FASHION & POWER
T/Th 9:00-10:30
Professor Rachel K. Ward: rachelkward@gmail.com, 06.78.68.67.11

“A history of dress would be a history of minds; for dress expresses a moral idea; it symbolizes the intellect and disposition of a nation,” Oscar Wilde.

This course examines fashion as a form of communication and culture. Through cultural and media studies theory, we will examine how fashion makes meaning, and how it has been valued through history, popular culture and media institutions, focusing on the relationship between fashion, visual self-presentation, and power. The course will situate fashion both in terms of its production and consumption, addressing its role in relation to identity and body politics (gender, race, sexuality, class), art and status, nationhood and the global economy, celebrity and Hollywood culture, youth cultures and subversive practices.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
- An analysis of mass culture, the culture industry, and the production of culture
- An understanding of the relationship of modernity to style and visuality
- An understanding of the economic, social, and cultural aspects of fashion
- An analysis of fashion as a key site of cultural meaning
- An analysis of the politics of labor that undergirds the fashion industry and the production of clothing
- An examination of the visual codes of fashion and fashion photography, with the tools to understand how fashion photography creates meaning
- An analysis of the role fashion and style plan in visual self-presentation and concepts of identity and the self
- An analysis of the role of bricolage and cultural practices that change the meaning of fashion
- A critical analysis of celebrity culture and how it functions

MATERIALS
-Supplementary articles in course pack (please note most but not all available through NYU library online)

EVALUATION
Grading scale 100-90% A, 89-80% B, 79-70% C, 69-60% D, 59-0% F
All assignments must be printed and may not be submitted by email.
Any late assignment must be signed and dated and loses 5% of total grade per day.

Dedication 15%
Please read all assigned materials before class and participate in class discussion. You will be required to bring in materials and go to excursions. This class will also have a shared blog at www.tbd.blogspot.com. Consistent lateness and unexcused absences risks this portion of the grade. Our class is intended for learning so please contribute to an atmosphere of respect. No laptops, texting, mobile phones, or eating.

Reading response & discussion leadership 10%
For one class session, you will read the assignments and help lead class discussion. You must compose a printed reading response in advance, submitted to me by email before class. You may print copies for the class and they will be posted as shared notes on the blog after class.

MARCH 9, Research topic and bibliography 10%
Your topic will be a specific power code communicated by clothing, image and/or brand, preferably European. The bibliography is a minimum 15 sources/2 pages of relevant materials following MLA style.

MARCH 16, Mid term 15%
Short answer and essays concerning the reading,

APRIL 15, Research paper 20%
Based on your topic of a fashion message and opposing message. Double spaced, maximum 12 point font (Arial, Helvetica, Times New Roman etc) 7-9 pages, plus works cited and images

MAY 4-6, Research presentation 10%
A 20 minute class presentation of your research findings using visual resource

MAY 13 / Final 20%
Final cumulative essay, open note
SCHEDULE:
*Asterisk items are suggested as time allows.

WEEK 1:
FEB 2 INTRODUCTION

FEB 4 WHAT IS FASHION?
BARNARD: 11. John Flugel, Protection

WEEK 2:
FEB 16 ARISTOCRATIC POWER
BARNARD: 5. Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, “Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory”
**“The Essence of Style: How the French invented High Fashion...”**

FEB 18 MODERN FRENCH POWER

WEEK 3:
FEB 23 FASHION AS LAW

FEB 25 THE FASHION WORLD
BARNARD: 32. Elizabeth Wilson, “Adorned in Dreams”
ARTICLE: David Gilbert, “Urban Outfitting (Fashion Cities),” *Fashion Cultures*
*Research topics discussed at end of class

WEEK 4:
MAR 2 POWER DESIGNERS
Initial topic idea due, please have it on paper to turn in
*ONLINE: Galliano, Still the Master Showman

