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 and the increasing proliferation of fashion blogs, digital fashion films 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 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:


**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 writing assignments as follows.

- **Participation, Attendance:** 10%
- **Presentation:** 10%
- **Paper 1 (5-7 pages):** 20%
- **Paper 2 (6-8 pages):** 30%
- **Final Paper (6-8 pages):** 30%

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 are **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. Classes 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 reason for your absence such as religious holidays/observations, sickness or health-related appointments, bereavement, family problems.

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 or coming to class.
**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 9/4: Introduction.

Friday 9/11: Fashion Theory: Communication, Identity, Art
Screenings: Clips from An Education (Lone Scherfig, 2009, UK), Marie Antoinette (Sofia Coppola, 2006), Valentino: The Last Emperor (Matt Tyrnauer, 2008), A Single Man (Tom Ford, 2009)

Friday 9/18: No Class (Moya has to have surgery)

Friday 9/25: Democratizing Dress? Fashion, Consumer Culture and Mass Media

TITLES FOR PAPER ONE POSTED ON NYU CLASSES

Friday, 10/2: Fashion Films and Television
Screenings: Clips from Gossip Girl, Sex and the City (TV, 1998-2004), Breakfast At Tiffany’s (Blake Edwards, 1961—Hepburn’s costumes by Givenchy), The Devil Wears Prada (David Frankel, 2006).

Friday 10/9: Fashion Stars and Celebrity Fashion
Readings: Church Gibson, pp. 53-82, 139-152, Warner, 1-20, 109-139, Wilson, pp. 134-154, *Rachel Moseley, “Trousers and Tiaras: Audrey Hepburn, a Woman’s Star”
Screenings: Clips from Funny Face (Stanley Donen, 1957), Possessed (Edgar Selwyn, 1931), The Bling Ring (Sofia Coppola, 2013)

PAPER ONE DUE

Friday 10/16: Fashion Magazines
Screening: Clips from The September Issue (R.J. Cutler, 2009), Mademoiselle C (2013)
**Friday 10/23: New Media, Blogs, Street Style and Fashion Online**

**Readings:** *Rosie Findlay, “The Short, Passionate and Close Knit History of Personal Style Blogs,”*  
*Monica Titton, “Fashionable Personae: Self-Identity and Enactments of Fashion Narratives in Fashion Blogs,”*  
*Agnes Rocamora, “Personal Fashion Blogs: Screens and Mirrors in Digital Self-Portraits,”*  
*Sophie Woodward, “The Myth of Street Style”*

**Screenings:** Clips from *Bill Cunningham New York* (2010)

**TITLES FOR ESSAY TWO ON NYU CLASSES**

**Friday 10/30: Transformation and Makeover Television: Neo-Liberalism and Self Branding**

**Readings:** Warner, pp. 143-158,  
*Alison Hearn, “Insecure: Narratives and Economies of the Branded Self in Transformation Television,”*  
*Jessica Ringrose and Valerie Walkerdine, “Regulating the Abject: The TV Makeover as Site of New-Liberal Reinvention Towards Bourgeois Femininity,”*  
*Rachel Moseley, “Makeover Takeover on British Television”*


**Friday 11/6: Fashion and Popular Film/TV Narration**

**Readings:** Warner, pp. 39-74,  
*Jane Gaines, “Costume and Narrative: How Dress Tells the Woman’s Story,”*  
*Tamar Jeffords MacDonald, “Costume and Film”*

**Screenings:** Clips from a range of films and TV shows including  
*Now, Voyager* (Irving Rapier, 1942),  
*The Bride Wore Red* (Dorothy Arzner, 1942),  
*The Women* (George Cukor, 1939) and *Gossip Girl*

**Friday 11/13: On- and Off-Screen: Merchandising, Tie-Ins and Embodiment**

**Readings:** Warner, pp. 23-38,  
*Jane Gaines, “The Queen Christina Tie-Ups: Convergence of Show Window and Screen,”*  
*Moya Luckett, “Advertising and Femininity: The Case of Our Mutual Girl,”*  
*Charles Eckert, “The Carol Lombard in Macy’s Window”*

**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

**PAPER TWO DUE IN CLASS**

**Friday, 11/20: Fashion, History and Costume Pictures**

**Readings:** Warner, pp. 91-106, Wilson, pp. 208-227,  
*Pam Cook, “The Lure of the Past: Reinventing History,”*  
*Stella Bruzzi, “Desire and the Costume Film,”*


**Friday 11/27: NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING BREAK**
Friday 12/4: Fashion Attractions and the Female Gaze
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)

TITLES FOR PAPER THREE ON NYU CLASSES

Friday, 12/11: Alfred Hitchcock: Fashion Icons, Fashion as Knowledge
Readings: *John Fawell, “Fashion Dreams: Hitchcock, Women and Lisa Fremont”

PROVISIONAL DUE DATE FOR FINAL PAPER 12/17