Fashion, Culture and the Body

**Semester**
SPRING 2016

**Class code**

**Class Details**
Fashion, Culture and the Body

Thursday 2.00 – 5.00

Location to be confirmed.

**Prerequisites**
There are no prerequisites for this class.

**Class Description**
This is a course that explores the relationship between ideas, the body and the way that fashion can be understood to mediate between the two. Through a range of disciplines and media this course considers the body as an aspect of not only medical and scientific exploration, but crucially as a vital element of culture and society. Bodies affect the ways in which the social world and power relations are organized, and they even arguably condition the way that we understand reality itself. Our physical form is constantly shaped according to both philosophies and fashions. Body ideals and broader ideals often interrelate strongly through bodily practices and with what we wear. There are meanings and fashions in all bodily forms (skinny, buxom, muscular, ideas of ‘whiteness’) and body practices (dieting, hair management, cleansing rituals, plastic surgery and genital cutting).

Over the sessions, we will take a conceptual approach to fashion, as a strident condition of modern life, that incorporates politics, science and aesthetics and we will closely read a number of cultural texts against a number of theoretical models. Attitudes towards the body can vary widely according to historical period, and this course will explore how, in different moments, and via different media, we have been preoccupied with the aesthetics of different body zones, with displaying identity (gender, class and ethnicity), and also with power. Different cultural forms (literary, visual, material etc) will provide the focus of our discussions as they all engage with the different ways that we make meaning out of our bodies. Students will be invited to investigate in their written work set texts from class in addition to primary material of their own choice.

The majority of classes will take place in Bedford Square and be formed of illustrated lectures, class activities, discussion of set readings, and student presentations. There will also be a class visit the Hunterian Museum as well as a meeting with a performance artist/academic who works on issues
connected to fashion and the body.

This course will include controversial images and texts, including pornographic formats, and the explicit discussion of bodies and bodily practices.

The format of the course will be lecture and seminar format with visits and outside speakers where relevant.

**Desired Outcomes**

After completing this course students will:

1. Be able to identify important and relevant aspects of fashion and bodily practices and relate them to a wider historical, theoretical or cultural context via a ‘representation based’ Cultural Studies approach.
2. Be familiar and able to evaluate a variety of theoretical approaches to the study of fashion and the body via the discussion of the relevant academic literature.
3. Have developed their ability to present independent and reasoned analysis of primary and secondary sources relevant to the study of fashion and the body, both verbally and in writing, adopting appropriate academic conventions.

**Assessment Components**

Two written essays, the first (2000) due on Session 6 and the second (2500) on Session 12 (20% and 30% respectively, together representing 50% of the total assessment)

- One x 5-10-minute oral class presentations, of c.1000 words, on a date to be arranged in class (10% of the total assessment)

- 1 x end of semester unseen written exam of two hours duration. (20% of total assessment)

- Attentiveness to, and engagement with, class content and the presentations of fellow students will represent 20% of each student’s total assessment.

Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class.

**Assessment Expectations**

Grade A: Students demonstrate a fully conceptualized understanding of the academic literature, combining critical assessment of primary and secondary sources with well-supported independent thought within a Cultural Studies discipline.

Grade B: Students show very good understanding of the subjects covered and can assess and compare primary and secondary sources with clarity within a Cultural Studies discipline.

Grade C: Students show reasonable understanding of the subjects covered and can present some key ideas clearly.

Grade D: A low pass

Grade F: This is a fail grade

**Required Text(s)**


**Supplemental Texts(s) (not)**

[Click here and enter information, including ISBN]
Internet Research Guidelines

Additional Required Equipment

Session 1

**Session 1: Introduction: Fashion, culture and the body**

04-Feb-16

Required Reading


Recommended Reading


Session 2

**Session 2: The body as a metaphor/Essay writing for Cultural Studies of fashion and the body I**

11-Feb-16

Required Reading


Session 3

**Session 3: The body as process. Foucault, fashion and the body**

18-Feb-16

Required Reading


Recommended Reading


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Session 4

**Session 4: Femininity and the body/Essay writing for Cultural Studies of fashion and the body 2**

**25-Feb-16**

Required Reading


Recommended Reading


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Session 5

**Session 5: Masculinity and the Body**

**03-Mar-16**

Required Reading


Recommended Reading


Session 6: Fashioning Bodies: Dolls

10-Mar-16

Required Reading


Recommended Reading


Paper One due

Session 7: Fashion and the Gothic Body 1

17-Mar-16

Required Reading


Session 8: Fashion and the Gothic Body 2: Contemporary Gothic Bodies

24-Mar-16

Required Reading


Recommended Reading


Mahawatte, R. (2009) ‘“life that is not clad in the same coat-tails and flounces”: the silver fork novel, George Eliot and the fear of the material’. Women’s Writing Special Issue: Silver Fork Novels, vol. 19, no. 1, 323-344, 1-22.
Session 9

Session 9 Fashion, Whiteness and the Raced Body

07-Apr-16

Required Reading


Recommended Reading


Session 10

Culture and Hair

14-Apr-16

Required Reading


Recommended Reading


### Session 11
#### Session 11: Desire and the Body in Motion

**21-Apr-16**

**Required Reading**


**Recommended Reading**


### Session 12

**28-Apr-16**

Meet at the following address 2.15 pm:
The Royal College of Surgeons of England
35-43 Lincoln's Inn Fields
London
WC2A 3PE
United Kingdom
Tel: 020 7405 3474

**Paper Two due**

### Session 13

**05-May-16**

Academic and fashion historian Dr Geraldine Biddle-Perry will speak about her work and issues connected to fashion, culture and the body.

