the lives, dreams and hopes of young teens, who offer astoundingly open and honest tellings of their life stories. Neither villains nor heroes, they have grown up too fast — left to find their own means of survival.

While *Starless Dreams* portrays the female experience in Iran's juvenile justice system, the first two installments, *It's Always Late for Freedom* and *The Last Days of Winter*, focus on boys behind bars. *Youth Behind Bars: The Iran Trilogy* is a groundbreaking, unforgettable documentary trilogy signaling the presence of a major voice in contemporary cinema.

"Mehrdad Oskouei's reputation as one of Iran's finest documentary filmmakers grows film by film." —*The Hollywood Reporter*

"Somewhere along the way, these documentaries stop being mere films and become lifelines instead." —*Village Voice*

STARLESS DREAMS

2016, 76 minutes
Purchase: **\$395** | Classroom rental: **\$125**
DVD+Digital Site License: **\$890**

Starless Dreams plunges into the lives of seven young teenage girls sharing temporary quarters at an all-female juvenile rehabilitation center on the outskirts of Tehran. Mehrdad Oskouei spent seven years securing access to the facility.

As the New Year approaches, the girls, all under 18, bond and reveal with disarming and often playful honesty the circumstances and acts that resulted in their incarceration. They have killed their father, robbed a bank or were arrested for carrying 651 grams of cocaine.

It is the sisterly bond that brings the girls to sing and dance with hope. Outside the prison walls, danger is everywhere.

"[A] heartbreaking work. What amazes is [the girls'] collective joie de vivre in the face of horrific experience." —Stephen Holden, *The New York Times*

"An extraordinary film. *Starless Dreams* captures a rare, sorrowful, infinitely complex milieu." —Michelle Orange, *Village Voice*

"A completely unfiltered look at life as a female juvenile offender in Iran. It covers feminism, class issues and abuse in a way that is poignant and authentic." —*Vox Magazine*

"Provides a rich entry point into some very complex questions about the state of human rights in Iran and the state of correctional systems internationally." —*Bitch Flicks*

THE LAST DAYS OF WINTER

2011, 52 minutes
Purchase: **\$350** | Classroom rental: **\$125**
DVD+Digital Site License: **\$800**

Following his harrowing documentary, *It's Always Late for Freedom*, director Mehrdad Oskouei continues his exploration of a male juvenile detention facility near Tehran. *The Last Days of Winter* follows a group of young men under 15 as they take stock of their lives.

Oskouei follows their day-to-day activities at the facility. He also joins them on a holiday excursion to the Caspian Sea where, according to *The New York Times*, a young Oskouei "thought of drowning himself after his father was imprisoned, throwing the family into poverty." With no walls around them, the boys become more open with the documentarian, detailing their plans of the future, family and love.

"A fantastic examination of the human spirit. It's easy to forget where these boys are and all they've had to go through in their short lives, but their big brown eyes tell the tales of their sadness."

—*Vox Magazine*



IT'S ALWAYS LATE FOR FREEDOM

2007, 53 minutes
Purchase: **\$350** | Classroom rental: **\$125**
DVD+Digital Site License: **\$800**

In this first installment of the *Youth Behind Bars: The Iran Trilogy*, Mehrdad Oskouei provides a rare glimpse into an all-male juvenile detention facility in Iran, where every boy, head freshly shaved to prevent lice, completes chores, shares a bunk bed and waits to use the phone—alongside adult inmates. The Tehran House of Correction treats the boys as adults, and boys come to see themselves this way.

"A testament to community and compassion." —*POV Magazine*

NEW



THE CROSSING

Directed by George Kurian

2015, 55 minutes

Purchase: **\$350** | Classroom rental: **\$125**

DVD+Digital Site License: **\$800**

Shown at numerous human rights festivals around the globe, *The Crossing* is a rare, firsthand account of one of the most dangerous journeys of our time. This timely, nail-biting documentary follows the gruelling plight of a group of refugees as they cross the Mediterranean Sea and travel across Europe.

A group of middle class Syrians have escaped to Egypt, but due to the government's increasing harassment, they decide to make the perilous journey across the Mediterranean. Using camera footage taken by refugee

Rami, the film chronicles the group's week-long voyage on a cramped, old sailboat. After arriving in Europe, they await their asylum status and struggle to navigate a maze of regulations and hardships that prevent them from working, attending school, or learning the language of their new country.