MAR 4 FRIDAY EXCURSION
Please meet at location at 1:00pm
*Reminder final topic and bibliography due next class + sample brand
WEEK 5:
MAR 9  BRAND POWER
Final Topic & Bibliography Due / Please bring any brand
BARNARD: 43. Tamsin Blanchard “Fashion & Graphics”
BANARD: 37. Fashion, or the Enchanting Spectacle of the Code, Jean Baudrillard

MAR 11  BRAND POWER
ARTICLE: Asok Som, “LVMH: Personal touch that built an empire of style and luxury”

WEEK 6:
MAR 16  EXAM REVIEW
MAR 18  MID TERM EXAM

WEEK 7:
MAR 23  THE POWER OF APPEARANCES
Please bring any fashion photo
BARNARD: 40. Roland Barthes, “Fashion Photography”
*ONLINE: Extreme Beauty in Vogue: 75 Years of Photography (22 photos)

MAR 25  THE POWER OF APPEARANCES
BARNARD: 42. “Doing Fashion Photographs” Erica Lennard

WEEK 8:
MAR 30  SEXUAL POWER
*ARTICLE: Reka Buckley and Stephen Gundle, “Flash Trash: Gianni Versace and the theory and practice of glamour,” Fashion Cultures

APR 2  THE MODEL & STAR POWER
ARTICLE: Patricia Beltran, “Fashion Models as Ideal Embodiments of Normative Identity”
ARTICLE: Brian Morean, “Celebrities, Culture & Name Economy”
*ARTICLE: Andy Warhol, “Fame,” The Philosophy of Andy Warhol, pp. 73-86.

WEEK 9:
APR 6  PURCHASE POWER

APR 8  *FRIDAY EXCURSION
Please meet at the main building at 1:00pm
Espace Culturel Louis Vuitton, “Behind the Scenes”
WEEK 10:

APR 13  SUBCULTURAL POWER
*ARTICLE: Lisa Birnbach, excerpts from The Official Preppy Handbook, 1980

APR 15  RESISTANCE / PAPER DUE
Because your paper is due, you will be assigned to read only ONE of the following:
BARNARD: 7. Fred Davis, “Antifashion: The Vicissitudes of Negation”
See also French Institute for Intellectual Property, http://www.unifab.com/

SPRING BREAK FRI APR 16 – MON MAY 3

WEEK 11:

MAY 4  PRESENTATIONS
MAY 6  PRESENTATIONS

WEEK 12:

MAY 11/13  REVIEW/FINAL (contingent on Ascension Day holiday)

READING QUESTIONS
1. What is the context? Look at the text to see when and where the text was published.
2. Who is the author? Look up the author online.
3. What is the approach? Reading the introduction or first paragraph should inform you of the author’s intentions. Is the article trying to be historical or theoretical? Is it trying to present facts and research?
4. What is the terminology? In order to accomplish the objectives for this course you will need to understand related terminology. Marking terms for class discussion is helpful.
5. What is the point of view? Reading the conclusion or last paragraph will suggest the author’s position.
6. How can it be applied? Can you find evidence of the ideas in the real world?

RESEARCH GUIDE
The goal is to develop your research skills and gain an informed opinion.
1. The topic should address a specific aspect of fashion and power
2. You are the author, consider existing interests and resources
   Narrow your research by your existing interests (historic era, particular designer, etc). You are in Paris so also consider something here you can access firsthand.
3. Plan the approach and a specific angle for a point of view
   You need an angle on the topic. A basic book report style paper (The story of the corset) is not permitted. We will discuss how to narrow the topic through place and date.
4. Use of relevant terminology
   Use the terms we learn in class in your research analysis
5. Informed point of view
   By the time you complete your research, you should have an informed point of view on the topic that you can easily express in your presentation.
6. Format
   Double spaced, maximum 12 point font (Arial, Helvetica, Times New Roman etc) 7-9 pages. The bibliography and footnotes must be consistent with MLA style. You must have 15 sources minimum to start and use a minimum of 5 in direct reference in your paper.