

USC School of

Historic Costume for the Theatre - Theatre 233

Dramatic Arts

Fall 2024

Session 001

Section 62795R

3 Units

Location is SOS B41

Tuesday - Thursday 2:00-3:20pm

Instructor: Howard Schmitt

schmitt@usc.edu

up to 72 hours timeline via email

Office PED 114 F, 213 740-1243

Office Hours: arrange via email,
can be done via ZOOM

SYLLABUS

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class is a historical survey of the theory and practice used for producing stage costumes. It both surveys the artifacts (images) of selected world cultures and presents examples of actual costumes that have been constructed for stage productions.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Its goal is to familiarize students with stage costuming practices as well as sources of historical research for understanding and visualizing dramatic literature.

COURSE OVERVIEW

In general, we will be looking at fashions that correspond to the body of literature performed on stage and screen. Costume History as a field evolves in response to the evolving stories that are being told in theatrical productions. (Note that the history of fashion as taught for the theatre, will vary somewhat from how the history of fashion is taught in Fashion Schools or in Art History courses.)

METHODOLOGY

This is a presentation/lecture course that emphasizes cultural and visual literacy. It presents images of clothing from cavemen to current fashion icons or celebrities. Often celebrities from entertainment and politics influence contemporary fashion as well as have influenced fashion throughout the ages. The mention of celebrity's influence on fashion brings up another point. Examining that a celebrity from either the world of entertainment or politics has influenced fashion can be a very separate issue from examining their character or how their actions affected others. There are many historical figures who have influenced fashion, whose ethics and conduct are quite questionable. Likewise, some historical events that have influenced fashion can involve quite a bit of social upheaval, revolution, war, public executions, and violence. For example, there are at least five different fashion "looks" associated with the course of the French Revolution. Certain images related to the history of fashion can be disturbing or for mature audiences.

We will look at both the pictorial record of clothing as well as stage reproductions of period costumes. We will discuss the aesthetics and the wearing of stage costumes.

We are concerned with chronology, trends, and influences in apparel and how costumes delineate character, define social structure and create ambiance in performance. Many historical figures and fine artists are important to the history of dress. Fashion, like art, does not exist in a void; it reflects political, economic, and cultural factors. Quite often the dominant political class will set fashion, but at other times, counter-culture will influence fashion. We will also discuss clothing as it reflects a society's idea of gender roles and celebrity. Nomenclature may, at times, provide insights into attitudes about style and fashion.

Files of most, but not all, of the images that we will look at in class are found on MyDrive. It can be beneficial to page through the images before class as a way of familiarizing with the scope of the presentation ahead of time.

Required Materials: TEXTBOOK

James Laver and Amy de la Hoya, Costume and Fashion (fifth edition)
paperback ISBN-13: 978-0500204122

The text is available from Amazon.com and has also been ordered at the bookstore.

The textbook is intended to be read before class lectures to help put the images presented during class into perspective. A few pictures from the textbook will appear on the exam.

Optional Materials: SUPPLEMENTARY READING

Edward Maeder, ed, Hollywood and History, Costume Design in Film

Deborah Landis, ed, Hollywood Costume

These books provide examples of the relationship between visual research and costume design in the entertainment industry. They also serve as excellent examples of critical writing on costuming practices. Both books are useful guides to style and methodology in writing papers for this course. They can be found at the USC library or the costume shop. Copies are available on amazon.com --sometimes at discounted prices.

Handouts will be provided when needed.

EXAMS AND ASSIGNMENTS

This course will have an introductory written assignment, a midterm exam, an analytical paper, and a final exam. Papers are expected to be turned in by the start of class on the due date. Exams must be taken on the scheduled date and time (unless a request is made on your behalf from the Office of Student Accessibility Services, a program director, SDA student services, an athletic coach, or the Office of Religious Life).

Preliminary Writing Assignment (3 - 5 pages)

Due Thursday Sept 19

In order to have written material graded prior to the mid-semester warning date, this course will have an introductory written assignment. The purpose of this assignment is for the instructor to assess students' writing prior to the analytical paper. The objective here is to write about fashion with the same seriousness of purpose that you would write a paper for a critical studies class or a history class. Often this paper serves as exercise in applying the ideas and approaches we use for discussion in class to your paper.

Options for this assignment:

View an exhibit at a local museum.

There is a current exhibit at the California African American Museum which can relate to the teaching of the history of fashion: *We Are Not Strangers Here: African American Histories in Rural California*.

