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BUF 4700-0L68: Contemporary Issues in Fashion

Beauty Culture, Commerce & Innovation

Spring Semester, 2022

**Wednesdays 6:00 – 8:30pm, Online/Blackboard Collaborate
3 credit hours**

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Office Hours: T/TH 12-1pm

GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION: BUF 4700 is a senior-level seminar course. Students investigate a specialized topic or topics related to the fashion industry. Research, discussion, and weekly readings will culminate in a final paper and presentation. Themes vary each semester. This course is designed to provide an exploration of contemporary issues that designers, merchandisers, product developers, and consumers confront as they create, wear, and discard fashion. The course emphasizes, but is not limited to, topics such as sustainability, globalization, and ethics. The objective of the course is to develop a dialogue on practices in fashion with a sense of sustainability, ethics, and socially responsible manufacturing practices.

Prerequisite: SBS 3201; Pre- or co-requisite: One BUF 4000 level course

SPECIFIC COURSE OVERVIEW (Beauty Culture, Commerce & Innovation):

Beauty Culture, Commerce & Innovation is designed to provide students with a foundation for critical analysis of marketing and management issues in the beauty industry. This discipline of critical thinking will be achieved through surveying the development of the modern beauty industry and the corresponding social, economic, and cultural factors that have influenced, and been influenced by its evolution. Through readings, films, and guest lectures, it is intended that students will understand the broader context of the beauty industry's development, and gain a keener insight into how key beauty innovators have contributed to the marketing paradigms in place today. It is expected that with this foundation, students will be able to critically assess the broader landscape of requirements for innovation and evolution of the beauty industry as future industry professionals.

SPECIFIC COURSE DESCRIPTION (Beauty Culture, Commerce & Innovation):

Beauty Culture, Commerce & Innovation will present anthropological, cultural, and socio-economic perspectives of the development of the beauty industry from ancient times through the present day, with emphasis on the 20th century. Particular attention will be given to evolution of beauty culture, the adaptation of beauty products and ornamentation through different cultures, product and market innovations that changed beauty habits and rituals, and the contributions of other design arts to the packaging, merchandising, and product development of the beauty industry. Individual companies that shaped the modern industry and innovators in the beauty and fragrance industry will also be profiled.

SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES (Beauty Culture, Commerce & Innovation):

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate critical thinking about anthropological, socio-economic, and cultural factors shaping beauty attitudes throughout modern history and how this has influenced the development of different beauty product categories;
- Develop a critical understanding of the way in which key beauty innovators have successfully used socio-economic events and cultural trends as a source of brand strategy, innovation, and business growth;
- Develop a critical context of industry development that will enable a systematic search for new market, distribution, and product opportunities based on social, economic and cultural climates/trends;
- Understand and employ a more contextual approach to innovation and methods of development of product and marketing opportunities.

GENERAL LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Identify and explain current trends, and developments within the specialized topic (class discussion, assignments, research paper, presentation)
2. Communicate comprehensively about the specialized fashion topic (class discussion, research paper, presentation)
3. Recognize how this particular topic impacts the fashion business (class discussion, assignments, research paper, presentation)
4. Predict future possible directions of the topic area based on acquire knowledge (class discussion, research paper, presentation)
5. Write a major research paper on a selected topic (research paper)
6. Gain experience in a graduate-level style seminar course (class discussion, course assignments)

GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Demonstrate intellectual honesty and personal responsibility (class discussions, class demeanor, research paper, presentations)
2. Gather, interpret, evaluate and apply information discerningly from a variety of sources (research paper, presentation)
3. Demonstrate expanded cultural and global awareness and sensitivity (class discussions, research paper, presentation)

STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Online Synchronous Classes

Synchronous classes resemble traditional on-campus in-person classes in that students must all be (virtually) present at the same time. Though they are conducted virtually, synchronous classes meet in real-time. Students must, therefore, commit to scheduled class times and sign onto their virtual learning platforms on schedule. During these classes, students will engage with the instructor and each other with online lessons, presentations, breakout rooms, and/or discussions. Active participation is an essential part of the learning process and is required of all enrolled students. A student who, for any reason, engages in non-class related activities during scheduled class times forfeits and loses the benefit of the education being provided.

