CLASSICS OF THE SPY NOVEL

Week 1: John Buchan’s *The Thirty-Nine Steps*
Week 2: Eric Ambler’s *Epitaph for a Spy*
Week 3: Graham Greene’s *Our Man in Havana*
Week 4: Ian Fleming’s *Goldfinger*
Week 5: John Le Carré’s *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy*
Week 6: Joseph Finder, Charles McCarry, “End of the String” and “Neighbors”
GRAHAM GREENE

- Born 1904, son of headmaster
- 1910, Attends father’s school; bullied, depression, psychiatric counselling
- Early 1920s, attends Balliol College, Oxford; suicidal thoughts
- 1925, Apprentice writer, *Nottingham Journal*; meets Vivien Dayrell-Browning; engaged
1926, Converts to Catholicism
1927, Marries Vivien; sub-editor on *The Times*
1929, Publishes *The Man Within*; quits journalism to write full-time; freelance journalist
1932, Publishes *Stamboul Train*
1934, Film adaptation, *Orient Express*
GRAHAM GREENE

- 1935, Travels through Liberia; publishes, *Journey Without Maps*
- 1937, Shirley Temple film review; 20th c. Fox lawsuit; lives in Mexico; writes *The Power and The Glory*
- WWII, recruited to MI6 by sister; friends with/serves under Kim Philby
GRAHAM GREENE

- 1939, Amicable separation from wife; unsuited to domestic life
- 1951, Publishes The End of the Affair; based on relationship with Catherine Walston
- 1954, Visits Haiti; publishes The Comedians
- 1958, Frequent visitor to Cuba; publishes Our Man in Havana
GRAHAM GREENE

- 1966, Moves to Antibes
- 1967, Short-listed for Nobel Prize
- 1969, Publishes *Travels with My Aunt*
- 1978, Publishes *The Human Factor*
- 1986, Order of Merit
- 1980s, Moves to Switzerland
- 1991, Dies of leukemia
20th c spy heroes are two kinds:

- 1820s to 1920s - Independence, expertise, physical prowess, the ability to charm men and women, ability to adopt disguises, and mild cynicism for the establishment

- 1930s to present – “Realistic” spy story, anti-hero professional or amateur, increasing criticism or mockery of establishment values
WWII & ESPIONNAGE

- 1939 - US/Br preoccupied with cracking German & Japanese codes
  + Breaking Enigma machine; real-time intelligence
- 1941-45 – Br/US play “Double Cross” game
  + Catch German spies & turn them back to spy for Allies
- 1942 - FDR authorizes Office of Strategic Services (OSS)
  + SOE & OSS – Share Allied espionage duties – organizing anti-Nazi groups to destabilize Germany
- 1947 - OSS becomes CIA
“Cold War” coined by George Orwell – world divided into superpowers that face off and hold each other hostage using weapons of mass destruction

- Did US or USSR have the spy edge in the Cold War?
  - Raymond L. Garthoff: No side had advantage through spying
  - Some spies had impact – Gordievsky (for West) & Philby (for USSR) – but how much?
- 1955-58 – Cuban Revolution
- 1961 – Bay of Pigs – CIA backed anti-revolutionaries
- 1962 – Cuban Missile Crisis – Threat of nuclear war
Greene moves to Section V London, monitoring Spain/Portugal:
- 51 St. Albans, London -> Room 501, Sevilla-Biltmore hotel - Hawthorne instructs Wormold in spycraft

Section V monitors:
- Agent Garbo – Catalan spy for British
- Agent OSTRO, a Nazi spy – invents fake networks for German pay
  + Lisbon = “hotbed of arms dealers, deserters, spies and refugees desperate to get across the Atlantic.”
  + Fidrmuc unknowingly often gives SIS chicken-feed to Nazis
  + Nazis already doubted OSTRO’s product -> dismissed D-Day report of Allied landing near Calais
WHY SPY? EVOLVING REASONS

- **1910s, Buchan**: spying necessary; uses disguise and evasion; enemy one-dimensional, evil.
- **1930s, Ambler**: spying despicable; clear set of techniques; attracts the criminal personality.
- **1950s, Greene**: spying for money or blackmail or romantic notions; no patriotism involved; evil is banal; powerful of West and East are the villains.
HAVANA – KEY SCENES

