

**20th Century Dress and Culture**  
**New York City College of Technology, Humanities Department**  
ARTH 1204 OL20 25700 / Fully Online Synchronous Course

Online Meeting Dates: Wednesdays, 6:00-8:30 pm EST, via Zoom

Instructor: Laura Palmer

Email: LaPalmer@citytech.cuny.edu

Virtual Office Hours: Wednesdays, 5:00-6:00 and by appointment

**Course Description:** This course is a survey of fashion history, from the end of the 19th century to the present. We'll study the effect of an historical period on the clothing of the time through analysis of its economics, politics, religion and culture. Issues affecting the industry will be explored through readings, videos, discussions and we'll also connect with guest speakers who work in the local fashion industry.

In this course, we'll closely examine the ways in which style and construction of fashionable dress are situated within, and influenced by, a historical and cultural context. Understanding the dynamic relationships between fashion and culture is integral to a full knowledge of twentieth century history and can lay the groundwork for how fashionable dress may continue to be developed in the twenty-first century.

Students are introduced to analytic techniques that evaluate how culture, economics, politics, and technologies influenced fashion designs and dress practices. This course also introduces important terminology integral to the fashion industry, and required to discuss all facets of its history. Using clothing, or garments represented in photographs and film, each student will trace how historical, cultural, technological and social factors influenced the development of particular styles.

**Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to understand and analyze historical sources related to dress, use fashion vocabulary in context, recognize the contributions of key designers, identify what cultural, social, and technological developments impacted fashion designs and dress practices in each time period covered, articulate how dress and body image shape human behavior and interaction, and analyze the ways that fashion consumption impacts daily life. Students will also improve their research, writing, reading, speaking, presentation and critical thinking skills.

**Class Overview**

Each class session will be held synchronously over Zoom. Students are expected to be present, with their video on unless they are experiencing technical difficulties, and actively engaged in class discussions via audio and chat functions.

**Week 1 - August 26**

Introduction to Fashion History

read for homework: *Fashion History: A Global View*, Part 1

**Week 2 - September 2**

The Impact of the Industrial Revolution: Fashion 1850-1900

read for homework: *Fashion Since 1900*, Chapter 1 & *Dress, Fashion & Technology*, Chapter 9

**Week 3 - September 9**

The Rise of the Designer: 1900-1913

read for homework: *Fashion Since 1900*, Chapter 2 & *Dress, Fashion & Technology*, Chapter 12

**Week 4 - September 16**

World War I and the New Simplicity of the 1920s

read for homework: *Fashion Since 1900*, Chapter 3 & *Dress, Fashion & Technology*, Chapter 11  
*Garment Analysis Paper Due*

**Week 5 - Wednesday September 23**

Recession and Escapism: 1930-1938

read for homework: *Fashion Since 1900*, Chapter 4 & "The Zoot Suit" by Alford in *Fashion Theory*

**Week 6 - Wednesday September 30**

World War II and Rationed Fashion: 1939-1945

read for homework: *Fashion Since 1900*, Chapter 5 & *Dress, Fashion & Technology*, Chapter 13  
*Film Assignment Due*

**Week 7 - Wednesday October 7**

Post-War Fashion and the New Look: 1946-1956

**Week 8 - Wednesday October 21**

Mid-Term Exam

read for homework: *Fashion Since 1900*, Chapter 6 & *Dress, Fashion & Technology*, Chapter 10

**Week 9 - Wednesday October 28**

Youth Culture and the Swinging Sixties: 1957-1967

read for homework: *Fashion Since 1900*, Chapter 7 & *The Peacock Revolution*, Chapter 4

**Week 10 - Wednesday November 4**

The Sexual Politics of the Seventies: 1968-1975

read for homework: *Fashion Since 1900*, Chapter 8 & *Fashion and Everyday Life*, Chapter 6

**Week 11 - Wednesday November 11**

Subcultural Styles: 1976-1988

read for homework: *Fashion Since 1900*, Chapter 9 & *When Clothes Become Fashion*, Chapter 7

**Week 12 - Wednesday November 18**

Grunge and Globalism: 1989-1999

read for homework: *Fashion Since 1900*, Chapter 10

**Week 13 - Wednesday December 2**

Fashion after 2000

*Design Assignment Due*

**Week 14 - Wednesday December 9**

Fashion Futures - Guest Lecture and Final Presentations

*Research Paper Due*

**Week 15 - Wednesday December 16**

Final Exam

**Textbooks**

The required textbook for this course is *Fashion Since 1900*, New Edition by Valerie Mendes and Amy de la Haye (London: Thames & Hudson, 2010). The book is widely available at online retailers. All other readings for the course will be uploaded to Blackboard. The other books that we will be reading from are *Fashion History: A Global View* by Linda Welters and Abby Lillethun (New York: Bloomsbury, 2018); *Fashion and Technology: From Prehistory to the Present* by Phyllis Tortora (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015); *The Peacock Revolution: American Masculine Identity and Dress in the Sixties and Seventies* by Daniel Delis Hill (New York: Bloomsbury, 2018); *Fashion and Everyday Life* by Hazel Clark and Cheryl Buckley (New York: Bloomsbury, 2017); and *When Clothes Become Fashion: Design and Innovation Systems* by Ingrid Loschek (New York: Bloomsbury, 2009). In addition, articles and other short excerpts will be uploaded to Blackboard.

