FASHION & POWER

Class code
MCC-UE9345001

Instructor Details
Sophie Chapdelaine de Montvalon
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Office Hours: Thursdays 2:30-3pm

Class Details
Fashion & Power

T 14:15 - 15:45
Th 13:00 - 14:30 (Group 1) and 15:00 - 16:30 (Group 2)

Prerequisites
None

Class Description
This course examines fashion both from its diffusion in a globalized society, and as a form of communication and culture. We will examine how fashion has been valued through social sciences - history and sociology on the one hand, and economy on the other hand, from its production to its consumption. The course will address fashion in terms of issues of consumerism and sustainability in a post-industrialized society.

Desired Outcomes
- An understanding of haute couture v. prêt-à-porter in France and the democratization at stake
- An understanding of the innovation process in the ready-to-wear industry
- An understanding of history of fashion as a key site for cultural meaning
- An understanding of fashion in theory, in terms of identity, gender, and role of status
- A critical understanding of the fashion system, the fashion business, luxury brands
- An insight into fashion in the media
- A critical understanding of fashion and its sustainability issue

Assessment Components

Participation 20%
Students are required to do all of the readings, attend all classes, complete all assignments, and participate fully in class discussion. You will be required to bring in materials and go to the visits. Lateness and unexcused absences risk this portion of the grade. Please, in class, no laptops, texting, cell phones, eating.

Discussion leadership 20%
For each class, the discussion leadership is assigned to a group of students. They will take the reading material for that class. If you are sharing the class, you should still read all of it but summarize only what you have been assigned, in a printed reading response. You may print copies for the class. You should bring related images or any visual material (dragged in a PP, PDF) for the class discussion. During class, be prepared for questions.

Research paper 20%
Students will work by groups of 2, and with a classmate of her/his group (Group 1 or Group 2)
7/9 pages - printed paper (double spaced, point font 12 max), plus works cited and images / visual material.
Feb 11 research topics discussed at end of class
Feb 25 initial idea for research paper due
Mar 11 final topic idea + bibliography due
Apr 8 paper due
April 10 and 29 + May 2 and 6:
A 15-min class presentation of your research findings using visual resource 10%

Mid Term - March 4 - 15%
Short answers concerning readings, lectures and visit.

Final exam May 13 - 15%
Short answers concerning readings, lectures and visits.

Assessment Expectations
Grading scale 100-90% A; 89-80% B, 79-70% C, 69-60% D; 59-0% F.

Grade conversion

Grading Policy
All assignments must be printed and will not be accepted by email. Any late assignment must be signed and dated and loses 5% of total grade per day.

Students are expected to do the required readings before class meeting and be prepared to answer the questions detailed here after.

Weekly readings detailed here after figure in the course pack (CP); in The Fashion Reader, Linda Welters and Abby Lillethun, Berg, London, 1st and 2nd ed. (FR);

Optional readings in French are proposed for 5% extra credit.

Introduction
For next class, please bring in an item or accessory expressing power

Jan 21

Jan 23

Reading:
-Georg Simmel, Fashion (1904), How does fashion unite and separate?

Session 2

FASHION and MODERN LIFE
- Thorstein Veblen, Dress as a form of the pecuniary culture in The Theory of the Leisure Class, 1899, CP How does fashion unite and separate?

Jan 28

Jan 30

- Anne Hollander, Sex and Suits, Introduction, Sex and The Modern Form. pp.3-10. CP

1. How does new commerce rely to modernity?
2. How do World exhibitions and Arcades glorify the exchange value of the commodity?
3. What is the power of the masculine suit’s simplicity?

Session 3  FRENCH FASHION POWER

Feb 4
- Anne Hollander, When Worth was King. FR
- Emile Zola, The Kill (La Curée), in: Colin Mc Dowell, the Pimlico Companion to Fashion, pp. 208-211. CP
- Gilles Lipovetsky, A Century of Fashion CP
- Lang & Engel Lang, The Power of Fashion, FR

Feb 6
1. Who was Worth? Why is he considered as a pioneer of Haute Couture?
2. To which extent a fashion designer can be granted as an artist?
3. Describe the two-pier fashion system of haute couture and manufacturing.

Session 4  FASHION AND MASS CULTURE

Feb 11
Subcultural Identity
- Dick Hebdige, Subculture, The Unnatural Break, FR

How subculture can be highjacked by fashion trends?

Research topics discussed at end of class
For next class, as part of your dedication %, please bring an example of subculture fashion

Feb 13
- Ted Polhemus Trickle down, Bubble up, FR
- Grant Mc Cracken, The Fashion System, FR

1. Describe the trickle down process
2. How does the fashion system transform an item into a sign?

Session 5  SEXUAL POWER

Feb 18

1. How does Beauvoir give voice to women's internal experiences of fashion?
2. Which are the dual ways of the feminist ideal?

Feb 20
Excursion to Musée Carnavalet, 'Roman d'une garde robe'. Meeting Point at 13:00 (Group 1) and 13:30 (Group 2) at 23 rue de Sévigné, 75004. Métro SAINT PAUL (line 1).

Session 6  Dandy

Feb 25
- Charles Baudelaire, 'The Dandy', from The Painter of The Modern Life’ (1863) CP

1. What is the power of the dandy figure?
2. Describe the limits of Khakis' ant fashion statement

Initial topic idea due, please have it on paper to turn in

Feb 27
Exam Review

Session 7
Mid Term Exam

Because of our field trip, there is only one reading:
Stella Bruzzi, *Undressing Cinema*, Cinema and Haute Couture, Sabrina to Pretty Woman, Trop Belle pour toi I, Prêt à Porter, pp. 3-34
Field Trip to Musée des Arts Décoratifs, exhibition Dries Van Noten. Meeting point 107 rue de Rivoli, 75001 Paris, Métro Palais Royal (line 1). At 13:00 (Group 1) and 15:00 (Group 2). tbc

Reminder: final topic and bibliography due next week
[Click and enter co-curricular activities, etc.]
1. What is called the control of marketing over the fashion and luxury brands?
2. What is the power of a trend forecaster?
3. To which extent do bloggers threaten the fashion hierarchy?

As part of your dedication %, bring examples of a brand you like and dislike

Session 12
RESISTANCE OPPOSITION / PAPER DUE

Apr 8
- Homa Hoodfar, The Veil in Their Minds and on our Heads, FR
- Fred Davis, Anti Fashion and the Vicissitudes of Negation CP
  pp.126-29; The business of Jumble and Salaula consumers pp. 223-228. CP

1. What are the historical origins of the veil?
2. Which are the forms taken by anti fashion discontents?
3. Describe how works a clothing recycling plant in UK. What is the side effect of sending second hand clc Saharan Africa’s economies?

Apr 10
Paper presentations.
Each group makes a 15-mn class presentation of their research findings, using visual resources.

Friday, April 11. MAKE UP CLASS from 11:30 to 13.00 (group 1) and 13:00 to 14:30 (group 2).
Field trip to exhibition Vogue Papier Glacé at Palais Galliera. tbc

Session 13

Apr 29
dpaper presentations.

Friday May 2
paper presentations

Session 14

May 6
paper class presentations (end)

May 8
OFF

Session 15

May 13
Final exam

May 15
Final

Your Instructor

[please brief text about yourself, possibly positions, publications, research specialism, conferences etc.]