CUNY's Academic Integrity Policy: *Academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York.* Penalties for academic dishonesty include academic sanctions, such as failing or otherwise reduced grades, and/or disciplinary sanctions, including suspension, or expulsion. **Cheating** is the unauthorized use or attempted use of material, information, notes, study aids, devices or communication during an academic exercise. **Plagiarism** is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writings as your own. The following are some examples of plagiarism, but by no means is it an exhaustive list: **Internet Plagiarism** includes submitting downloaded term papers or parts of term papers, paraphrasing or copying information from the Internet without citing the source, and "cutting and pasting" from various sources without proper attribution.

For a more detailed explanation, you can find the full **Academic Integrity Policy** here:
http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/aboutus/docs/policies/CUNY_ACADEMIC_INTEGRITY_6-2011.pdf

Students are expected to participate in each class. Please read the college catalog statement on Attendance and Lateness (Spring 2019, p. 29). *Absence/lateness will affect your participation grade.*

CLASSROOM GUIDELINES:

- Debate, opinions, and participation are welcomed and encouraged! Respect for other classmates is essential.
- While taking notes on your computer is fine, please do not use your cell phones, tablets, or computer internet/email during class for personal/work use. It is distracting and disrespectful to other students, guest speakers, and me.
- Please make every effort to be present and on time, out of respect to the class. Consistent tardiness will impact your grade since you will miss important announcements, presentations, and discussions.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Jones, Geoffrey. (2010). *Beauty Imagined: A History of the Global Beauty Industry.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Yi, David. (2021). *Pretty Boys: Legendary Icons who Redefined Beauty and How to Glow Up, Too.* New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing.

Dabiri, Emma. (2020) *Twisted: The Tangled History of Black Hair Culture.* New York: Harper Perennial.

Supplemental Material:

Khanna, Nikki. (2020). *Whiter: Asian American Women on Skin Color and Colorism.* New York: New York University Press.

Sutton, Denise. (2012, 2009). *Globalizing Ideal Beauty: Women, Advertising, and the Power of Marketing.* New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Etcoff, Nancy. (2000). *Survival of the Prettiest: The Science of Beauty.* New York: Knopf.

Koehn, Nancy F., Anne Dwojeski, William Grundy, Erica Helms, and Katherine Miller. (March 2007). "Madam C.J. Walker: Entrepreneur, Leader, and Philanthropist." Harvard Business School Case 807-145, (Revised April 2011)

Haiken, Elizabeth. (1997). *Venus Envy: History of Cosmetic Surgery*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Scranton, Philip, ed. (2000). *Beauty and Business: Commerce, Gender and Culture in Modern America*. New York: Routledge.

Tedlow, Richard. (2003). *Giants of Enterprise: Seven Business Innovators and the Empires They Built*. New York: Harper Business.

Yacob, Shakira, et al. (2018). "Local Branding Strategies in Southeast Asian Islamic Cultures," *JATI – Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, vol 23 (1), 101-131. *article about Halal beauty products

ASSESSMENT (ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING):

10% Class Participation

10% Media Summaries and Presentations

40% Critical Argument Papers (2 papers - averaged)

30% Case Research Analysis Paper

10% Research Paper Presentation

CLASS PARTICIPATION GRADING

Class Participation will be graded on:

- Demonstrated reading of assigned material
- Attentive, vocal, and contributory participation
- Respect for other students' viewpoints
- Sharing of contemporary outside material germane to learnings
- Preparation and respect for in-class speakers
- Engagement in Blackboard discussion forums

Final Research Paper - Two Options:

1. A RESEARCH PAPER on a beauty topic of your own choosing

Papers are to be submitted on or before May 18th via Blackboard assignment link, each student will also present a four-minute presentation of their research to the class with slides. Research papers should be in APA style, and 10 pages in length (excluding images and bibliography).