For those of you with an interest in the Fine Arts, certain exhibits at the Getty Villa, the Getty Center and Los Angeles County Museum of Art can be good to write on.

For those of you who might be interested in the relationship between politics and fashion (a relationship that has existed since time immemorial), the clothing exhibits at the Nixon and Reagan Presidential Libraries would also work well for this assignment.

The idea behind the paper is to discuss a handful of pictures of clothing or related items similar to the way we discuss images in class.

Additional topics are available which do not require a visit to a place of public gathering:

Unisex &/or non-binary fashion: for much of the history of fashion dress has been gendered, and there have been two options. At certain times in history the "gendered" fashions share more in common than in other eras. Sometimes there are unisex garments. And some eras have a foppish or effeminate look for certain fashionable young men. Women in pants, with or without "gendered" associations has been another subject. In recent years non-binary fashion is emerging to a greater degree than in earlier times. Drag perhaps has never been more popular both as entertainment or as personal expression.

Non-western fashion in contemporary life: While some non-Western styles are sold in fashion shops in cities such as Los Angeles, how often are these styles worn in daily life? Here at USC we buy them for theatrical productions, but how often do these styles appear in street fashion. A similar topic can be to explore the same idea with retro fashions. (You may want to take photos to illustrate your discussion points.)

Celebrity fashion (either from entertainment or politics): We will talk in class a fair amount about the role of celebrities in popularizing fashions. Pick a celebrity and discuss how they have influenced contemporary dress. (While fashion seems to have always been cognizant of celebrity, do note that those who have influenced fashion are not necessarily role models for society in their personal or public lives. At times there have been figures who have been influential in fashion who do not exactly have any semblance of a moral compass.)

This assignment will be worth 110 points with an additional 15 points for promptness. (Late assignments will not receive the full 15 points for promptness.) Points will be given for methodology (50), presentation of visual support (15), citations (15) (if needed) and style (15) and personal voice (15). [Discuss "mistakes of CO-mission" and "mistakes of O-mission".] Watch out for faux analogies. Be careful about setting up overstretched analogies. I am often flexible on points as certain topics suggest certain approaches. For instance, if your topic does not need citations, there will be no loss of points—what's important is to be able to decide what is needed for what you've chosen to write about. While three pages is the minimum length, it is important to correlate the length of your paper to your personal writing style. Those who write in terse prose don't need as many pages as those who write in longer styles.

Submit a short proposal if you would prefer to write on a different topic of your own choosing.

Midterm Tuesday Oct .17

The midterm exam will cover class lectures, topics from the handouts as well as a few examples from the textbook. Both historical pictures and stage reproductions of costumes will be on the exam. Some questions will cover broad topics such as time and place and some questions will be specific and detailed. The midterm exam must be taken at the scheduled time. The exam is short answer questions and is closed notes.

The midterm will have between 275 and 325 points.

Some students find creating study guides for themselves beneficial, though a written study guide for the course as a whole has not been useful.

Analytical Paper (5 - 7 pages)

Due Tuesday Nov. 26

This paper is an analysis of the use of period style in costume design found in film. Choose one of the nine film combinations listed below:

Ben Hur

(1925, 1959, the recent ones --2010, 2016-- are much harder to write about)

Cyrano De Bergerac

(1950, 1990 in French)

Les Liaisons Dangereuses

(1959 in French, Dangerous Liaisons 1988, 2003 in French, 2012 in Mandarin, Valmont 1989, Cruel Intentions 1999)

Henry IV

(Chimes at Midnight 1965, My Own Private Idaho 1991, The Hollow Crown 2012)

Henry VIII

(The Private Life of Henry VIII 1933, A Man For All Seasons 1966, Anne of the Thousand Days 1969, The Six Wives of HENRY VIII 1971, The Other Boleyn Girl 2003, The Spanish Princess 2019)

Richard III

(1908, 1912, 1955, 1995, or The White Queen 2013 TV miniseries)

Harriet Tubman

(Go Down Moses 1963 TV, A Woman Called Moses 1978 TV miniseries, Harriet 2019)

Mary, Queen of Scots

(1936, 1971, 2018)

Marie Antoinette

(1938, 2006)

Madame Bovary

(1947 in Spanish, 1949, 1975, 1991 in French, 2000)

[The European 1969 version is questionable to write about for a costume class; the 2014 version may be harder to write about than the earlier ones.]

King George III and Queen Charlotte

(The Madness of King George 1994, Queen Charlotte: a Bridgerton Story 2023)

The Tarzan or Bamba movies from the mid 20th century vs Disney's live action The Jungle Book 2016.

