

COMM 396: Fashion, Media and Culture

Fall 2013

Professor: Alison Trope, Ph.D.
Office hours: T/TH 2-3 pm and by appointment
ASC 321F, trope@usc.edu

ASC 204
TTH 12:30-1:50

Teaching Assistants: Diana Lee <lee.diana@usc.edu>, Laura Alberti <lalberti@usc.edu>

Course Description:

This course will examine fashion as a form of communication and culture. Using a diverse range of readings drawn from cultural studies, we will examine what fashion means and how it has been valued through history, popular culture and media institutions, while also exploring some of the economic and social issues that revolve around fashion's industrial production. The course will therefore situate fashion both in terms of its production and consumption, addressing its role in relation to identity and body politics (gender, race, sexuality, class), art and status, nationhood and the global economy, celebrity and Hollywood culture, youth cultures and subversive practices.

Guest speakers will periodically come to class. Please note that you are expected to attend and be fully engaged during these class sessions.

Course Readings:

All course readings will be available on Blackboard.

Course Requirements and Attendance:

Students are required to do all of the reading, attend all classes, complete all assignments, and participate fully in class discussion. Attendance is mandatory and will be taken each class meeting. Attendance grade may be affected by your promptness and level of attention during class lecture. You are allowed two absences without explanation, after which there is a deduction off the final grade for each unexcused absence.

Personal computers and wireless Internet are a key part of today's technological culture, but they also can distract you from the class discussion and dampen participation. You may bring your laptops to class for note-taking, but please refrain from browsing the internet, updating your Facebook profile, playing games, instant messaging, shopping, tweeting etc. Although you may think you are being discreet, most of the time students engaging in such behavior give themselves away (through inappropriate facial expressions, lack of eye contact, out of sync typing, etc.). **Use of computer in the classroom is a privilege. If you abuse this privilege, you will be marked absent for that class period and laptops may be banned from the classroom.**

You will receive details about each assignment/exam separately. **All assignments must be completed and handed in on time to avoid a grade reduction. If you are unable to turn in an assignment due to illness or a personal emergency, you must provide written documentation that will allow you to be excused, or discuss your situation with me in a timely manner. Do not wait until the end of the semester to sort things out. Remember: this is YOUR responsibility.**

Assignments and Grading:

You are responsible for the material covered in class and in the reading. You will be evaluated on the following:

- 1) the level of your engagement with the class materials (as demonstrated in your written work and class participation)
- 2) your capacity to explain your ideas and analysis in articulate and well-written forms
- 3) your ability to creatively explore the theories and methodologies of the class

All of your work will be graded on two primary evaluative scales:

- 1) how well it demonstrates an understanding of the theories and methodologies of the class
- 2) how well it articulates and structures its argument

The final course grade will be based on the following distribution:

Class participation	10%
Blog postings/reports (3 total)	15%
Paper 1 (6-8 pages)	25%
Paper 2 (8-10 pages)	25%
Final Examination	25%

You must complete ALL of these assignments in order to pass the class. **Failure to complete one of them will result not only in an F for that assignment, but a failing grade in the course.**

Course Grading Policy:

Grades will be assigned as follows:

A	outstanding, thoughtful and insightful work and analysis, showing an ability to think beyond the basic course material
A-/B+	above average work, demonstrating effort and keen understanding of conceptual ideas
B/B-	average work, needs improvement on ideas and argument
C+/C	shows little effort, lacks clarity and/or argument
C- and below	fulfilling the bare minimum and showing little understanding of the material

Each assignment will be worth 100 points and will be converted to a percentage score depending upon the weight assigned to each. Your percentage scores on the assignments will be totaled and translated to a letter grade as per the scale shown below:

A+	= 97-100		
A	= 96-94	C	= 76-74
A-	= 93-90	C-	= 73-70
B+	= 89-87	D+	= 69-67
B	= 86-84	D	= 66-64
B-	= 83-80	D-	= 63-60
C+	= 79-77	F	= 59-00

If you have concerns regarding a grade on a given assignment, you must first wait 24 hours (cooling off period) before appealing it in writing, stating the reasons why you feel the grade is inaccurate. All concerns should be addressed within 10 days of receiving the graded assignment. After that, no appeals will be accepted for review and the grade will be considered final.

