Course Description

This course will examine the roles fashion plays in film, television and digital media and their cultural and economic significance. As a signifying system in its own right, fashion contributes to the semiotics of popular forms. It can also operate as a means of authentication (especially in period films and TV) or reveal a variety of ways in which media plays with space and time, purposeful or not. Besides evoking specific temporalities and narrative tone, fashion plays an important role in the construction of gender, both in terms of representation and address. This course will examine the history of the intersection of the fashion and media industries from the free distribution of film-related dress patterns in movie theaters of the 1910s to the current trend for make-over TV, networks like the Style network and the increasing proliferation of fashion blogs and forms of social networking. How does fashion’s specific configuration of consumerism, signification and visual pleasure lend itself to the articulation of modern/postmodern cultures and their presentation of the self? Indeed, how are fashion and media linked to the construction of modernity, new visions of citizenship, and changing articulations of the public and private? What pleasures does fashion they offer and how might these relate to the construction of individuality, agency and new forms of the self?

Course Objectives/Learning Goals

At the end of the class, you should have a deeper understanding of the following:

How the media and fashion industries intersect and the consequences for both businesses and their products: fashion as a mass phenomenon prioritizing rapid change and immediate diffusion; media depending on fashion for content, appeal to women, a sense of place and for broader narrative and aesthetic purposes.

A more critical understanding of fashion as an academic discipline centered on communications, visual culture, aesthetics, economics, social status and questions of class, luxury and mass tastes.

The history of the relationship between the fashion business and media industries, including an awareness of how different industries—print, film, television and digital—have shaped fashion coverage and adopted fashion to their own ends.
The role of fashion in the staging of the self and the construction of communities over the past two hundred years.

Required Texts

The following books are required and are available at the NYU Book Center:


Adrienne Munich (ed.), *Fashion in Film* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011)


Other required readings are marked with an asterisk (*). These will be available on NYU Classes.

Readings are listed for the week they will be discussed in class—ensure you have completed them by these dates.

Course Requirements

You will be evaluated on participation and the following written assignments.

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation, Attendance:</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Presentation:</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Paper 1:</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Paper 2:</td>
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<td>Final Paper:</td>
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All assignments should all be typed, double-spaced in an acceptable 12-point font (Times, Palatino) with 1-inch margins.

Presentations

Each week, two-three students will give brief presentations on the readings (either one reading of your choice or a presentation about the issues the readings bring up). You
should also bring in three questions for class discussion. These presentations are worth 10% of your grade.

**Participation/Discussion and Attendance Policies**

Participation and Discussion is **REQUIRED**. Although I will give a short lecture each day, this is not a lecture class as such, so you should come to class having studied the readings and be prepared to contribute to class. Lectures include material not covered in the readings, screenings, video clips, discussion and in-class exercises.

**ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY** and will be taken at the beginning of class. Not attending class will severely damage your grade unless you have a well-documented excuse.

**More than TWO late arrivals during the semester will affect your participation grade.**

**No cell phone or internet use during class, including screenings unless it is for class related materials—like searching for relevant information online.**

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism involves presenting somebody else’s work as your own. It is **extremely serious**: a form of theft, fraud and deception.

Plagiarism includes—but is not limited to:

- Downloading a paper from the internet.
- Copying material from the internet, from a book or some other source and presenting it as your own.
- Asking someone to write a paper for you (or writing one for someone else).
- Collaborating on an assignment in such a way that you and your friend both have the same paper or answers.
- Poor citation protocol.
- Confusion about the way you reference someone else’s ideas.

There will be no tolerance for plagiarism in this class. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please speak to me or email me. If in doubt, cite your source—whether it is a website, a book, an article or something said in class. Please familiarize yourself with NYU and Gallatin’s policies on this very important matter.
**Late Papers**

Late work will only be accepted if you have contacted me in advance and have a valid reason like a religious holiday, sickness, family problems or other unexpected disasters. Please let me know when you will be able to complete the work and keep in touch with me should any eventuality prevent you from completing work on time.

