Course Description

In this course we will examine fashion as an important component of culture, and come to understand the role of fashion in constructing and perpetuating relations of power at the societal level. Our readings and discussions will span historical periods, geographic locations, subcultural groups, and identity categories such as gender, ethnicity, class, and sexuality. We will draw on the theories and methods of cultural studies, urban sociology, critical race theory, feminist theory, performance theory, queer theory, and political economic analysis. Throughout our study of fashion and power, we will trace eight keywords or central concepts: Representation, Identity, Control, Hierarchy, Transgression, Resistance, Appropriation, and Pleasure. Students will have the opportunity to trace these concepts through readings, discussions, written assignments, visual image curation, and in-class group activities.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
- Define fashion as a component of culture and carrier of meaning
- Recognize the power relations embodied and expressed in fashion phenomena
- Identify various methodological approaches to the study of fashion, power, and culture
- Explain, through visual imagery and writing, the relationship between fashion and power
- Critically analyze fashion's role in social power relationships
- Synthesize critical studies of fashion and identify key themes in fashion theory and critique
- Suggest new analytical lenses through which fashion and power might be understood
- Identify and cultivate personal and professional areas of interest in fashion

Required Texts

All required readings will be provided as PDFs during the first week of the term. You are encouraged to obtain a personal copy of Dick Hebdige's *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, as we will be reading the whole thing in Week 6.
Course Grade Calculation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Percentage of Final Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Pinterest Board</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keyword Curation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final post</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outline</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final submission</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Curation</td>
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<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curation Write-up</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class Activities</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Final grades, based on total points earned, out of 500:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>320-334</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>335-349</td>
<td>D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>350-369</td>
<td>C-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>370-384</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>385-399</td>
<td>C+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400-419</td>
<td>B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>420-434</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>435-449</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>450-469</td>
<td>A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>470-500</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation Criteria

A = Excellent  
This work demonstrates comprehensive and solid understanding of course material and presents thoughtful interpretations, well-focused and original insights, and well-reasoned analysis. It is thought-provoking and creative, and pushes the reader beyond predictable conclusions. It includes skillful use of source materials and illuminating examples and illustrations. It is submitted in polished form and manifests sincere effort to be thorough and professional.

B = Good  
This work demonstrates a complete and accurate understanding of course material, presenting a reasonable degree of insight and broad level of analysis. Work reflects competence. Source material, along with examples and illustrations, are used appropriately. “B” work is reasonable, clear, appropriate and complete, but may not demonstrate unique or original insight. It may also be lacking in polish, effort, or professional presentation.

C = Adequate/Fair  
This work demonstrates a basic understanding of course material but remains incomplete, superficial or expresses some important errors or weaknesses. Source material may be used inadequately or somewhat inappropriately. The work may lack concrete, specific examples and illustrations and may be hard to follow or vague. It belies a clear lack of effort and polish.

D = Unsatisfactory  
This work demonstrates a serious lack of understanding and fails to demonstrate the most rudimentary elements of the course assignment. Sources may be used inappropriately or not at all. The work may be inarticulate or extremely difficult to read.
Course Policies

Participation: All students are expected to actively participate in class sessions. This means coming to class prepared by having done all the readings, bringing assigned readings to class, paying attention during all lectures and screenings, asking thoughtful questions, and sharing personal insights when appropriate. Your participation grade is assessed above and beyond your attendance; just showing up to class will not earn you any participation points. Spending class time on your laptop or cell phone engaged in non-class activities will negatively affect your participation grade. Regular tardiness will affect your participation grade, as it presents an obstacle to starting class discussions on time and thereby detracts from the other students’ learning experience.

A note about virtual participation alternatives: if you are not the kind of person who is comfortable volunteering in class, you can also participate by actively engaging with your classmates’ blog posts on a regular basis and by tweeting using the course hashtag. If you plan to pursue this option, please make me aware of your Twitter username. Note that participating in online formats will not excuse you from being attentive during class discussions.

