Course Aims:
- To explore the analysis of film from the perspective of the academic study of religion
- To gain knowledge about esotericism and secrecy in religious sub-traditions, with a special emphasis on Western Europe from the seventeenth through twentieth centuries
- To learn about English ceremonial magic, magical and fraternal lodges (especially the Order of the Golden Dawn and its offshoots), and African religion as transmitted to the Americas
- To gain basic literacy in modern Western occult symbols and practices
- To understand narratological strategies and challenges in novels and films about secret societies and religious esotericism
- To discuss the possible relationships between esoteric religious sub-cultures and their larger home traditions

Policies:
Administrative Stuff
Office Hours: Use them! I am available to discuss the course & your standing in it, drink tea, and talk ideas and literature. Talking with students is one of the best things about my job—this is not just a polite assurance. I love seeing you in office hours. In fact, Snoot requires you to come for tea some time before Spring Break.

Coming late: A few minutes into the class, we’ll close the door. If you’re running late and you find the door closed already, please leave it closed. Just head home, get ahead on the reading, and plan your final project if applicable. This isn’t punitive; it’s just too disruptive to have people trickling in. Opening the door will cause you to be attacked by giant ants from space. Because I care about you, I do not want this to happen.
Plagiarism and cheating are grave violations of the academic integrity policy of the California State University, Chico. This policy (EM 04-36) is posted at http://www.csuchico.edu/prs/EMs/EM04/em04_36.htm. We view plagiarism and cheating as serious offenses. The policy of the Department of Comparative Religion and Humanities is that anyone found to have blatantly cheated or plagiarized on an assignment will automatically fail the course and be referred to student judicial affairs for further disciplinary action.

If you have a documented disability that may require reasonable accommodations, please contact the Accessibility Resource Center (ARC) for coordination of your academic accommodations. DSS is located in Building E. Building E is adjacent to Meriam Library and Bell Memorial Union (BMU). The ARC phone number is 898-5959 V/TTY or FAX 898-4411. Visit the ARC website at http://www.csuchico.edu/arc/.

Required Books:

Required for purchase:
1. Ed Sikov, Film Studies. Available at Lyon Books (next to 7-11).
2. J.M. Greer, Inside a Magical Lodge: Group Ritual in the Western Tradition Available at Lyons
3. Wade Davis, The Serpent and the Rainbow Buy this online. Do it today.
4. Zilpha Keatley Snyder, The Egypt Game (Alternatively, you can read my copy, which is on reserve in the library.)

Some of our materials are sexually quite frank. If you are concerned about this, please talk with Mr. Clower and Snoot at the beginning of the semester.

GRADES

Snoot does all my grading. Here is his ingenious scheme:
To earn a C+ in this class requires that you:
  a. come to tea by Spring Break
  b. make a major contribution to every* Monday discussion

If you miss target (a), it will affect your grade. If you meet it, you earn a C and qualify to go for a B.

To earn a B- to B+ in this class requires that you:
  a. come to tea by Spring Break
  b. make a major contribution to every* Monday discussion;
  c. make satisfactory progress on reading and lodge duties.

If you miss target (b), it will weight your grade down. If you meet both targets, you earn a B and qualify to go for an A.

To earn an A in this class requires that you:
  a. earn a B (see above);
  b. and submit a 15-page paper OR create a secret society after spring break.

If your paper or project is lame, it will weight your grade down.

* Everyone gets one “freebie,” a class they can miss without reason or penalty. Beyond that, you may also miss one further session by prior arrangement, for which Snoot will give you an assignment. Anything beyond that will weight your grade down.

Class Schedule
Readings are to be completed before the day listed. This schedule is SO going to be revised! Therefore you MUST watch Blackboard Announcement for message from the Secret Chiefs of the Order.

Pre-Equinox

Before the Equinox, reading priorities will depend on whether you are a Praemonstrator or a Hierophant.

Wk. 1
Jan. 21 (W): Introduction. Please read “They Cracked This 250-Year-Old Code, and Found a Secret Society Inside” (web link on Blackboard) by Friday at 5pm. No quiz.