A document that goes beyond the news coverage, *The Crossing* is an essential documentary highlighting the complex mechanisms of isolation many migrants face — and finally gives them the opportunity to share their life-or-death traumatic experiences.

"The Crossing is an affecting study of those fleeing conflict. Kurian reminds us that hopes and dreams don't diminish when people are forced to leave their homeland, and illuminates some of the harshest problems faced by refugees while trying to build a new life in a foreign world." —CineVue

50 FEET FROM SYRIA

Directed by Skye Fitzgerald

2015, 39 minutes

Purchase: **\$350** | Classroom rental: **\$125**

DVD+Digital Site License: **\$800**

Optional closed captions

A gripping and timely snapshot that provides a glimpse into the plight of Syrian refugees, *50 Feet from Syria* uncovers the humanitarian efforts of a Syrian-American orthopedic surgeon who travels to the Turkish border to volunteer to operate on victims of the civil war.

With a suitcase full of donated stainless-steel bone implants, Syrian-American surgeon Hisham Bismar arrives at a Turkish hospital on the Syrian border, ready for anything. What he finds is horror, chaos, and an ocean of refugees in need of medical care: colleagues who perform operations without anesthesia, stories of Syrian government snipers targeting children and pregnant women, and images of 55 gallon barrels filled with shrapnel and TNT dropped deliberately on civilians.



"50 Feet from Syria is a fine and inspiring film. A direct experience of the lives of people displaced—and often enough physically dismembered—by Middle Eastern war."

—Anthropology Review Database

"Ideal for the classroom."

—Al Jadid

NEW



FROM IRAN: A SEPARATION

Directed by Azadeh Moussavi and Kourosh Ataei

2013, 52 minutes

Purchase: **\$350** | Classroom rental: **\$125**

DVD+Digital Site License: **\$800**

A gripping and moving story that illustrates the impact cosmopolitan recognition has on an isolated population, *From Iran: A Separation* details the reception of the speech Asghar Farhadi (*About Elly*) gave when his film *A Separation* won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. After the awards, it seems everyone in Tehran has an opinion about Farhadi's film, and the discussions about its message take place in cinemas, at carpet dealers and in front of kiosks and at carpet dealers.

From Iran: A Separation shows how important an Oscar acceptance speech can become when divorce is taboo and freedom of speech is something not to be taken for granted.

ABOUT ELLY

Directed by Asghar Farhadi

2015, 119 minutes

Purchase: **\$195**

DVD+Digital Site License: **\$645**

From the Academy Award winning director of *A Separation*, comes this gripping mystery set among a group of old friends on a holiday retreat.

With the return of their close friend Ahmad from Germany, a group of old college pals decide to reunite for a weekend outing by the Caspian Sea. The fun starts right away as they quickly catch on to the plan of lively Sepideh, who has brought along Elly, her daughter's kindergarten teacher, in hopes of setting her up with recently divorced Ahmad. But seemingly trivial lies suddenly swing round and come back full force when one afternoon Elly suddenly vanishes.

🎯 Critics' Picks

"Gorgeous. Thrilling. Powerful."

—The New York Times

"A devastating dissection of Tehrani upper-middle class dissimulation." —Sight and Sound

Women & the Middle East



THE LIGHT IN HER EYES

Directed by Julia Meltzer and Laura Nix

2011, 87 or 58 minutes

Purchase: **\$310** | Classroom rental: **\$125**

DVD+Digital Site License: **\$720**



Shot on the eve of the Syrian uprising, *The Light in Her Eyes* is a portrait of a remarkable woman, a Muslim preacher who founded one of the first religious schools for girls in Syria. This fascinating documentary explores a surprising cultural shift occurring in the Middle East today — in which more women are claiming space within the Mosque.

“An exceptional documentary. Highly recommended for women’s studies, Islamic and Middle Eastern studies, and anthropological discussion.”

—*Library Journal*

“A rare close-up view of how women are engaging with the tradition of Qur’anic memorization and recitation in order to broach questions of feminism, Islam, and the ‘women’s mosque movement,’ or da’wa movement, in the Middle East today.”

—*Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies*

THE OTHER SIDE OF BURKA

Directed by Mehrdad Oskouei

2004, 52 minutes

Purchase: **\$310** | Classroom rental: **\$125**

DVD+Digital Site License: **\$720**

By the director of *Youth Behind Bars: The Iran Trilogy*, *The Other Side of Burka* is an award-winning documentary about one of the most extreme examples of face-veiling in the Middle East.

