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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.

The course is divided into five key areas. The first section, "Why Fashion Matters" explores the line between fashion and dress, and historically frames both as key facets in the historical construction of identity. The second section of the class considers the role image production and media play in communicating fashion's meanings and significance. In the third section of the class, "Fashioning Bodies," we will see the way fashion plays a role in how we understand gendered, raced, sexualized bodies, among other facets of identity and politics. "Economies of Fashion" explores various facets and changes in fashion production that impact design and creativity, labor, the environment, as well as consumption. Finally, the last section of the class looks at the street (physical as well as virtual) as a key site for creative expression and lifestyle, allowing you to circle back and consider fashion's role in your own lives and in the city and streets of Los Angeles.

As of Fall 2018, COMM 396 fulfills USC's GE-A requirement.

Course Objectives

This course situates fashion as a culture industry, and asks students to

- **Identify** fashion's formal attributes and creative inspirations (drawing from fine art, politics, popular culture, etc.)
- **Develop** critical thinking and analytic skills to understand fashion's social and cultural meanings in a variety of contexts (from everyday streetwear to magazines to runway shows to shop windows to museum exhibits to blogging and social media)
- **Interpret** the relationship between fashion and identity, considering rules and conventions of dress, alongside controversies.

- **Contextualize and assess** fashion's role as a global industry and economy that has implications on labor and the environment.
- **Engage** fashion's role in Los Angeles by visiting sites and hearing from invited guests.

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. Simply showing up to class does not guarantee a perfect attendance/participation score. Other factors, including promptness and level of attention during class lecture and guest speaker visits, will impact your grade. You are allowed two total absences without explanation, after which there is a deduction off the final grade for each unexcused absence. If circumstances prevent you from attending class, the instructor and/or TA should be informed by email or phone. Participation grades will start at 85—the threshold—and then move up or down based on the factors above.

Note-taking should be done by hand unless otherwise instructed or announced. Use of laptops and other devices will not be permitted during lecture, when we will discuss readings and course content.

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 (4 total)	20%
Paper 1 (5-7 pages)	25%
Paper 2 (5-7 pages)	25%
Final Examination	20%

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 grade of A+ (97-100) <i>may</i> be given to <i>individual</i> assignments in <i>rare</i> instances where expectations are exceeded
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 (only possible on individual assignments)
A	=	96-94
A-	=	93-90
B+	=	89-87
B	=	86-84
B-	=	83-80
C+	=	79-77
C	=	76-74
C-	=	73-70
D+	=	69-67
D	=	66-64
D-	=	63-60
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.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

a. Academic Conduct

Plagiarism

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

b. Support Systems

Counseling and Mental Health - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call
studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call
suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention and Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press "0" after hours – 24/7 on call

studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)- (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298

equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following *protected characteristics*: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations. The university also prohibits sexual assault, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual misconduct, intimate partner violence, stalking, malicious dissuasion, retaliation, and violation of interim measures.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

usc-advocate.symlicity.com/care_report

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity | Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776

dsp.usc.edu

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710

uscса.usc.edu

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101

diversity.usc.edu

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Annenberg Student Success Fund

<https://annenberg.usc.edu/current-students/resources/additional-funding-resources>

The Annenberg Student Success Fund is a donor-funded financial aid account available to USC Annenberg undergraduate and graduate students for non-tuition expenses related to extra- and co-curricular programs and opportunities.

Breaking Bread Program [undergraduate students only]

<https://undergrad.usc.edu/faculty/bread/>

The Breaking Bread Program is designed to provide individual undergraduate students with an opportunity to meet and have scholarly discussions with faculty members outside of the normal classroom setting. Through this program, students and faculty enjoy good company and great conversation by literally “breaking bread” over a meal together and USC will pick up the tab! Your meal event can take place anywhere outside of the normal classroom setting. Your venue can be a restaurant or eatery on or off-campus.

