

20th Century Dress and Culture
New York City College of Technology, Humanities Department
ARTH 1204 OL46-34536 / Fully Online Synchronous Course

Online Meeting Dates: Wednesdays 6:00-8:80 pm EST, via Zoom

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Virtual Office Hours: Wednesdays, 5:00-6:00 pm EST 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 and actively engaged in class discussions via audio and chat functions, and are encouraged to turn their video on unless they are experiencing technical difficulties.

Week 1 - Wednesday February 3

Introduction to Fashion History

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

Week 2 - Wednesday February 10

The Impact of the Industrial Revolution: Fashion 1850-1900

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

Week 3 - Wednesday February 17

The Rise of the Designer: 1900-1913

read for homework: *Fashion Since 1900*, Chapter 2 & excerpts from *The Dress Detective*

Week 4 - Wednesday February 24

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 March 3

Recession and Escapism: 1930-1938

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

Week 6 - Wednesday March 10

World War II and Rationed Fashion: 1939-1945

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

Week 7 - Wednesday March 17

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

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

Week 8 - Wednesday March 24

Youth Culture and the Swinging Sixties: 1957-1967

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

Week 9 - Wednesday April 7

The Sexual Politics of the Seventies: 1968-1975

read for homework: *Fashion Since 1900*, Chapter 8 & *Fashion*, Chapter 10

Week 10 - Wednesday April 14

Subcultural Styles: 1976-1988

read for homework: *Fashion Since 1900*, Chapter 9 & *Dress, Fashion & Technology*, Chapter 12
Annotated bibliography for research paper due

Week 11 - Wednesday April 21

Grunge and Globalism: 1989-1999

read for homework: *Fashion Since 1900*, Chapter 10 & *Fashion*, Chapter 7

Week 12 - Wednesday April 28

Fashion after 2000

Design Assignment Due

Week 13 - Wednesday May 5

Fashion Futures - Guest Lecture and Discussion

Week 14 - Wednesday May 12

Final Presentations

Research Paper Due

Week 15 - Wednesday May 19

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. The recommended text is *Fashion and Technology: From Prehistory to the Present* by Phyllis Tortora (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015). 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* by Christopher Breward (Oxford University Press, 2003); *The Peacock Revolution: American Masculine Identity and Dress in the Sixties and Seventies* by Daniel Delis Hill (New York: Bloomsbury, 2018); and *The Dress Detective* by Ingrid Mida and Alexandra Kim (New York: Bloomsbury, 2015).

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. These readings may be discussed during class sessions as well.

Guest Speakers

We will host guests during this course who will join our sessions to lecture on topics related to fashion history and culture, or their experiences working within the fashion industry. 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. Selecting an appropriate primary source and submitting an annotated bibliography with your academic sources is a part of the research paper assignment and the overall grade.

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 from your own wardrobe using the research methodologies of a fashion historian, according to the outline we will discuss in class. You'll be considering what this garment could tell a researcher about the time in which it was made, who made it, the person who may have worn it, and what it may have symbolized or signaled. Write a 2-3 page analysis paper outlining your analysis and 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.

Projects & Tests

There will be a mid-term project 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. For the mid-term project, students will complete an individual essay on a central course topic, and write a glossary entry on a fashion term to share with the class. The final exam will consist of essays, short answers, multiple choice and other question forms that will review material about the designers, technological developments and styles of silhouettes that we cover, in their socio-historical context. Short quizzes may also be given, to prepare students for the type of questions they can expect on the final exam.

Assessment

For each assignment given, a detailed prompt, including instructions on how to submit the assignment, and a grading rubric, will be provided on Blackboard. Students must meet the requirements of the prompt in order to receive credit for the assignment. The final exam will be given synchronously during our scheduled online session.

Class Participation: 20%

Research Paper: 25%

Mid-term Project: 10%

Film Response Paper: 10%

Garment Analysis Paper: 10%

Design Assignment: 5%

Final Exam: 15%

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.

Prerequisites & 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. Students should have a working camera and microphone, to be turned on at instructor request.

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 disability 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.