Novel uses spy story pattern ironically – uses language that normally signifies the opposite for humor or emphasis:

- **Assignment:** money trouble (4-5, 18); Hawthorne’s offer (40-41)
- **Quest A:** creating agents (58, 76, 106, 109)
- **Quest B:** revenge (189, 208-209); Segura’s list (200-201, 210-11)
- **Obstacles:** Carter & luncheon (174-183), agents come to life (144-45)
- **Resolution:** leaving Havana (189)
- **Conclusion:** decoration (222, 225)
HAVANA – GREENE’S STYLE

Simple, character-revealing action:

- Milly breaks a shoe to hammer nails, plaster falls into cold lunch (14, 16)
- Comparative education professor (133)
- Waiter’s grief over his dog (183)
- Wormold’s collection of mini whisky bottles (23)
- Hasselbacher’s blue cheese mold (6)
HAVANA – GREENE’S STYLE

Structure of story in told in layers:

1. Spy world of Chief, Hawthorne
2. Cuban world of Battista, exotic, disordered
3. Outer family life of Wormold, Milly
4. Inner life of Wormold, passive, self-doubt, growth, determination
ELEMENTS OF OUR MAN IN HAVANA

- Hero
- Villain
- Helper
- Chief
- Love Interest
- Abroad
- Hi-Tech
**HAVANA - ELEMENTS**

- **Hero**: plain, dependable (4); passive with daughter (18); left by wife (30)
- **Villain**: Carter, second-rate school (168); stutter (140); afraid of women (206-207); romantic (210)
- **Chief**, romantic (44-45); hoarding info (79); more interested in roasts than “casualties” (149-50)
- ** Helpers**: Hasselbacher, realistic (4, 146)
HAVANA - ELEMENTS

- **Helpers:** Hasselbacher, superstitious (33-34); idealistic (35-36); unused to death (116)
- **Love interest:** Beatrice, boy’s game (124-25); practical (130-31); disinterested in games/power/ the “unreal” (194, 223)
- **Spycraft:** book codes (39); hidden equip. (100-101); microdots 224-25
- **Abroad:** Cuban vitality (63) vs. English drabness (223)
HAVANA – THEMES

- **Power:** Ambler shows “the ape beneath the velvet;” pleasant façade hides evil/corruption.
  
  - Greene shows evil caused by banality (Chief, Carter). No one is evil but does it through romantic ideas (patriotism, class war, revenge).
  
  - Individuals not very different; similar sentiments, fears, hopes. But the Powers/ISMS they serve that corrupt.
**HAVANA - THEMES**

- **Providence:** Ambler shows Blind Chance in events; characters ruled by desire for power.

- Greene shows human free will setting events into motion and responsible for it. (Beatrice squirting Segura with water.)

- Human free will a sign God might exist: Free choices made for just ends lead to goodness. The presence of goodness suggests meaningfulness and so a higher power.
TYPES OF SPY STORIES

- Amateur yarn (Stevenson)
- Straight-forward spy – Agent works for organization (Buchan, Fleming)
- Conspiracy story - Stop villain within bureaucracy (Le Carré)
- Moral ambiguity - Critique home values (Greene)
Carol Reed is “the only director I've really enjoyed working with.” “The Third Man” and "The Fallen Idol” are the best film treatments of my work.

These films were based on long short stories. "A short story makes a much better film than a novel” because “[a] novel is too long, has too much material, and there have to be too many compromises."
HIDDEN VS SURFACE LIFE - AVERAGE PERSON

REGULAR PERSON

Surface self - actor displays to others

Core self - inner mental life of actor

Appearance, behaviour, habits

Life - Public - visible to others

Life - Private - hidden from others

Thoughts, feelings, beliefs
HIDDEN VS SURFACE LIFE - SPY

SPY

Surface self - actor displays to others

Core self - inner mental life of actor

2 layers of surface life - "cover story" life & "real life" when not spying

Cover story - appearance, behaviour, habits
Real life - Appearance, behaviour, habits

Life - Public - visible to others
Life - Private - hidden from others

Thoughts, feelings, beliefs