

**BUF 4700-OL70: Contemporary Issues in Fashion**  
**Spring Semester 2023**  
**Asynchronous Course**

**Beauty Culture, Commerce & Innovation**  
3 credit hours

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**Office Hours: Mon/Wed 10-11am and by appt.**

**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 20<sup>th</sup> 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:

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- 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:**

**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](http://www.citytech.cuny.edu/aboutus/docs/policies/CUNY_ACADEMIC_INTEGRITY_6-2011.pdf)

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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.*** \**This does not apply to asynchronous courses.*

### **ASYNCHRONOUS CLASSROOM GUIDELINES:**

- Stay up-to-date on the course readings and assignments. This is an **asynchronous course**, which demands more discipline, organization, and motivation.
- Debate, opinions, and participation are welcomed and encouraged on the discussion board! Respect for other classmates is essential.
- Contact Dr. Sutton if you are experiencing difficulties, have questions about the material, have questions about an assignment or the syllabus, and/or cannot finish an assignment by the due dates (needs to be discussed *before* the due date).

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Adhikari, Sadichchha. (2021). *Beautiful People: Women of Color Decentralizing Innovation in Beauty*. New Deal Press.

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.

### **Excerpts provided via Blackboard:**

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

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

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.

Scarpellini, Emanuela. (2023). "Transnational Beauty: Avon International and the Case of Italy," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 28:1, 113-142.

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.

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

### **ASSESSMENT (ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING):**

20% Class Participation (see below)

40% Critical Argument Papers; Response Paper (3 papers - averaged)

40% Final Research Paper

Class Participation will be graded on:

- Demonstrated reading of assigned material
- Contributory participation online
- Respect for other students' viewpoints
- Sharing of contemporary outside material germane to learnings
- Engagement/writing assignments in Blackboard discussion forums

### **Final Research Paper Options:**

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

Papers are to be submitted on or before May 22<sup>nd</sup> via Blackboard assignment link. Research papers should be in APA style, and 10 pages in length (excluding images and bibliography).

**OR**

**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 22<sup>nd</sup> via Blackboard assignment link. 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?

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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 argument 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 day it is due. A detailed question/prompt will be provided for each critical argument paper.

### **REFLECTION PAPER (1)**

A reflection paper requires you to write your opinion on a topic, supporting it with your observations and personal experiences. As opposed to presenting the reader with the views of other academics and writers, in this paper, you get an opportunity to write your point of view. It is YOUR opinion, and it is your job to express your thoughts in a manner that will be understandable and clear. Reflection papers should have an academic tone yet be personal and subjective. In the reflection paper for this course, analyze and reflect upon the film *Toxic Beauty* (details on the assignment link in Blackboard).

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 (p. 11) 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's name, 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.

### **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. Writing 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

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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

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

\*all assignments are fully detailed on Blackboard (BB) in the assignment links

### **Week One**

Welcome and review of syllabus

**\*View Two Videos on BB: one is a review of the syllabus and the other is a lecture**

Topic: “What is Beauty?”

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

### **Week Two**

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

Read: *Survival of the Prettiest: The Science of Beauty*, Nancy Etcoff (excerpt on BB); *Pretty Boys*, Foreword and Introduction, pp. 8-17 and pp. 12-71.

***Assignment Due Feb. 6th: Discussion Forum Assignment #1 (What is Beauty?)***

**\*View Video Lecture on BB**

### **Week Three**

NO CLASSES

### **Week Four**

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

Read: Intro, CH 1, 2, and 3, *Beauty Imagined*.

***Assignment Due Feb. 19th: Discussion Forum Assignment #2***

### **Week Five**

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

Read: Introduction, *Whiter: Asian American Women on Skin Color and Colorism* (excerpt on class shared Google Drive); *Beautiful People*, pp. 1-24.

View: Bloomberg News Video on Rhianna's Fenty Beauty Brand: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bt0xUDIrBag>

**Assignment Due Feb 27th: Discussion Forum Assignment #3** (*Whiter & Beautiful People*)

### **Week Six**

Beauty as Modernity: Belle Époque 1880s-WWI

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

Read: Harvard Business School Case Study on Madame CJ Walker

View: *The Powder and the Glory* - This film is available at Amazon Prime here: <https://www.amazon.com/Powder-Glory-Jane-Alexander/dp/B082DQTG8V>

**\*View Video Lecture on BB**

### **Week Seven**

Continued - Beauty as Modernity: Belle Époque 1880s-WWI

Read: *Beautiful People*, pp. 27-53; *Pretty Boys*, pp. 83-125.

**Assignment Due March 13th: Critical Argument Paper #1** (details in assignment link on BB)

### **Week Eight**

Massification of Beauty: 1920s-30s

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: CH 2, *Globalizing Ideal Beauty*; (BB) CH 4, *Beauty Imagined*.

**\*View Video Lecture on BB**



## Week Nine

Massification of Beauty: 1920s-30s

Read: CH 3/*Venus Envy*, “Consumer Culture and the Inferiority Complex.” (BB)

**Assignment Due March 27th:** Discussion Forum Assignment #4 (*Venus Envy*)

## Week Ten

The Beauty Boom: WWII – 1950s

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: CH 5 and 6, *Beauty Imagined, Pretty Boys*, pp. 176-213.

**Assignment Due April 3rd:** Critical Argument Paper #2 (details in assignment link on BB)

**\*View Video Lecture on BB**

## Week Eleven: SPRING BREAK (April 5 – 13)

## Week Twelve

The Beauty Boom: WWII – 1950s

Read: *Beauty and Business*, “Estee Lauder: Self-Definition and the Modern Cosmetics Market”; *Giants of Enterprise*, “Charles Revson” (BB)

## Week Thirteen

Beauty Consolidates and Redefines 1960s -1970s

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: *Beauty and Business*: “Black is Profitable: The Commodification of the Afro, 1960-1975” (BB); *Beautiful People*, pp. 55-85.

**Assignment Due April 24th:** Discussion Forum Writing Assignment #5 (*Black is Profitable & Beautiful People*)

**\*View Video Lecture on BB**

### **Week Fourteen**

Beauty Consolidates and Redefines 1960s -1970s

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: *Beautiful People*, pp. 85-105.

View the film *Toxic Beauty*: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9541486/>

***Assignment Due May 1st: Response Writing Assignment*** (details in assignment link in BB)

### **Week Fifteen**

Shifting Geographies of Fashion and Beauty

Read: Shakila Yacob, “Local Branding Strategies in Southeast Asian Islamic Cultures”; (BB); Emanuela Scarpellini. “Transnational Beauty: Avon International and the Case of Italy”; *Pretty Boys*, pp. 176-213.

### **Week Sixteen**

Maturation of Beauty: Present and Future

Read: *Beautiful People*, pp. 107-151; *Pretty Boys*, pp. 214-240.

***Assignment Due May 15th: Discussion Forum Writing Assignment #6*** (The Future of Beauty – Emerging Trends?)

### **Week Seventeen**

***Assignment Due May 22nd***: Final research paper due

**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
<b>THOUGHTFUL ARGUMENT ANALYSIS AND INDEPENDENT THOUGHT</b>	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.
<b>UTILIZATION OF RELEVANT COURSE CONTENT AND OUTSIDE SOURCE MATERIAL</b>	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.