**Incompletes**

As with late work, incompletes will be given only to students who have contacted me in advance (where possible) and have valid reasons for not completing the course work on time (illness, family problems, unexpected disasters). Students taking incompletes should also contact me to discuss a reasonable schedule for finishing the course. Please consult the Gallatin website for the school’s policy on Incompletes for more information.

**Use of Laptops/Tablets**

Laptops are permitted in class but **ONLY** for course-related activities like taking notes and looking up relevant examples online. They must **NOT** be used for google chat, IM, email, Facebook, shopping, game playing, etc.
Course Schedule

Friday 9/6: Introduction.

Friday 9/13: Fashion Theory: Fashion as Language and Communication

Friday 9/20: Democratizing Dress? Fashion, Consumer Culture and Mass Media
Screenings: “Hollywood Style Center of the World,” short promotional film, 1940, It (Clarence Badger, 1927), All On the Line (Sundance, 2011-)
TITLES FOR PAPER ONE POSTED ON BLACKBOARD

Friday 9/27: Fashion and Narrative
Screenings: Now, Voyager (Irving Rapper, 1942), The Bride Wore Red (Dorothy Arzner, 1942), The Women (George Cukor, 1939)

Friday, 10/4: Costume Design and Fashion Designers
Screenings: Tonight or Never (Mervyn Le Roy, 1931—costumes by Chanel), Her Sister from Paris (Sidney Franklin, 1925—Gilbert Adrian’s first film), Breakfast At Tiffany’s (Blake Edwards, 1961—Hepburn’s costumes by Givenchy), Stage Fright (Alfred Hitchcock, 1950—Dietrich’s costumes by Dior)
PAPER ONE DUE

Friday 10/11: Fashion, Attractions, Surface and Detail
Screenings: Clips from The Affairs of Anatol (Cecil B. De Mille, 1921), Fashions of ‘34 (William Dieterle, 1934), the fashion show from The Women (George Cukor, 1939), The Scarlet Empress (Josef Von Sternberg, Paramount, 1934), Atonement (Joe Wright, 2007)
Friday 10/18: Bridging On- and Off-Screen: Fashion Merchandising, Tie-Ins and Embodying the Moving Image
Screenings: Clips from Queen Christina (Rouben Mamoulian, 1933), Valley of the Dolls (Mark Robson, 1967), The Best of Everything (Jean Negulesco, 1959), Confessions of a Shopaholic (P.J. Hogan, 2009). Press books (online) from William K. Everson Collection, NYU

Friday 10/25: Fashion, Knowledge and the Female Spectator

Friday 11/1: The Fashion Star
Readings: Church Gibson, pp. 53-82, 139-152, Wilson, pp. 134-154, Edwards, pp. 103-119, *Rachel Moseley, “Trousers and Tiaras: Audrey Hepburn, a Woman’s Star”
Screenings: Funny Face (Stanley Donen, 1957), Possessed (Edgar Selwyn, 1931), Why Change Your Wife? (Cecil B. DeMille, 1920).
Articles on fashion stars like Gloria Swanson and Joan Crawford in period fashion magazines archived online
TITLES FOR PAPER TWO POSTED ON BLACKBOARD

Friday 11/8: Fashion Films and Television
Screenings: Sex and the City (TV, 1998-2004), Coco Before Chanel (Anne Fontaine, 2009, France), The Devil Wears Prada (David Frankel, 2006), Marie Antoinette (Sofia Coppola, 2006).

Friday 11/15: Transformation and Makeover Television: Neo-Liberalism and Self Branding
PAPER TWO DUE IN CLASS
Friday, 11/22: Fashion Magazines, New Media and Online Fashion Coverage
Screening: The September Issue (R.J. Cutler, 2009)
TITLES FOR ESSAY THREE ON BLACKBOARD

Friday 11/29: NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING BREAK

Friday 12/6: Fashion, History and Time
Screening: W.E. (Madonna, 2011), Barry Lyndon (Stanley Kubrick, 1975), Mad Men (AMC, 2007-present)

Friday, 12/13: Fashion and/as Art
Readings: Church Gibson, pp. 153-182.
Screenings: Valentino: The Last Emperor (Matt Tyrnauer, 2008), A Single Man (Tom Ford, 2009)

PROVISIONAL DUE DATE FOR FINAL PAPER 12/18