IDSEM-UG9254L01,  
Fashion, Culture and the Body

Instructor Information
- Dr Royce Mahawatte
- Office Hours: Thursday 4-5 pm

Course Information
- [Thursday 1-4 pm
- There are no prerequisites for this class.

Course Overview and Goals
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, using methodologies taught in the class.

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 to St Bartholomeus Pathology Museum as well as a meeting with a fashion historian who works on issues connected to fashion and the sporting 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.

Upon Completion of this Course, students will be able to:

- 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 and other related methodologies.

- Be familiar and able to evaluate a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of fashion and the body via the discussion of the relevant academic literature.

- 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

Course Requirements

Grading of Assignments

The grade for this course will be determined according to these assessment components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments/ Activities</th>
<th>Description of Assignment</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
<th>Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper One (2500 words)</td>
<td>One x 2500 word essay due on Session 7</td>
<td>25%</td>
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### Assignments/Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of Assignment</th>
<th>% of Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper Two One x 2500 word essay due on Session 12</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Presentation - One x 5-10-minute oral class presentations, of c.1000 words, on a date to be arranged in class.</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Final Exam 2hrs - 1 x end of semester unseen written exam of two hours duration.</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Engagement Attentiveness to, and engagement with, class content and the presentations of fellow students will represent 20% of each student's total assessment.</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</table>

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

### Grades

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Example: 93.5% and higher</td>
<td>Excellent, sophisticated work that demonstrates lucid, original thinking, superior writing skills, and sustained critical engagement with the course concepts and requirements. Reflects a unique 'voice,' while balancing personality with appropriate tone, style, structure, and awareness of audience. Incorporates evidence with aplomb. Virtually free of grammatical and spelling errors, and presented professionally in terms of layout and referencing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Example: 82.5% - 87.49%</td>
<td>Solid work demonstrating some original thinking, clear writing skills, and sustained engagement with the course concepts and requirements. A B assignment will show a good deal of potential and clarity, but overall it may be less consistent or fully achieved. Writing and ideas may be clear but lack the flair of an A paper. Good editing and structure will be in evidence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Letter Grade</td>
<td>Percent</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>Example: 72.5% - 77.49%</td>
<td>Satisfactory work demonstrating fair writing skills and some engagement with the course requirements. An effort to sustain thinking and develop ideas will be evident, but will not be thoroughly executed. A grasp of some relevant concepts will be present, but there may be omissions, mistakes, or inaccuracies. Writing may be stale and unfocused, or simply lack clarity.</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>Example: 62.5% - 67.49</td>
<td>Weak work with clear flaws and a lack of engagement with the course concepts and requirements. May lack structure and will be muddled, with confusions of language and ideas. Likely to be underdeveloped, with variable presentation. Grammar and punctuation is lacking.</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Example: 59.99% and lower</td>
<td>Inadequate work with a lack of engagement with the course requirements. Fails to address the prompt, offers of little to no structure, and exhibits high levels of confusion or misunderstanding.</td>
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**Course Materials**

**Required Textbooks & Materials**
- All required reading is provided on Classes.

**Optional Textbooks & Materials**
- NA

**Resources**
- Access your course materials: NYU Classes (nyu.edu/its/classes)
- Databases, journal articles, and more: Bobst Library (library.nyu.edu)
- NYUL Library Collection: Senate House Library (catalogue.libraries.london.ac.uk)
- Assistance with strengthening your writing: [NYU Writing Center](nyu.mywconline.com)
- Obtain 24/7 technology assistance: [IT Help Desk](nyu.edu/it/servicedesk)

## Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session/Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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</table>
| Session 1    | Introduction: Fashion, culture and the body | Required Reading  
| Session 2    | The Body as a Metaphor plus Essay Writing for Fashion, Culture and the Body | Required Reading  
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<td><em>Danger: an analysis of concept of pollution and taboo. London: Routledge</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td>The Body as Process. Foucault, Fashion and the Body</td>
<td>Required Reading</td>
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<td>Session 4</td>
<td>Gender and the Body/ Writing for Fashion, Culture and the Body 2: Methodologies</td>
<td>Required Reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 5</td>
<td>Femininity and the body/Methodologies for Fashion, Culture and the Body</td>
<td>Required Reading</td>
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<td>Recommended Reading</td>
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<td>Session 6</td>
<td>Masculinity and the Body</td>
<td>Required Reading</td>
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<td>Darby, R. (2005) <em>A Surgical Temptation: the demonization of the foreskin and the rise of</em></td>
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<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading</td>
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<td><strong>Recommended Reading</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 7</td>
<td>Fashioning Bodies: Dolls</td>
<td><strong>Required Reading</strong></td>
<td>Paper One due</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Recommended Reading</strong></td>
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| Session 8   | Fashion and the Gothic Body 1 | Required Reading  
| Session 9   | Fashion and the Gothic Body 2: Contemporary Gothic Bodies | Required Reading  
| Session 10  | Fashion, Whiteness and the Raced Body | Required Reading  
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<tr>
<td>Session 11</td>
<td>Session Visit: The Wellcome Collection</td>
<td>Guided Tour of the Wellcome Collection</td>
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<td>Misbehaving Bodies: Jo Spence and Oreet Ashery</td>
<td>Meet at the following address: 1.15 pm, 183 Euston Rd, Kings Cross, London NW1 2BE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 12</td>
<td>Culture and Hair</td>
<td>Required Reading</td>
<td>Paper Two due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Session 13</td>
<td>Desire and the Body in Motion</td>
<td>Required Reading</td>
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<td>Burt, R. 1995. The Male Dancer: Bodies, Spectacle,</td>
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<td>Session 14</td>
<td>Visiting Speaker</td>
<td>Academic and fashion historian Dr Elizabeth Kutesco will speak about her work.</td>
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<td>See NYU Classes for reading and exercise materials.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Assessment</td>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>Unseen format of two and a quarter hours duration.</td>
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<td>You will be required to answer two questions.</td>
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**Curricular Activities**
- [Required trips: details, dates, special instructions]
- [Suggested trips]
- [Estimated travel costs]

**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.

**NYUL Academic Policies**

**Attendance and Tardiness**
- Key information on NYU London’s absence policy, how to report absences, and what kinds of absences can be excused can be found on our website (http://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/attendance-policy.html)

**Assignments, Plagiarism, and Late Work**
- You can find details on these topics and more on this section of our NYUL website.
(https://www.nyu.edu/london/academics/academic-policies.html) and on the Policies and Procedures section of the NYU website for students studying away at global sites (https://www.nyu.edu/academics/studying-abroad/upperclassmen-semester-academic-year-study-away/academic-resources/policies-and-procedures.html).

Classroom Conduct

Academic communities exist to facilitate the process of acquiring and exchanging knowledge and understanding, to enhance the personal and intellectual development of its members, and to advance the interests of society. Essential to this mission is that all members of the University Community are safe and free to engage in a civil process of teaching and learning through their experiences both inside and outside the classroom. Accordingly, no student should engage in any form of behaviour that interferes with the academic or educational process, compromises the personal safety or well-being of another, or disrupts the administration of University programs or services. Please refer to the NYU Student Conduct Policy for examples of disruptive behavior and guidelines for response and enforcement.

Disability Disclosure Statement

Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

Instructor Bio