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: McCarry’s “End of the String” & Finder’s “Neighbors”
TIMELINES

EVENTS

1909
Colonialism
Boer War

1914
Empire
WWI

1939
Capitalism
Communism
Facism WWII

1945
Democ
Socialism
Cold War

1989
US/USSR decline
Post-CW

SPY ORGANIZATIONS

Secret Service
Bureau (BR)

MI5-MI6 (BR)
Deuxieme
Bureau (FR)

Office Strat
Services
(BR)/Special
Ops Exec (US)

CIA
KGB
Stasi
Mossad

NSA/CIA
(US)
FSB/GRU
(RUSS)

GENRE/AUTHOR/FEAR

Invasion yarn
Buchan
Anarchist

Ironic Noir
Amblor
Stateless
traitor

Greene
Lit comedy
Carter/
Unknown

Fleming
Blockbuster
SMERSH

Le Carre
Psych lit
USSR

Mccarry/Finder
Realism
Terrorist/
Dictator
SCHOOLBOY REBELLION

- Teen angst, resentful sons – *A Perfect Spy*
  + Young student recruited to be a spy
  + Vulnerable, no father, resenting Authority but wanting its approval
- Cornwell - Short spy career
  + Philby affair blows cover – disappointment in decision makers, unreliable
  + Boredom of real spying vs. Bond fiction
  + Psychological realism & social criticism
Whig history a way of writing about the past

Espouses liberalism – Faith in human reason to reshape society for the better, regardless of past history and tradition

Presents past as always moving towards a better future - inevitable progress of humankind

Greater freedom and enlightenment are evidenced in modern liberal democracy and constitutional monarchy – specifically British constitutional government, personal freedoms and scientific progress

Similar to Marxist theory of history, which presupposes that humanity moves through historical stages to reach a classless, egalitarian society – communism’s goal

See Herbert Butterfield, The Whig Interpretation of History (1931)
“TINKER TAILOR”: FILM SCENES


- Guinness’ George interviews Toby – to 3:10 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xG3NgDwjsE4

- Alfredson’s version, Control and Jim - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p-EwHC4Pt2k

- Alfredson’s ending - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8uwB73taLkI&list=PLcdnBYtVmomYIHmNhmWKvIPFfCZKaanTM&index=9
HIDDEN VS SURFACE LIFE - AVERAGE PERSON

REGULAR PERSON

- Appearance, behaviour, habits
- Surface self - actor displays to others
- Core self - inner mental life of actor
- Thoughts, feelings, beliefs

Life - Public - visible to others
Life - Private - hidden from others
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
HIDDEN VS SURFACE LIFE – 2X AGENT

DOUBLE AGENT

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
"Real" thoughts, feelings, beliefs
JOHN LE CARRÉ/DAVID CORNWELL

- 1931, Born, Dorset, England
- Educated at Sherborne School
- 1948-1949, Studies languages at University of Bern; begins junior MI6 work
- 1950, Joins Intelligence Corps in Austria interviewing Eastern refugees
JOHN LE CARRÉ

- 1952, Attends Oxford; spies on leftist groups for MI5
- 1954, Leaves Oxford; teaches, marries Alison Sharp
- 1956, Graduates from Oxford
- 1956-1958, Teaches at Eton
- 1958, Runs agents for MI5
JOHN LE CARRÉ

- 1960s, Works for MI6 in Germany under diplomatic cover
- 1961-1963, Publishes Call for the Dead, A Murder of Quality and Spy Who Came in From the Cold
- 1964, Leaves Service to write
- 1971-1972, Divorced; remarries
- 2011, Honorary doctorate, Oxford
"The Spy Who Came in From the Cold" in 1963... was manifestly the work of a strong and original popular novelist and was greeted with enthusiasm by... C. P. Snow, J. B. Priestley and Graham Greene (who called it "the best spy story I have ever read"). The book became one of the great international best sellers of the 1960's and was the first thriller to dominate the American best seller lists for an entire year. Le Carré was established as an accomplished, intelligent genre writer as far from Ian Fleming as Ross Macdonald is from Mickey Spillane."
SMILEY, THE LAST GENTLEMAN

‘Smiley is an anti-James Bond, an unheroic,... cuckolded secret agent who looks like a shy and miserable clerk.... In fact,... Smiley is the finest secret agent in the world; his pathetic demeanor conceals a brilliant mind and stout heart. Smiley is one of the last English gentlemen -- not a strutting parody of the clubman, like Bond, or a foppish and conniving political type, but an honorable... fellow who hasn't much hope... in the postwar world. He is the sorry witness of national decline, epitomized by the service: "The inspired amateurism of a handful of highly qualified, underpaid men had given way to the efficiency, bureaucracy and intrigue of a large Government department.””
“Le Carré's novels appear to dispel the romantic illusion of a strong, noble British Daddy... but is not George Smiley... a somewhat reduced and saddened but good old British Daddy all the same?....