Academic Integrity:

When taking this class, you enter into a contract that states that all the work you are turning in is your own and no one else's, and that you have not turned in any work for which you have received credit in another class. Do not take this policy lightly!

The School of Communication is committed to the highest standards of academic excellence and ethical support. It endorses and acts on the SCampus policies and procedures detailed in the section titled "University Sanction Guidelines." These policies, procedures and guidelines will be assiduously upheld. They protect your rights, as well as those of the faculty. It is particularly important that you be aware of and avoid plagiarism, cheating on exams, submitting a paper to more than one professor, or submitting a paper authored by anyone other than yourself. Violations of this policy will result in a failing grade in the course, and be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. If you have any doubts about any of these practices, you must confer with the professor.

Disability

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.- 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213)740-0776.

ESL Students

Please inform me as soon as possible if you require special accommodations based on your understanding of the English language.

TENTATIVE WEEKLY SCHEDULE (open to revision)

.....

UNDERSTANDING FASHION: WHY FASHION MATTERS

Week 1 **Reading Fashion and Fashioned Bodies**

August 27: Course Introduction

August 29: Joanne Enstwistle, "The Dressed Body" pp. 93-104
Anne Hollander, excerpts from *Sex and Suits: The Evolution of Modern Dress*, pp. 14-29

Week 2 **Fashion and Identity**

September 3: Joanne Enstwistle, "Fashion and Identity" pp. 112-139

September 5: Georg Simmel, "Fashion," pp. 541-558

Week3 **Fashion and History**

September 10: Elizabeth Wilson, "The History of Fashion" pp. 16-46

September 12: Christopher Breward, "Early Twentieth Century: Clothing the Masses" pp. 183-221

Blog Post #1 DUE

September 13: **Last day to drop without receiving a "W"**

FASION AND IMAGE PRODUCTION

Week 4 **Au Courant: From Vogue to style.com**

September 17: Hilary Radner, "On the Move: Fashion Photography and the Single Girl in the 1960s" pp.128-142

Richard Martin, "Style from Paris, Reality from America: Fashion in Life Magazine, 1947–1963," pp. 51-55

September 19: Anna König, "*Sex and the City*: A Fashion Editor's Dream?" 130-143

Robin Ghivan, "Why Fashion Keeps Tripping Over Race: The Paint-Chip Problem Revisited"

Week 5**Fashion Icons**

- September 24: Valerie Steele, "Chanel in Context" pp. 118-126
Rachel Moseley, "Trousers and Tiaras: Audrey Hepburn, a Woman's Star"
Kathleen Craughwell-Varda, "Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis" pp. 287-292
- September 26: Douglas Kellner, "Madonna, Fashion and Identity" pp.159-182
Jennifer Craik, "Supermodels and Super Bodies" pp. 282-286

Week 6**Costume Design: Fashion and Hollywood**

- October 1: Deborah Nadoolman Landis and Pat Kirkham, "Designing Hollywood: Women Costume and Production Designers" pp. 247-268
Excerpts from Deborah Nadoolman, excerpts from *Costume Design*
- October 3: Pamela Church Gibson, "'The Rough with the Smooth': Male Costuming in Contemporary Hollywood"

FASHIONING GENDER, SEXUALITY AND THE BODY**Week 7****Men's Fashion: The Dandy, the "Metrosexual" and the Non-Fashion Guy**

- October 8: Christopher Breward, "The Dandy Laid Bare: Embodying Practices and Fashion for Men" pp. 221-238.
- October 10: Tim Edwards, "Private Investigations: Interpretations on the Theme of the New Man" and "The Marketing of Masculinities." pp. 39-71
Malcolm Gladwell, "Listening to Khakis"

PAPER 1 DUE**Week 8****Hypersexuality and Androgyny**

- October 15: Fred Davis, "Ambivalences of Gender: Boys Will Be Boys, Girls Will Be Boys," pp. 31-54.
- October 17: Reka C.V. Buckley and Stephen Gundle, "Flash Trash: Gianni Versace and the Theory and Practice of Glamour" in pp. 331-348.