Choose two versions, made in different decades, of the title you have selected.

Discuss the visual approach of the film. Compare and contrast the style of the two films. Analyze relevant choices made in clothing (and hairstyles and make-up if desired). If it's an area of your personal interest, comment on the relationship between the costumes and the settings or lighting approach. You may want to observe how the prevailing aesthetic of the decade in which the film was made is apparent in the visual images in the film. (Books such as Hollywood and History will help in understanding a decade's prevailing aesthetic.) It may be interesting to note why a particular story or piece of literature appeals to a particular generation. Feel free to note when the designers intentionally (or *unintentionally*) departed from "historical accuracy", and examine why this decision would have been made. Be careful about referring to design choices as mistakes, what is important is to understand why historical dress is adapted for film costuming.

This is not a paper about value judgments. *No one really cares whether or not you liked the films.* Rather, look at how the design and the use of history affect the viewer's perception of the literature. One goal is to understand each film in terms of its own merits; it is not desirable to conclude that one version is better than another. The visual style may bring out certain themes of the story while de-emphasizing other themes. Examine these issues through the comparison of two visions of the same piece. Be careful when comparing a black and white film to a color one. Your discussion should reflect an understanding of the aesthetics of each medium, NOT a preference for one of them. Also, be careful not to slam older versions of a story, the object of this exercise is to understand the

conventions and aesthetics of the film. One thing to remember is that the reason almost any 50+ year old film is available today, is because it has some notable merits or popularity. (Mediocre art is not usually preserved.) Reading the essays in Edward Maeder's Hollywood & History should help define the issues and approach for an analytical paper on costume design. This paper is often a four-step project. 1. Watch the first film and take notes. 2. Watch the second film and take notes. 3. Research and rough draft. 4. Final draft.

The paper will have 220 points, with an additional 20 points for promptness.

Final Exam Thursday, Dec. 12 2 - 4 p.m.

The exam will cover class lectures, discussions, textbook, assignments & handouts. It will be cumulative, comprehensive, and rigorous. The final must be taken at the scheduled time.

The exam will have about 400 points.

Student Scheduling Conflicts

No student is permitted to omit or take early a final examination and no instructor is authorized to permit a student to do so.

Students should plan in advance to avoid scheduling conflicts in their final examinations. If a student is scheduled for two final examinations at the same time, the student should request to take one of the examinations on a different day or time. If a student is scheduled for more than two final examinations in one day, the student may request to take one of the exams on a different day or time. In either situation the student must contact the professors involved no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled examination date and request an accommodation. If an accommodation cannot be arranged, the student should contact the office of Academic Programs at academic.programs@usc.edu.

CRITERIA FOR GRADING

Students doing work of C- and below on the midterm, will receive mid-semester warnings.

Class attendance is expected. Participation will be recognized.

The points accumulated on each exercise (assignments and exams) will be totaled at the end of the semester. Grades will be given, based on the sum of the accumulated points with allowances for the highs, lows, mean, median, and standard deviation for each exercise. When assignments are returned, we will discuss the letter approximate grading ranges associated with point totals on that exercise.

Extra credit is not a part of this course.

Grading Breakdown

Preliminary Writing Assignment	12.5%
Midterm	25%
Analytical Paper	25%
Final Exam	37.5%

COMMUNICATION

I want you to feel comfortable asking questions and giving me feedback on the course. If you have written questions or comments, please email me (schmitt@usc.edu).

Grading Timeline

Papers will be returned after all students turn in the assignment. Late assignments from one student will delay the return of the assignment for all students.

The Midterm will be returned after Fall Recess provided all students have taken it.

Sharing of course materials outside of the learning environment

USC policy prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

SCampus Section 11.12(B)

Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (See Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).

Course evaluation

Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester university-wide. It is an important review of students' experience in the class. You should expect to receive an email update once the system has launched to provide your feedback on this course. In addition, you are always welcome to connect with me as the instructor to offer any feedback on the course.

SDA PRODUCTIONS, ISPS, AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

SDA productions, ISPs and Extracurricular Activities* will not excuse you from any class work. There will be no exceptions made for absences in class, missed or delayed assignments, homework or lack of class participation resulting from your involvement in any of the above. Your grade will reflect your work in this class, independent from work in any other class or activity.

*Activities that have been officially sanctioned by the larger university (such as marching band, song girls, or varsity sports) are exempt. You must submit official documentation to your professor regarding your participation in an event prior to your absence.