TENTATIVE WEEKLY SCHEDULE (open to revision)

UNDERSTANDING FASHION: WHY FASHION MATTERS

Week 1

Reading Fashion

January 14:

Course Introduction

January 16:

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

January 21:

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

January 23:

Monica Tilton, "Fashionable Personae: Self-identity and Enactments of Fashion Narratives in Fashion Blogs" pp. 202-218
Listen to one of the podcasts here: "[Articles of Interest](#)" (from 99% invisible)

Week 3

Fashion and History

January 28:

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

January 30:

Christopher Breward, "Early Twentieth Century: Clothing the Masses" pp. 183-221
Susan Kaiser, et. al. "Luxury and Its Opposites"
Derek Thompson, "[Everything You Wear Is Athleisure](#)" The Atlantic 10/28/18

Blog Post #1 (Identity) DUE

FASHION AND IMAGE PRODUCTION

Week 4

Au Courant: From Fashion Mags to Instagram

February 4:

Richard Martin, "Style from Paris, Reality from America: Fashion in Life Magazine, 1947–1963," pp. 51-55
Pamela Church Gibson, "The Changing Face(s) of the Fashion Magazine and the New Media Landscape" pp. 125-138

February 6:

Rosie Findlay, "The Short, Passionate, and Close-Knit History of Personal Style Blogs" pp. 158-173
Kyra Hunting, "Fashioning Feminine Fandom: Fashion Blogging and the Expression of Creative and Mediated Identity"
OPTIONAL: Brooke Erin Duffy, Elizabeth Wissinger, "Mythologies of Creative Work in the Social Media Age: Fun, Free, and "Just Being Me"

Week 5

Crossing Over: Icons, Celebrity, & Branding

February 11:

Pamela Church Gibson, "Designers and Models Become Brands" pp. 183-205
["The Glass Runway: Gender Equality in the Fashion Industry"](#) (5/23/18)

February 13:

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. 287-29
Nicole Phelps, "[Beyonce is the CFDA's Fashion Icon, Read Her Speech Here](#)"
Vogue, 6/6/16

Week 6

Fashion on Display

February 18:

Valerie Steele, "Museum Quality: The Rise of the Fashion Exhibition" pp. 8-29
Natalie Kahn, "Catwalk Politics" pp. 114-127
OPTIONAL: Grant Johnson, "Citing the Sun: Marc Jacobs, Olafur Eliasson, and the Fashion Show" pp. 316-328

February 20:

Sharon Zukin, "B. Altman, Ralph Lauren, and the Death of the Leisure Class," 113-144.
Megan Garber, "[How Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's Plain Black Jacket Became a Controversy](#)" (The Atlantic, 11/16/18)
Rebecca Jennings, "[Lady Gaga pegged her powerful Women in Hollywood speech to her suit.](#)" Vox, 10/16/18

FASHIONING BODIES

Week 7

Fashion's Race Relations

- February 25: Janice Cheddie, "The Politics of the First: The Emergence of the Black Model in the Civil Rights Era" pp. 61-77.
Elizabeth Wissinger, "Black, Black, Black—How Race Is Read"
Robin Ghivan, "[Seriously, Prada, What Were You Thinking?: Why the Fashion Industry Keeps Bumbling Into Racist Imagery](#)"
- February 27: Minh-Ha Pham, "The Racial and Gendered Job Performances of Fashion Blogger Poses"
Lauren Michele Jackson, "[The Devil Wears Cornrows](#)"

PAPER 1 DUE

Week 8

Men's Fashion: The Dandy, the "Metrosexual" and the Non-Fashion Guy

- March 3: Christopher Breward, "The Dandy Laid Bare: Embodying Practices and Fashion for Men" pp. 221-238
Joshua Rothman, "It's Raining Menswear," *The New Yorker*, 11/12/15
- March 5: Malcolm Gladwell, "Listening to Khakis" *The New Yorker* 1997
Cam Wolf, "[The New Uniform of White Supremacy](#)" *GQ* 2017
Ben Barry, "[What Happens When Men Don't Conform to Masculine Clothing Norms at Work?](#)" *Harvard Business Review*, 8/31/17