2. CASE RESEARCH ANALYSIS: INCLUSIVITY IN BEAUTY

Beauty history is incomplete. Much of what has been written about beauty culture and the beauty industry to date has been *exclusive*, prioritizing Eurocentric and American developments and perspectives.

The goal of this case research analysis is to expand the canon of beauty history and scholarship to include groups, cultures, or customer segments who, from your point of view, have been underrepresented, undervalued, or not fully understood by the beauty industry. Areas can include, but are not limited to, gender, race, ethnicity, geographic region, religion, and sexual orientation.

Your paper should identify and analyze a company or entrepreneur that, through innovation or initiative, has broadened inclusivity of the beauty industry, either intentionally or not. Examples of case studies include the role of MAC Cosmetics and the transgender community, Chanel's Boy de Chanel makeup line, the growth of Halal beauty, or Venus Williams' Eleven launch. I encourage you to be broad in your subject consideration, given the need for more global examples in the beauty history canon.

Papers are to be submitted on or before May 18th via Blackboard assignment link; each student will also present a four-minute presentation of their research with slides. Creativity in selection is encouraged, however, please ensure there is enough material to support your research. Research can include primary and secondary source material, including digital archives, launch materials, interviews, and reviews. Papers should be 10 pages maximum, excluding bibliography.

Template for your case research analysis:

1. What was the strategic need, problem, or opportunity the company was trying to address?
2. What is the background of the company or entrepreneur, and why would they have been (or not) uniquely positioned to address the gap?
3. What was the proposed objective and innovation or communication?
4. What was the socio-economic or cultural context that supported this innovation or initiative in its success?
5. What has been the impact for key consumer groups, the company, and the industry as a whole? Were there alternative solutions that the company did not embrace, which could have been recommended?
6. How does this case analysis relate to discussions of modernity and how beauty dictates or evolves with modernity?

CRITICAL ARGUMENT PAPERS (2)

These papers are approximately three pages (double-spaced), presenting your opinion on an assigned question and demonstrating an understanding of the classroom material, and utilizing outside research to help support your opinion. A copy of the paper – in APA style - should be submitted (via Blackboard assignment link) on the night it is due. *A detailed question/prompt will be provided for each paper.*

Papers will be graded on:

- Clear, thoughtful analysis of topic
- Demonstration of independent thought
- Utilization of relevant course and outside source material
- Grammar, style, and spelling

Please refer to the grading rubric (last page of syllabus) for more details.

All papers MUST be typed. A page is the equivalent of a 2.0/double-spaced 8.5 x 11-inch paper with one-inch margins using 12-point type in Times New Roman font. Follow the page length guidelines for each assignment and number each page. All work **MUST** contain the student name(s), the course name and number, the date the assignment is submitted, and the name of the assignment. Please plan accordingly for all your assignment due dates. Effective writing helps clarify ideas and communicate those ideas to others. Be organized, clear, and succinct. Grammar, punctuation, style, and spelling count. Make use of City Tech's Writing Center for assistance.

MEDIA SUMMARIES/PRESENTATIONS

Throughout the course of the semester, all students will contribute an analysis of current news articles about the beauty industry—especially as it relates to global issues in beauty. Some possible sources include: *The Business of Fashion*, *Glossy*, *NYTimes*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Vogue*, *Vogue Business*, and *Fashion Snoops*, among many others.

Students will make a presentation to the class summarizing the article, and explain why this article is relevant to the course, and why it is interesting to them. Student presenters will also post a link to the article a Blackboard forum created for the media summary. This assignment must be also be typed and posted online in the Blackboard media summary forum. **Use APA style for the citation.**

BLACKBOARD DISCUSSION FORUM

Students' engagement in discussion forums on Blackboard will be part of their participation grade. The forums will center around course material. Students will read the assigned writing and then engage in a discussion on the forum. Prompts will be provided by Dr. Sutton.

