SERIES C: The Secret World of Espionage

Fridays, 1:00 – 2:45 pm, September 18 to November 27, 2020
No lecture Friday, November 13 for Reading Week

Innis College, Town Hall

An accomplished lecturer, historian and author, Dr. Courteaux received his Doctorate in History from the University of Paris-Sorbonne and was a faculty member at Royal Military College and at Ryerson University. He is a frequent lecturer for several later life learning programs in Toronto, including those at Glendon College and Ryerson University.

September 18: Decoding the secret language of espionage
How does one become fluent in a language that no one speaks? Explore some of the key words such as "covert operations", "HUMINT", "double-agent" or "deception" and a look at the earliest examples of espionage in history.

September 25: The rise of English intelligence in the age of Elizabeth I
During the reign of Elizabeth I, when she was fighting the Spanish armada, intelligence played a crucial role. As we shall discover, it was during the era of Elizabeth I that intelligence became linked to military expansion and power. Follow the rise of sir Francis Walsingham, Elizabeth I's "spymaster" and how he plotted the downfall of Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots.

October 2: The "King's secret": France, Great Britain and the American War of Independence
A look at the secret channels of King Louis XV and how French intelligence services contributed to the Franco-American victory over Great Britain in 1783 and the independence of the United States of America.

October 9: The French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars
For over 20 years, the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars pitted France against most of Europe and paved the way to an intense espionage activity. A look at Joseph Fouché, the French interior minister and master of intrigue, who relied so heavily on counterespionage and disinformation.

October 16: Prelude to the Great War
As the great European powers sought to carve out huge overseas empire (the "Great Game" in Central Asia comes to mind) and tensions heightened, the world of espionage became more structured and institutionalized. A tense and highly competitive period where covert operations played a key role.

October 23: The First World War
As the conflict dragged on, breaking the stalemate on the battlefield became a necessity. Intelligence services played a key role in bringing the U.S. into the war in 1917, tipping the balance in favor of the Allies. The "Great War" also offered new opportunities to women (Mata Hari, Edith Cavell...) and proved to be a significant shift from human intelligence to code breaking.
October 30: Covert operations and codes in the Second World War
Conspiracies, ruses, covert operations and deception ruled the day. New organizations emerged and code breaking, together with deception, became paramount. The perfect example: Operation Bodyguard, the most sophisticated deception the world has ever known.

November 6: Intelligence in the Cold War
Tensions between East and West quickly rose following the Second World War. The role of espionage in the dramatic race to build the atomic bomb, the rise of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and its increased role in international crises, including the Cuban missile Crisis and the Vietnam War. Did espionage play a role in the ultimate demise of the Soviet Union?

November 13: NO CLASS—Reading Week

November 20: Spies in fiction and films
The history of espionage in literature, film and other media. From propaganda films of the Second World War to Ian Fleming's James Bond and Graham Green or John Le Carré's heroes, a study of an intriguing world of fiction continues to fascinate us.

November 27: The future of espionage
From post-Cold War espionage and the changing of targets, the rise of radical Islamism and the massive intelligence failure that led to the 9-11 attacks to the explosion of cyberterrorism, the scandal of Wikileaks and foreign interference in elections, what is the future for espionage?