Week 9

Fashion at the Edge: The Body As Spectacle

- March 10: Fred Davis, "Ambivalences of Gender: Boys Will Be Boys, Girls Will Be Boys," pp. 31-54
TBD
- GUEST: [Behnaz Farahi](#)**
- March 12: Caroline Evans, "Fashion at the Edge" pp. 111-117
Natalie Khan, "Fashion as Mythology: Considering the Legacy of Alexander McQueen" pp. 261-269

Blog Post #2 (Designer) DUE

-----SPRING BREAK-----

ECONOMIES OF FASHION

Week 10

Distilling the Fashion Industry

March 24:

Joanne Entwistle, "The Fashion Industry" pp. 208-236
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

March 26:

Adam Briggs, "Capitalism's Favorite Child: The Production of Fashion" pp.
186-195
Noam Scheiber, "[High Skilled White Collar Work? Machines Can Do That, Too](#)"
NYT, 7/7/18
["Who's Killing the Soul of Sneaker Culture"](#)

Week 11

Eco Fashion, Ethical Fashion, & Sustainability

March 31:

Sarah Scaturro, "Eco-Tech Fashion: Rationalizing Technology in Sustainable
Fashion" pp. 470-487
[Big Closets Small Planet podcast](#) (Linda Greer)

Screening: *The True Cost*

April 2:

Clare D'Souza "Marketing Challenges for an Eco-fashion Brand: A Case
Study" pp. 68-77
Nathaniel Dafydd Beard, "The Branding of Ethical Fashion and the
Consumer: A Luxury Niche or Mass Market Reality" pp. 448-465
Benjamin Leszcz, "[The Life Changing Magic of Making-Do](#)"
OPTIONAL LISTEN: Livia Firth—"Is Sustainable Fashion for Privileged Only?"

Week 12

Traveling Fashion: Global & Local Markets, Fast & Slow

April 7:

Peter Jackson, "Local Consumption Cultures in a Globalizing World" pp. 212-
215
Louise Crewe, "Tailoring and Tweed: Mapping the Spaces of Slow Fashion"
pp. 200-212

Blog #3 (Fashion Forensics) DUE

- April 9: Norma M. Rantisi, N.M. "The Designer in the City and The City in the Designer," pp. 91-109.
David Gilbert, "A New World Order? Fashion and Its Capitals in the 21st Century" pp. 11-28
Matthew Schneier, "[Los Angeles Moves to Paris](#)"

RETHINKING HIERARCHIES & TRENDS

Week 13 **Street Style and Style Politics**

- April 14: Brent Luvaas, "On the Street: A Conceptual History of Street Style Photography"
Stuart Cosgrove, "The Zoot Suit and Style Warfare" pp. 342-353
- April 16: 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
["Sneakers Have Always Been Political Shoes"](#) The Atlantic

Blog Post #4 (Street Style) DUE

Week 14 **Thrifting, DIY, and Subcultural Fashion**

- April 21: Tadashi Suzuki and Joel Best, "The Emergence of Trendsetters for Fashions and Fads: Kogaru in 1990s Japan," pp. 61-79.
Theresa Winge, "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep Dressed in Street Fashions? Investigating Virtually Constructed Fashion Subcultures"
- April 23: Angela McRobbie, "Second-hand Dresses and the Ragmarket"
Rachel Lifter, "Fashioning Indie: The Consequences of A Subculture and The Emergence of 'Stylish' Femininity" pp. 175-184

Week 15 **Tech Trends: Fashioning the Body via Technologies**

- April 28 Sarah Berry, "Be Our Brand: Fashion and Personalization on the Web," pp. 49-60.
Elizabeth Wissinger, "Blood, Sweat, and Tears: Navigating Creepy versus Cool in Wearable Biotech"

April 30: Course Conclusion

Paper 2 DUE

May 2-5: Study Days

Tuesday, May 12 FINAL EXAMINATION, 11am-1pm, ASC 204 (unless otherwise indicated)