Grading System: All grades will be based in proportion to the following scale:

A	=	93-100
A-	=	90-92.9
B+	=	87-89.9
B	=	83-86.9
B-	=	80-82.9
C+	=	77-79.9
C	=	70-76.9
D	=	60-69.9
F	=	59.9 and below

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COURSE OUTLINE

February 2

Welcome/Introductions and review of syllabus

Discussion Topic: “What is Beauty?” (includes in-class writing assignment)

February 9

Origins of Beauty Culture: Ancient Civilizations Through to the Industrial Age (mid-1800s)

Discussion Topic: The concept of beauty and beauty culture; its relation to disciplines such as biology, sociology, economics, politics, and gender throughout history.

Read and be prepared to discuss: *Survival of the Prettiest: The Science of Beauty*, Nancy Etcoff (excerpt on class shared Google Drive).

*an example of media summary/presentation, critical argument paper assignment discussion

February 16 – No Class

February 23

Student Media Summary/Presentation: Joyce Wu, Carla Ward

Discussion Topic: The concept of beauty and beauty culture; its relation to disciplines such as biology, sociology, economics, politics, and gender throughout history.

Read and be prepared to discuss: Intro, CH 1, 2, and 3, *Beauty Imagined; Pretty Boys*, Foreword and Introduction, pp 8-17 and pp 12-71.

March 2

Student Media Summary/Presentation: Ashley Triblet, Fani Tzikas

Discussion Topic: The concept of beauty and beauty culture; its relation to disciplines such as biology, sociology, economics, politics, and gender throughout history.

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Read and be prepared to discuss: Introduction, *Whiter: Asian American Women on Skin Color and Colorism* (excerpt on class shared Google Drive); *Twisted*, Intro and CH 1.

Assignment Due: Discussion Forum Assignment #1 (*Whiter*) Details posted on BB.

March 9

Student Media Summary/Presentation: [Sheila Rodriguez](#), [Hugo Rodriguez](#)

Session Topic: Beauty as Modernity: Belle Époque 1880s-WWI

Discussion Topic: Modernity and the Industrial Revolution's influence on the beauty industry, early beauty innovators—Elizabeth Arden, Helena Rubinstein, and Madam CJ Walker.

Viewing of the film (students will view prior to class and will be prepared to discuss): *The Powder and the Glory*.

Read and be prepared to discuss: Harvard Business School Case Study on Madame CJ Walker

March 16

Student Media Summary/Presentation: [Nargiza Rahmatilloeva](#), [Janine O'Donnell](#)

Continue Session Topic: Continued - Beauty as Modernity: Belle Époque 1880s-WWI

Read and be prepared to discuss: CH 4 *Beauty Imagined*; CH 2, *Twisted*; *Pretty Boys*, pp. 83-173.

Assignment Due: *Critical Argument Paper #1* (Details posted on BB)

March 23

Student Media Summary/Presentation: [Mercedes Potts](#), [Guadalupe Lopez Veliz](#), [Justin Lewis-Deans](#)

Session Topic: Massification of Beauty: 1920s-30s

Discussion Topic: The birth of advertising and the expansion of the beauty industry; the influence of the “new woman” on popular culture; emerging medical disciplines’ effect on beauty business and innovation.

Read and be prepared to discuss: CH 2, *Globalizing Ideal Beauty*; CH 3, *Twisted*; CH 3/*Venus Envy*, “Consumer Culture and the Inferiority Complex.

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March 30

Student Media Summary/Presentation: [Bibi Dhanraj, Shafana Begum, Nano Jikhaia](#)

Session Topic: The Beauty Boom: WWII – 1950s

Discussion Topic: The influence of politics on beauty culture and industry; the emergence of next generation entrepreneurs; the impact of television on the beauty business.