✓ **“Highly Recommended. This cultural documentary offers insights into the unquestioned tradition of patriarchy and the dimension of deprivation and suffering women experience.”**

—*Educational Media Reviews Online*



OUR SUMMER IN TEHRAN

Directed by Justine Shapiro

2011, 59 minutes

Purchase: **\$310** | Classroom rental: **\$125**

DVD+Digital Site License: **\$720**

Optional Closed Captions

Our Summer in Tehran transports us into the seldom seen realm of middle class family life in Iran. Academy Award-nominated director Justine Shapiro (*Promises*) takes her 6-year-old son Mateo with her to Tehran where they spend the summer with three families.

“Gives us an exceedingly rare look at what can happen when the veils come off. A valuable educational tool for gleaning a unique cross cultural perspective.”

—*Deirdre English, Director, Felker Magazine Center, University of California, Berkeley*

“A poignant, respectful, and open-minded peek at a country and culture that is often misunderstood.” —*Booklist*



HIDE YOUR WORDS

Directed by Behnam Behzadi

2003, 27 minutes

Purchase: **\$210** | Classroom rental: **\$65**

DVD+Digital Site License: **\$520**

As they gather salt, two young girls talk about a fellow classmate, a 14-year-old girl who was forced to marry a 73-year-old man. An intimate look at the reality of arranged marriages in Iran.

“Reveals the contrasting views between the daughters and parents regarding the value of education and necessity of marriage. Recommended for discussion on Middle Eastern studies, gender equality, women’s education, women’s rights, and women and Islam.”

—*Educational Media Reviews Online*



FRONTRUNNER: THE WOMAN WHO SURPRISED THE WORLD

Directed by Virginia Williams

2008, 90 minutes

Purchase: **\$350** | Classroom rental: **\$125**

DVD+Digital Site License: **\$800**

The heroic story of the first woman to run for President of Afghanistan. *Frontrunner* introduces us to Dr. Massouda Jalal, a mother of three children, whose campaign inspired thousands of women across the country to participate in the democratic process.

“Recommended. Frontrunner offers a fine portrait of one committed woman, while also reminding us that while the road to democracy may be worth traveling, it invariably features numerous potholes and speed bumps.” —*Video Librarian*

Israel / Palestine



TERRACE OF THE SEA

Directed by Diana Allan

2009, 52 minutes

Purchase: **\$350** | Classroom rental: **\$125**

DVD+Digital Site License: **\$800**

Filmed in an unofficial Palestinian Bedouin camp that was established in 1948 on a stretch of beach in South Lebanon, *Terrace of the Sea* uses a collection of family photographs taken over three generations as a prism through which to reflect on memory, loss and history. An anthropologist, author and filmmaker, Diana Allan documents the experiences of the Ibrahim family and looks at their relationship to work and to the camp, and how they've persevered in this 'temporary' home.

Produced at Harvard's Sensory Ethnography Lab (*Sweetgrass*, *Leviathan*, *People's Park*), *Terrace of the Sea* is a haunting meditation on the process of memory.

"A lovely, evocative study of the memories of Palestinian refugees/settlers on the Lebanese coast." —*Anthropology Review Database*



STILL LIFE

Directed by Diana Allan

2007, 25 minutes

Purchase: **\$250** | Classroom rental: **\$125**

DVD+Digital Site License: **\$600**

"The Arab governments pushed us out of our homes... I was twelve years old... I've been here for 60 years." A beautiful, poignant documentary, *Still Life* examines the effect a collection of personal photos — which show life in Palestine before the 1948 displacement

— have on an elderly Palestinian fisherman living in exile in Lebanon. A moving meditation on the role memory, and photographs, play in the lives of those in exile from their homes.

"At a time when the world must cope with growing numbers of refugees, this short film artfully records one voice that echoes for many."

—*Al Jadid*

"An intrinsically interesting story of the impact of childhood relocation."

—*The Gerontologist*



THE ANABASIS OF MAY AND FUSAKO SHIGENOBU, MASAO ADACHI AND 27 YEARS WITHOUT IMAGES

Directed by Eric Baudelaire

2011, 66 minutes

Purchase: **\$395** | Classroom rental: **\$125**

DVD+Digital Site License: **\$890**

Mixing personal stories, political history, revolutionary propaganda and film theory, renowned artist Eric Baudelaire illuminates the idealism and radicalism of left-wing extremist movements in the 1970s by connecting the stories of two of its protagonists: May Shigenobu, born in secrecy in Lebanon (her father was the leader of the Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine) and Masao Adachi, the legendary Japanese director who gave up cinema to take up arms with the Red Army for the Palestinian cause.