**Supplementary Reading**

In addition to the assigned texts, supplementary readings and other materials will be posted on Blackboard. These optional materials will provide additional detail or different perspectives on course concepts. Current news about the fashion industry that is relevant to our course will also be posted as supplementary reading.

**Guest Speakers**

We will host guest speakers throughout the course who will join our Zoom sessions to lecture on special topics related to fashion history and culture, or to share their experiences working within the fashion industry. These speakers will be announced prior to the start of class, and students will be able to ask questions and make comments following their presentations.

**Class Participation**

Students are expected to attend all scheduled class sessions, and be fully present and engaged during each session. During class sessions, students will engage in activities that demonstrate participation, such as contributing to class discussions and small groups discussions with comments and questions, writing short reading responses, and engaging in class activities like polls and quizzes.

## **Assignments**

*Research Paper:* The final assignment will be a 5-7 page research paper where you will choose a primary historical source, such as a garment, photograph, illustration, or painting, and use secondary sources and your own analysis to discuss the social, cultural and historical context that influenced the fashionable dress you've selected. You will present your research to the class.

*Film Response Paper:* This will be a group project: students will work with 4-5 others. Each group will be asked to watch a film assigned by the instructor and write a 4-5 page response paper about the role of fashion in the film, in socio-historical context. Students will present a brief, 3-5 minute synopsis of their analysis to the class.

*Garment Analysis Paper:* In this assignment, you will be analyzing a piece of clothing using the research methodologies of a fashion historian. What does this garment tell you about the time in which it was made, who made it, and the person who may have worn it? Write a 1-2 page analysis paper speculating what a researcher might learn from this garment if it was a historical source.

*Design Assignment:* In this assignment, you will design a garment of your own for this historical moment. What socio-cultural factors and technological advances will make your piece of clothing wearable now? How will you consider sustainability? Does the pandemic play a role in your design? Submit a short artist statement that addresses how you considered social and cultural context in your clothing design. Note that artistic ability will not be assessed.

## **Tests**

There will be a mid-term and a final exam which will assess your knowledge of vocabulary, style of silhouette, and socio-historical context for the time periods covered in the course. Short quizzes may also be given, to prepare students for the type of questions they can expect on the mid-term and final exams.

## **Assessment**

For each assignment given, a detailed prompt, including instructions on how to submit the assignment, and a grading rubric, will be provided. Exams will be given during our scheduled online sessions.

Class Participation: 20%

Research Paper: 20%

Mid-term Exam: 20%

Final Exam: 20%

Film Response Paper: 10%

Garment Analysis Paper: 5%

Design Assignment: 5%

## **Extra Credit**

Throughout the course, students will be recommended additional, optional educational experiences that they can attend or engage in, for example, other related lectures and museum visits. If students choose to attend, they may write a 2-page response paper on these recommended activities for extra credit. Extra credit can count for up to 10% of the final grade, 5% per paper.

**Technical Requirements**

Each student will need access to a computer with at least 256 MB RAM and an Internet connection via a 56k modem or, ideally, the college T1 line. Students should have access to and be able to use a Chrome, Firefox, Safari, or Internet Explorer browser. A complete list of versions supported is found [here](#). Students will need their City Tech email account and should be comfortable using it. All communication for the course will be sent to and should come from your CUNY email address. Students will need to be able to use the Zoom platform for our class sessions, and the Blackboard system to access class materials. Contact the [CUNY Tech Resource Help Desk](#) if you are having connection or technical issues.

If you are having technical issues during a class session, please do your best to let the instructor know during that class session.

**Student Accessibility**

Any student who needs accommodations for this course should be in touch with the [Center for Student Accessibility](#).

**Academic Integrity**

As scholars and researchers, we uphold the standards of academic integrity, and do not tolerate plagiarism of any kind. 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: Copying another person's actual words without the use of quotation marks and footnotes attributing the words to their source, presenting another person's ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledging the source, using information that is not common knowledge without acknowledging the source, and failing to acknowledge collaborators on assignments. Any instances of plagiarism will be brought to the administration for appropriate action.