[...]nadvertently Le Carré's novels reinforce the... liberalism they claim to condemn. They are nostalgic and given to self-pity; they offer... melodramatic or sentimental answers to political dilemmas.... Le Carré's books repeatedly express a horrified, morally outraged but essentially naive retreat from the full imagination of politics and society..... [I]n Le Carré's books everything works out.”
Rotten Establishment: Gentleman betrayer in the mole; forsaking English skeptical patriotism for soviet fanaticism.

Spying as Game: Necessary sacrifice of morality for Crown; part of the “delight” of the game; creating alternate identities.

Life of spying: Spying as betrayal of someone is a “metaphor for the human condition.”
**TINKER, TAILOR – THEMES**

- **Individual vs. Institution:**
  - British law protects individual against government/institutions.
  - Soviet system protects “People’s” institutions from exploitation by individuals (enemies of the state).
  - When English Establishment sacrifices individualism, loses legitimacy.
TINKER, TAILOR – SUBTHEMES

- **Betrayal vs. Loyalty**: personal (wife to husband) and political (minister to taxpayers)
- **Love vs. Loyalty**: What will we sacrifice (friends, countries) and for what/whom?
- **Fanatic vs. Rationalist**: Who is right, the soft West or the hard East?
- **America vs. Britain**: Exploitive, ignorant Capitalism or gentlemanly Empire?
TINKER, TAILOR – STYLE

- German bildungsroman → the story of personal growth, maturity; from innocence to experience.
- Detective story → detective as guide; finding out the Truth; interviewing witnesses for clues.
- Discontinuous events → moving backwards in time or to alternate stories at same time.
Heroes – Smiley as anti-hero, outsider, teacher; old generation of spy; Romantic loving standards that don’t exist.

Villains – Bill and his enablers (Alleline, Minister, Higher Circle); dedicated to ideas, not people; seeking “right aesthetic.”
TINKER, TAILOR – ELEMENTS

- **Helpers** – Guillam, Jim Prideaux, Connie Sachs: necessary victims in the game; loyal.

- **Love interest** – Anne a Romantic but realist (148); implied love between Jim and Bill; suspicious Guillam.

- **Chief** – Control: old, nameless, total command until removed.
- **Tech/Spycraft** – Meetings, drop boxes, fake identities, switching files, reviewing files, interviewing witnesses, reviewing film, taping interviews, back-up, following.

- **Abroad** – “Home”: Office/Circus or School; “real” domestic life among the “lotus-eaters” unreal.
TINKER, TAILOR – STRUCTURE

- Different 1st person points of view → different aspects of the same events.
- Stories within stories → reach and consequences of actions.
- Dialogue → states of mind, status, current beliefs “out there.”
- Moderate violence → focus on mysterious inner life of characters and Circus.
**TINKER, TAILOR – KEY SCENES**

1. *Context* → Jim the good spy (12-14); childhood hurts basis for spying (10, 17).

2. *Assignment* → Lacon’s offer (70-71, 75).

3. *Quest* → Establish Past: Alleline (142, 144); Smiley and Karla (212-13, 217-18); Jim’s story (291, 293, 303-304).

4. *Quest* → Present: Jim waits; Guillam spies on Circus; Smiley pieces it together (222, 231, 329).
5. *Quest* → Set trap: squeezing Esterhouse; Tarr’s fake cable; waiting for the mole (352-354); mole caught (359).

6. *Resolution* → Mole and mission wrapped up (365, 369-71); Jim’s personal justice or act of love? (374-75).

TINKER, TAILOR – STORY TYPE

- **Moral tale** – Criticism of establishment; the casual way people suffer for country.
- **Straight spy story** – Uncover mole, determine Witchcraft legitimacy.
- **Conspiracy story** – answer, Why does someone become a spy? A mole? Dysfunctional upbringing.
“Smiley has been so frequently and publicly cuckolded that people underestimate him; they don’t realize... he is, after the Prime Minister, possibly the most powerful man in England. He’s so mild and polite... that it takes even us, his intimates, quite a while to realize how driving and single-minded he is.... [H]e... [is] a kind of secular god of intelligence..., of what is relevant and what isn’t, what is worth knowing and what is trivial.”
"[R]eal le Carré junkies might feel it’s not the full meal, but I think it works very well. At first I lamented the loss of a lot of MI6 jargon – lamplighters (surveillance experts)…. But I think in a two-hour film it would have been confusing…. It’s a less cosy, English affair. It’s a little sexier, more contemporary, less nostalgic[,]... crueller. It’s still set in the Cold War.... but it has an edge.... le Carré... loved it. As he so eloquently put it, “We’ve turned the cow into an Oxo cube.”"
“The film… is a triumph…. It’s not the film of the book. It’s the film of the film, and… a work of art in its own right…. [W]hat he [Alfredson] made of it is wonderfully his own…. [I]f ‘poor Alec’ had witnessed Oldman’s performance, he would have been the first to give it a standing ovation.”