THE LAW IN THESE PARTS

Directed by Ra'anan Alexandrowicz

2012, 101 minutes

Purchase: **\$195** | Classroom rental: **\$125**

DVD+Digital Site License: **\$490**

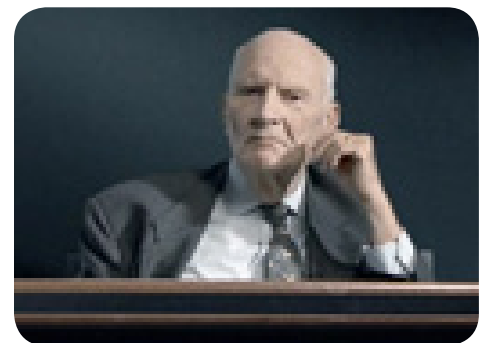
Through candid, first-ever, interviews with Israeli judges, prosecutors and legal advisors, *The Law In These Parts* — winner of the Documentary Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival — is a gripping

and revelatory investigation into the legal framework put in place by Israel in 1967 to govern the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The film is executive produced by renowned filmmaker and journalist Laura Poitras.

"Superb. Fascinating. A brilliantly complex film."
—*Los Angeles Times*

✓ **"Highly Recommended. It is difficult to conceive of a more potent, relevant work with such a unique assemblage of interviewees, and a creative yet surgical approach."**

—*Educational Media Reviews Online*



The Arab Spring



Academy Award Nominee
Best Documentary, Short Subject

KARAMA HAS NO WALLS

Directed by Sara Ishaq

2013, 26 minutes

Purchase: **\$250** | Classroom rental: **\$125**

DVD+Digital Site License: **\$600**

A 2014 Academy Award nominee, *Karama Has No Walls* is a gripping account of the tragic day that changed the course of the revolution in Yemen, when pro-government snipers opened fired on a peaceful gathering of protesters, sparking national outrage and ultimately leading to the end of 33 years of autocratic rule.

Incorporating remarkable footage from two cameramen who were there as events unfolded, *Karama*

Has No Walls offers a dynamic, multifaceted perspective in telling the story of a single day that altered the path of a nation.

"A snapshot of a protest movement at its most powerful, when differences were put aside in the name of battling the shared injustices of poverty, unemployment, and corruption." —*The New Yorker*

"An urgent, stereotype-exploding historical document." —*Salon*

"A remarkable street-level portrayal of a historic clash between freedom and anti-freedom."

—*Anthropology Review Database*

✓ **"Highly Recommended."**

—*Educational Media Reviews Online*



THE MULBERRY HOUSE

Directed by Sara Ishaq

2013, 65 minutes

Purchase: **\$350** | Classroom rental: **\$125**

DVD+Digital Site License: **\$800**

An incredibly moving and intimate story by the director of Academy Award nominated *Karama Has No Walls*. Arriving at the heart of an emerging revolution after living abroad for ten years, a young female filmmaker redefines her place in Yemeni society, as well as her relationships with her father and grandfather. In a unique examination of the uprisings in Yemen, *The Mulberry House* shifts the focus from events on the streets to the impact of the revolution on the story of one family.

"Recommended. *The Mulberry House* provides viewers with an up-close look at the domestic side of the 2011 Arab Spring uprising in Yemen [and] reveals the universality of family tensions with regard to gender roles and cross-cultural differences." —*Educational Media Reviews Online*

"Just as the Arab Spring signaled a challenge to the old ways of political reality in the Arab world, so too does Ishaq signal change inside the lives of ordinary Yemenis." —*Al Jadid*

WORDS OF WITNESS

Directed by Mai Iskander

2012, 70 minutes

Purchase: **\$310** | Classroom rental: **\$125**

DVD+Digital Site License: **\$720**

A fascinating account of Egypt post-revolution, *Words of Witness* follows a 22-year-old female reporter, an incredible, fearless young woman, as she covers her country's unsteady transition to democracy. From the director of *Garbage Dreams*, this is a dynamic portrait of the youth movement that sparked the revolution and its continued reliance on social media.