Wk. 2
Jan. 26 (M): Introduction to Film Studies, Introduction and Chaps. 1-2 (which just for this week is in a PDF on Blackboard). Quiz.
Jan. 28 (W): Hierophants, watch “Ceremonial Magic” documentary (in web links) and start reading *Inside a Magical Lodge* like your hair is on fire. Start with Chaps. 5-7
Praemonstrators, watch *all* documentaries.

**Wk. 3**
Feb. 2 (M): *Introduction to Film Studies*, Chaps. 4-6; “Myth of the Fisher King” (weblinks). **Quiz.**

Feb. 4 (W): **Lodge gathering** tonight for all Hierophants and Praemonstrators. Await coded instructions.

Hierophants, *Inside a Magical Lodge*. The faster you can finish and move on to the *Egypt Game* (on reserve), the better.

Praemonstrators, you should be researching madly on a topic or topics of your choice. Remember, this means more than garbage on the internet. That’s a fine starting place, but you need to read actual books. Let Frater L.N.P. know what topic(s) you’re looking at. He may have suggestions.

**Wk. 4**
Feb. 9 (M): *Introduction to Film Studies*, Chaps. 7, 9, 10. **Quiz.**


Praemonstrators, more research. Remember, this is virtually your only job until the Equinox, so we want you to have a ton to show for it.

**Wk. 5**
Feb. 16 (M): Special visit from Soror Anima et Carnis 5°=6°, Greatly Honored Emissary of the Secret Chiefs of the Order. We will meet in the lodge room, not the classroom. Afterward **Hierophants will stick around** to meet in lodge in 1°.

Feb. 18 (W): Hierophants, finish *Inside a Magical Lodge*.

Praemonstrators, more research! Consider starting *The Egypt Game* too.

Don’t worry, it’s a children’s book. It will hardly distract you from your research.

**Wk. 6**
Feb. 23 (M): Hierophants, read *The Egypt Game*.

Feb. 25 (W): Hierophants, start watching the documentaries you have not seen yet.

Praemonstrators, finish *The Egypt Game* (on reserve).

**Wk. 7**
Mar. 2 (M): “The Man Who Would Be King” (PDF)

Mar. 4 (W): Hierophants, watch documentaries.

Praemonstrators, research.
Wk. 8
Mar. 9 (M): Your homework tonight is to read the hell out of every interpretation you can find about *The Ninth Gate* (1999).


Equinox March 20. No class March 14-22.

Post-Equinox

Wk. 9
Mar. 23 (M): **Lodge meets in 1°, in lodge room.** Praemonstrators present their research and depart. Hierophants stick around afterward to rehearse.

Mar. 25 (W): **Everyone meets in lodge room. Initiation into 2°.**

Wk. 10

Apr. 1 (W): Cryptic workings of the Inner Order. Praemonstrators, read *Inside a Magical Lodge*, Chaps. 5-7; this is extremely important.

Wk. 11
Apr. 6 (M): *The Serpent and the Rainbow*, Chaps. 7-10. **Quiz on Blackboard.**

Apr. 8 (W): Cryptic workings of the Inner Order. Praemonstrators, please finish *Inside a Magical Lodge* (Chaps. 8-13).

Wk. 12

Apr. 15 (W): Cryptic workings of the Inner Order

Wk. 13
Apr. 20 (M): No more reading; all of your out-of-class energies are directed to the work of the Inner Order.

Apr. 22 (W): Cryptic workings of the Inner Order
**Wk. 14**
Apr. 27 (M): No more reading; all of your out-of-class energies are directed to the work of the Inner Order.

Apr. 29 (W): Cryptic workings of the Inner Order

**Wk. 15**
May 4 (M): No more reading; all of your out-of-class energies are directed to the work of the Inner Order.

May 6 (W): Cryptic workings of the Inner Order

Finals Week: Secret society initiation (for those going for an A) at a time to be arranged on Monday or Wednesday night.