Read and be prepared to discuss: *Beauty and Business*, “Estee Lauder: Self-Definition and the Modern Cosmetics Market”; *Giants of Enterprise*, “Charles Revson”

Assignment Due: Discussion Forum Assignment #2 *Details to follow.*

April 6

Student Media Summary/Presentation: [Yessica He Wu, Jesenia Bravo](#)

Read and be prepared to discuss: *Students should be prepared to talk about their research paper topic – brainstorming session*

Guest Speaker: Shawn Sibley, anti-colorism activist, graduate student in Pan African Studies at University of Kentucky

Assignment Due: *Critical Argument Paper #2 (Details to follow)*

April 13

Student Media Summary/Presentation: [Ebony Francis, Carlos Contreras](#)

Session Topic: Continued - The Beauty Boom: WWII – 1950s

Read and be prepared to discuss: CH 5 and 6, *Beauty Imagined*, *Pretty Boys*, pp. 214-240

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April 20 – No Class/Spring Break

April 27

Student Media Summary/Presentation: [Thomas Baez](#), [Tiesha Fedna](#)

Session Topic: Beauty Consolidates and Redefines 1960s -1970s & Shifting Geographies of Fashion and Beauty

Discussion Topic: The influence of youth culture and activism on beauty culture and industry; the creation of beauty subcultures and segmentation within the beauty industry.

Read and be prepared to discuss: *Beauty and Business*: “Black is Profitable: The Commodification of the Afro, 1960-1975”; CH 4, *Twisted*. CH 7, *Beauty Imagined*.

May 4

Session Topic: Guest Speaker: Susy Sanchez, chemist at J. Lowenstein & Brothers, Brooklyn, NY

Assignment Due: Assignment #4 *Details to follow.*

May 11

Session Topic: Global vs. local in beauty culture and commerce and_Maturation of Beauty: Present and Future

Read and be prepared to discuss: Shakila Yacob, “Local Branding Strategies in Southeast Asian Islamic Cultures,” (Google Drive); CH 8, 9, and Conclusion, *Beauty Imagined*.

[Student research paper presentations begin](#)

May 18: Student Presentations

[Student research paper presentations](#) (cont.)

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Assignment Due: Final research paper due

**Schedule subject to change – always look for latest version on Blackboard*

**BUF 4700: Beauty Culture, Commerce & Innovation
(Contemporary Issues in Fashion)**

ASSIGNMENT RUBRIC

Category	Exceeds Expectations 93-100 A	Meets Expectations 90-92.9 A- / 87-89.9 B+	Approaches Expectations 83-86.9 B	Does Not Meet Expectations 82 or below B- or below
THOUGHTFUL ARGUMENT ANALYSIS AND INDEPENDENT THOUGHT	Demonstrates an exceptional, in-depth level of comprehension of the subject matter, including business and cultural aspects as it pertains to the assignment. Expertly identifies and explores key issues and viewpoints, with evidence of original and unexpected research and thought process. Exceptionally well-prepared analysis and judgment. Exceptional command of language, spelling, and grammar, with captivating, organized style.	Exhibits a strong understanding of the subject matter, including business and cultural aspects as it pertains to the assignment. Identifies and explores key issues and viewpoints, with evidence of solid research. Prepares an above-average paper that shows a thoughtful analysis. Strong aptitude for writing and language, with graduate-level writing and few spelling errors.	Shows a moderate level of understanding of the subject matter, but limited incorporation of multi-faceted elements of the question. Identifies and explores top-line issues and viewpoints, with mostly class-based evidence and a thought process lacking in full exploration. Repeats source texts with little analysis and engagement. Overly wordy or simplified, without attempts to edit or correct spelling prior to submission.	Fails to show an understanding of the question and subject matter. Issues and viewpoints are off-point. Analyses are superficial. Thought process and evidence are weak. Repeats source texts without analysis. Sub-par standard of writing, with excessive spelling and grammatical errors. Incomplete sentences and other mistakes that indicate paper was rushed and not edited prior to submission.
UTILIZATION OF RELEVANT COURSE CONTENT AND OUTSIDE SOURCE MATERIAL	Incorporates extensive course content and outside research to produce a highly original and creative paper.	Uses both course content and some outside research but does not integrate closely to push argument further in originality.	Provides minimal research, primarily from classroom readings, with sources irrelevant to paper. Reliance on superficial materials, with thoughts less grounded in fact and scratching the surface of the subject matter.	Rudimentary research, with limited to no sourcing from classroom or outside materials. Guesswork and platitudes dominate paper.