



## ***A Wedding in Ramallah***

### **Film Study Guide**

**Director: Sherine Salama**

**2002 | Documentary | 90 Minutes | Australia | English | Unrated**

<https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/weddinginramallah/film.html>

**Synopsis:** Even in the midst of intense political conflicts, people try to get on with their lives. So it is with Mariam and Bassam, a Palestinian couple who met during the relatively peaceful summer of 2000. This wonderfully observant film follows their relationship from courtship to marriage, and beyond. Bassam, a telephone repairman in Cleveland, returns to Palestine to find a “home-made” bride. He quickly meets and marries the young Mariam, but leaves her in Palestine with his family. Soon afterward, a new intifada takes place and violence erupts throughout Palestine. Life in wartime is brilliantly evoked: people talk on cell phones, quarrel and cook dinner while tanks are shelling buildings a few blocks away. After many months, Bassam is able to procure a visa for Mariam, but she soon discovers that life in exile in the US is not what she expected. This charming film says a great deal about love, courtship, and the roles of women and men in Palestinian society, while touching on the details of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict.

### **Post-Screening Discussion Questions**

1. What do you know about the conflict in the Middle East?
2. How has media coverage affected your views on the situation?

3. Have you heard, read or seen any depiction of Palestinian life in the Occupied Territories?
4. Do you know of other contemporary cultures that have arranged marriages?
5. Why does Bassam travel all the way back to Ramallah to find a bride even though he is already living in the US?
6. Why does Mariam agree to the arrangement?
7. What do you think about arranged marriage?
8. How would you feel if you did not know the person you were going to marry?
9. What do you think about the husband's expectations of the wives after marriage?
10. What do you think Mariam and Bassam need to do to make their marriage work in the US?