"Recommended. This film's use of a female voice to capture the emotional metamorphosis that the Egyptian masses are experiencing gives the viewer a very real sense of the fragility of the situation but also the hope and excitement that the youth of the country embody."

—*Educational Media Reviews Online*



"Fascinating — an excellent supplement to a broader curriculum about the world-changing events in the Middle East."

—*School Library Journal*

"A crucial story of modern revolution."

—*Los Angeles Times*

ROUGE PAROLE

Directed by Elyes Baccar

2011, 95 minutes

Purchase: **\$310** | Classroom rental: **\$125**

DVD+Digital Site License: **\$720**

On December 17, 2010, 26-year-old Mohamed Bouazizi set fire to himself on the streets of Tunis sparking a popular uprising that toppled a dictator and developed into the Arab Spring. With remarkable never-before-seen footage of the demonstrations and celebrations, *Rouge Parole* chronicles the revolution in Tunisia and its immediate aftermath.

"*Rouge Parole* is integral film for those trying to understand the spontaneity and collective nature of the revolution." —*Al Jadid*

✓ **"Highly Recommended."**

—*Educational Media Reviews Online*

The Arab-American Experience

AMERICAN ARAB

Directed by Usama Alshaibi

2013, 60 minutes

Purchase: **\$350** | Classroom rental: **\$125**

DVD+Digital Site License: **\$800**

A provocative look at the complexities of Arab identity in post 9/11 America, *American Arab* interweaves filmmaker Usama Alshaibi's own story, and that of his family, as well as other Arab-Americans to thoughtfully explore the values, passions, hopes and perceptions of his community, from inside and out.

Born in Iraq and raised in the United States, filmmaker Usama Alshaibi sets out to examine this stereotype and how it came to be. A timely and important film that emphasizes the diverse and complex array of voices and cultures within the Arab-American community.

"Alshaibi presents a very personal and exposed story of identity without finding a straightforward answer of what being a Muslim, an American, an Arab, or anything else really means to oneself or to those around that person."

—Anne Shelley, Illinois State University



"This perceptive video tells a universal story about immigrants' struggles to assimilate and seek the often elusive promise of the American dream. A potent discussion starter." —Booklist

"Probes what you might call the Arab-American dilemma. Alshaibi's family is smart and complicated, and you immediately have an emotional connection to these people."

—Chicago Tribune

COMEDY MIDDLE EASTERN STYLE

Directed by Soodabeh Oskoui Babcock and James Babcock

2005, 56 minutes

Purchase: **\$310** | Classroom rental: **\$125**

DVD+Digital Site License: **\$720**

Middle Eastern standup comics living in New York share their views on political issues and the prejudices they've had to endure since 9/11.

✓ **"Highly Recommended. This is a very funny video that raises salient points about political and cultural issues."**

—Educational Media Reviews Online



BY THE DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT: CHRIS JACKSON'S JOURNEY TO ISLAM

Directed by Zareena Grewal

2004, 52 minutes

Purchase: **\$310** | Classroom rental: **\$125**

DVD+Digital Site License: **\$720**

Basketball star Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf caused a national stir when the NBA suspended him for refusing to stand during the national anthem because of his "Muslim conscience." This documentary reexamines the controversy, the media misrepresentations and the reactions of the Muslim immigrants who responded with an embarrassed disavowals.

The film documents multiple and competing perspectives creating a complex montage of voices, including the analyses of four Muslim jurists, and addresses issues of Islam in the US.

"Recommended. This timely film should be of value to those interested in the place of Islam in American society as a whole, the relationship of the African American Muslim community to the immigrant Muslims in particular, and the situation of Muslims in America on the eve of 9/11."

—Educational Media Reviews Online

THE INTERRUPTERS

Photographed and Directed by Steve James

Produced by Alex Kotlowitz and Steve James

2011, 125 minutes

Purchase: **\$195** | Classroom rental: **\$95**

DVD+Digital Site License: **\$490**

One of the most celebrated documentaries in recent years, *The Interrupters* tells the stories of three Violence Interrupters who try to protect their communities from the violence they once perpetrated. One of these three is Ameena Matthews, daughter of former gang leader Jeff Fort, who was herself a drug ring enforcer. She discusses and credits her Muslim faith for pulling her off the streets.

✓ Critics' Picks

"A hard wallop of a documentary. Mr. James has put a face to a raging epidemic and an unforgivable American tragedy." —The New York Times

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