AI

SDA's syllabus template has a section on incorporating AI into courses, but none of the three options seems in line with this course. Likewise, USC's Center for Excellence in Teaching sent a 7-page memo on incorporating AI into courses. Here are two points from it.

Outlining or getting started on an assignment:

- Students can ask the AI to generate three different versions of an outline for an essay, then choose one that aligns best with the assignment and their goals and begin editing.

Critical thinking:

- Have students use AI tools to compare and contrast their own personal writing with what is generated. Have them identify what they, or the AI tool, missed and evaluate the various approaches they could have taken.

However, I have the feeling AI may have very limited applications in assignments for this class. I have the feeling that AI would be far more useful on a history paper about naval battles in the Pacific during WWII than it would be for a costume history paper. And within the costume history field, I think AI would be more adept at a paper for an art history course or a fashion design class.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Integrity:

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, compromises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Accommodation is expected to be requested two weeks before an exam.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion + Intimacy in Theater Consent Culture Statement:

Through our pluralistic approach of diverse pedagogies, methodologies, ideologies, and modalities of artistic expression, we invite(engage) and challenge students to expand their breadth and depth of knowledge, complexity, and range of the human experience. Even though we nurture, guide, and challenge our students to embrace the unknown or unfamiliar and step outside of their comfort zones through storytelling/art, we aim to practice effective strategies and offer tools to students mindful of their physical, psychological, social, and emotional wellbeing. In alignment with professional and industry standards, we will integrate core principles and techniques of Intimacy in Theater and Building Cultures of Affirmative Consent. This will provide agency, offer resources and support to the teachers, students, directors, and staff to establish healthy boundaries of consent when working on material that is physically, intimately, or emotionally charged content in both the classroom and production.

SDA Student Support & Reporting Form:

To facilitate a supportive environment of accountability, SDA has created an internal system of reporting for students to address issues/concerns and to offer feedback or suggestions for improvement. This mechanism provides a pathway for reporting and offering feedback without fear of retaliation or judgment. Any submission filed through this form will be reviewed and processed accordingly through SDA Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

To file a report, please visit: <https://bit.ly/SDAstudentreporting>

Support Systems:
Support Systems:

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

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

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

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.

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

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

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

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

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

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

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) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

Catalogue Description

THTR 233 Historic Costume for the Theatre (3, Fa) Historical survey, theory, and practice in construction of costume, emphasis on period and style.

Course Schedule: A Weekly Breakdown

week 1

Aug 27 Overview, Prehistory
(read Laver, chapter one)

Aug 29 Mesopotamian – Biblical - Egyptian

week 2 (read Laver, chapter two)

Sept 3 Egyptian

Sept 5 Crete, Greece

week 3 (read Laver, chapter three)

Sept 10 Roman, Byzantine

Sept 12 Dark Ages, Romanesque, Vikings

week 4

Sept 17 Gothic

Sept 19 Gothic **Preliminary Writing Assignment Due**

week 5 (read Laver, chapter four)

Sept 24 Early Italian Renaissance

Sept 26 Renaissance, Tudor

week 6

Oct 1 Elizabethan

Oct 3 Jacobean - Cavalier

week 7 (read Laver, chapter five and six)

Oct 8 Cavalier – Pilgrim
Oct 10 Fall Recess – no class

week 8

Oct 15 Restoration
Oct 17 **MIDTERM EXAM**

week 9 (read Laver, chapter seven)

Oct 22 18th Century
Oct 24 French Revolution - Napoleon -Empire

week 10 (read Laver, chapter eight)

Oct 29 19th Century
Oct 31 Late 19th Century

week 11 (read Laver, chapter nine)

Nov 5 19th Century - Russian styles
Nov 7 Turn-of-the-Century, teens

week 12 (read Laver, chapter ten)

Nov 12 20th Century - catalogues - uniforms - formalwear
Nov 14 20th Century - artists - photographers- fashion illustration

week 13 (read Laver, chapter eleven)

Nov 19 20th Century - First Ladies and Presidents
Nov 21 20th Century – Celebrities, actors, Royalty

week 14 **Analytical Paper Due**

Nov 26 Remote Review of pictures and images (on ZOOM)

Nov 28 Thanksgiving Recess no class

week 15

Dec 3 20th Century, 21st Century - African Fashions, Asian Fashions,
Indian Fashions, Jewish Fashions

Dec 5 Review of costumes (class in PED 114E – costume shop)

[Reviews will be done out of chronological sequence as a way of
preparing for the exam is out of sequence.]

Finals week FINAL EXAM

Thursday, Dec. 12 2 - 4