### Session 14

**12-May-16**

Student meetings, final exam preparation and essay return.

### Session 15

**19-May-16**

Final exam: unseen format of two and a quarter hours duration. You will be required to answer two questions.
Classroom Etiquette

Classroom etiquette aims to promote the best possible learning environment and good communication between all participants. To this end, mobile phones and laptops will be switched off, unless you are asked to use them. All readings must be brought to class in hard copy (there is a printing allowance for this). Food will not be consumed during class.

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NYU LONDON ACADEMIC POLICIES

Academic Integrity

At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community. By accepting membership in this community, students take responsibility for demonstrating these values in their own conduct and for recognizing and supporting these values in others.

At NYU London, students will submit electronic copies of their written work to Turnitin via their NYU Classes course site. Instructions will be provided to you separately.

Late Submission of Work

Written work due in class must be submitted during the class time to the professor. Late work should be submitted in person to a member of NYU London staff in the Academic Office (Room 308, 6 Bedford Square) during office hours (Mon – Fri, 10:00 – 17:00). Please also send an electronic copy to academics@nyu.ac.uk for submission to Turnitin.

Work submitted within 5 weekdays after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 10 points on the 100 point scale.

Written work submitted more than 5 weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

Please note end of semester essays must be submitted on time.

Attendance Policy

Study abroad at Global Academic Centres is an academically intensive and immersive experience. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. As classes typically meet once a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course.

To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance is mandatory and unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in failure.

How to report an absence

Absences from class must be reported to NYU London administrative staff using the online Absence Form: http://tinyurl.com/nyulabsence

Absences can ONLY be excused if they are reported using this form. Students should NOT approach their class instructor for an excused absence. However, students should contact their class instructor to catch up on missed work.

Medical absences

If you are unable to attend a class due to ill-health, you must provide details of your illness and class(es) missed to NYUL staff using the online Absence Form WITHIN SEVEN DAYS of your return to class.

Please do not use the form to report a medical emergency or to request urgent assistance. In a medical emergency call 999 and ask for an ambulance. NYU London staff are available to offer support, whatever time of day. If you would like to speak to a member of staff urgently to request support with a medical problem, please call 0800 316 0469, selecting option 2.

Non-medical absences

If you have to miss class for an unavoidable, non-medical reason you must provide details to NYUL staff using the online Absence Form at least SEVEN DAYS PRIOR to the date(s) in question. Examples of valid non-medical reasons are as follows: religious holiday; family wedding; scholarship competition; family emergency. If in doubt please speak to a member of Academics staff or email academics@nyu.ac.uk. Failure to provide requested documentation for these types of absences will result in the absence remaining unexcused.

Further information regarding absences

NYU London staff carefully monitor student attendance and absence records. In most cases full completion of
the online Absence Form will be sufficient to excuse your absence. However, in certain circumstances, you will be asked to provide additional information/verification before it can be excused. If we notice that you have multiple absences you will be contacted to arrange a meeting with a member of staff.

**Unexcused absences from exams are not permitted and will result in failure of the exam.** Students may not take an exam before or after other students in the class, and may not leave the programme before all course work has been submitted.

Please refer to the NYU Wikis Page for the full absence policy: [https://wikis.nyu.edu/x/awRgAw](https://wikis.nyu.edu/x/awRgAw)

Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. Students must notify their professor and the Office of Academic Support in writing via email one week in advance before being absent for this purpose.

**Academic Accommodations**

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in a class are encouraged to contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. For more information, see [Study Away and Disability](#).

**Grade Conversion**

NYU in London uses the following scale of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

- A=94-100
- A-=90-93
- B+=87-89
- B=84-86
- B-=80-83
- C+=77-79
- C=74-76
- C-=70-73
- D+=67-69
- D=65-66
- F=below 65

Where no specific numerical equivalent is assigned to a letter grade by the class teacher, the midpoint of the range will be used in calculating the final class grade (except in the A range, where 95.5 will be used).

**Grading Policy**

NYU in London aims to have grading standards and results in all its courses similar to those that prevail at Washington Square.

NYU requires all instructors to submit midterm grades for their students. Midterm grading is considered an educational best practice, and plays an important role in schools’ early intervention programs, which enable advisers to identify and to respond to students in crisis.