Week 9 **The Body as Work of Art: Fashion and Spectacle**

October 22: Fiona Anderson, "Museums as Fashion Media," 371-389.
Natalie Kahn, "Catwalk Politics" pp. 114-127

October 24: Caroline Evans, "Fashion at the Edge" pp. 111-117.
Daniel Wojcik, "Punk and Neo-Tribal Body Art" pp. 302-304.

Blog Post #2 DUE

THE FASHION INDUSTRY

Week 10 **Economies of Fashion**

October 29: Joanne Enstwistle, "The Fashion Industry" pp. 208-236.

October 31: Katy Chapman, "Inside Design: A Look at the Method Behind the Madness"
pp. 352-356
John Andrews, "Business Sense: It Takes a Lot More than Individual Flair to
Stay at the Top" pp. 357-360.

Week 11 **Traveling Fashion: Local and Global Markets**

November 5: Peter Jackson, "Local Consumption Cultures in a Globalizing World" pp. 212-
215
Pietra Rivoli, excerpts from *The Travels of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy*
Richard McIntyre and Yngve Ramstad, "Not Only Nike's Doing It: 'Sweating'
and the Contemporary Labor Market" pp. 219-224

November 7: Norma M. Rantisi, N.M. "The Designer in the City and The City in the
Designer," *Cultural Industries and The Production of Culture*, edited by
Dominic Power and Allen J. Scott. (London: Routledge Press, 2004), pp.
91-109.
David Gilbert, "World Cities of Fashion" pp. 179-184

Week 12 **Consuming Fashion**

- November 12: Louise Crewe and Alison Goodrum, "Fashioning New Forms of Consumption: The Case of Paul Smith," pp. 25-48.
- November 14: Sharon Zukin, "B. Altman, Ralph Lauren, and the Death of the Leisure Class," 113-144.
Nathaniel Dafydd Beard, "The Branding of Ethical Fashion and the Consumer: A Luxury Niche or Mass Market Reality"
- Optional: Christopher M. Moore and Grete Birtwistle, "The Burberry Business Model: Creating an International Luxury Fashion Brand," 412-422

BOTTOM UP: FASHION AND MASS CULTURE

Week 13 **Street Style and Style Politics**

- November 19: Dick Hebdige, "Subculture: The Unnatural Break" pp. 152-158
Stuart Cosgrove, "The Zoot Suit and Style Warfare" pp. 342-353
- November 21: Robin M. Chandler and Nuri Chandler-Smith "Flava in Ya Gear: Transgressive Politics and the Influence of Hip-Hop on Contemporary Fashion," pp. 229-254
Yuniya Kawamura, "Japanese Street Fashion: The Urge to Be Seen and To Be Heard" pp. 343-345

Blog Post #3 DUE

Week 14 **Thrifting and DIY Fashion**

- November 26: Angela McRobbie, "Second-hand Dresses and the Ragmarket"
Tadashi Suzuki and Joel Best, "The Emergence of Trendsetters for Fashions and Fads: Kogaru in 1990s Japan," 61-79.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Week 15

Mass Fashion and Fashioning Lifestyle

December 3:

Sarah Berry, "Be Our Brand: Fashion and Personalization on the Web,"
pp. 49-60.

Julia Fein Azoulay, "Born in the USA: The Growing Premium-Denim Market
Goes Global" pp. 378-382

December 5:

Course Conclusion

Paper 2 DUE

December 7-10

Study Days

December 17:

**FINAL EXAMINATION, 11-1pm
ASC 204 (unless otherwise indicated)**