Publication of work: Some of the work for this class will be posted publicly on the course WordPress and Pinterest sites. This has a dual purpose of cultivating conversation among and beyond the participants in the class, and of allowing you to practice presenting your ideas in a public forum (a professional and civic skill for which the Media, Communication, and Culture program is hopefully preparing you.) To protect your online privacy, you are welcome to create a pseudonymous WordPress account for use in the class – please let me know if you do so. You are free to delete your posts from the site once final grades have been submitted, if you wish. My professorial evaluations of your work will not be public – they will remain confidential between you and me.

Late work: Due dates are firm. Assignment grades will be automatically reduced by 10% for each day (or fraction of day) they are late. If you must submit work late, kindly notify me so that I know you are planning to turn it in. The final essay cannot be turned in late, as I must report final grades immediately after the essay due date.

Backing up your work: Online platforms like WordPress and Pinterest can be unstable. Always save your work for yourself offline so that if the web version goes awry you still have something to submit as a back-up. This is especially important in this course since we will be experimenting with Pinterest and there may be great opportunity for error.

Absences: You are allowed 3 unexcused absences, no questions asked. After that, any absences will result in a 10% reduction in your attendance grade, per absence. If you have extenuating personal circumstances, please arrange a meeting with me so that together we can be sure your attendance will not adversely impact your performance in the course.

Making up activities: I will post links to all in-class activities on the course webpage as the semester progresses. If you need to miss class for any reason, please check this space in advance and download the activity for the day you will miss. If you complete it and email it to me by the end of class time on the missed day, you can still receive credit for the activity. You may not make up activities after the fact - you must download and submit it no later than all the other students who are present in class. I reserve the right to give surprise activities/quizzes during class, in which case they may not be made up in advance or after the fact. You are of course welcome to download any past activities for your own reference.

Students with disabilities: Students with physical or learning disabilities are required to register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities, 726 Broadway, 2nd Floor, (212-998-4980) and are required
to present a letter from the Center to the instructor at the start of the semester in order to be considered for appropriate accommodation.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM:** I take academic integrity extremely seriously. When you turn in work that is not your own, you communicate to me that you are not serious about this course and I will adjust your grade to reflect that. If I suspect that you have submitted dishonest work, you will receive a zero for the assignment. You may also fail the course and the case may be forwarded to department and university administrators. If you have any doubts as to whether work you plan to submit violates the standards of academic integrity, please ask me in advance. It is better to have an honest question cleared up before the fact than to risk failure and disciplinary action.

All students must be familiar with the NYU Steinhardt School definition of plagiarism and the policy on academic integrity. The NYU Steinhardt Statement on Academic Integrity is available at:
http://steinhardt.nyu.edu/policies/academic_integrity

The Steinhardt School defines plagiarism as follows:
*Plagiarism, one of the gravest forms of academic dishonesty in university life, whether intended or not, is academic fraud. In a community of scholars, whose members are teaching, learning and discovering knowledge, plagiarism cannot be tolerated.*
*Plagiarism is failure to properly assign authorship to a paper, a document, an oral presentation, a musical score and/or other materials, which are not your original work.*
You plagiarize when, without proper attribution, you do any of the following:
* Copy verbatim from a book, an article or other media;
* Download documents from the Internet;
* Purchase documents;
* Report from other's oral work;
* Paraphrase or restate someone else's facts, analysis and/or conclusions;
* Copy directly from a classmate or allow a classmate to copy from you.

**Other Resources for Students**

**The Writing Center**
http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/writing_center.html
411 Lafayette, 3rd Floor, New York, NY 10003
212 998-8866
mailto:writingcenter@nyu.edu
writingcenter@nyu.edu
Hours: Monday to Thursday, 10 am to 8 pm; Friday, 11 am to 4 pm

**NYU Wellness Exchange**
http://www.nyu.edu/999
212-443-9999
The Wellness Exchange is the constellation of the University's expanded and enhanced programs and services designed to address the overall health and mental health needs of our students.
Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction
1/29: Introductions – no readings
1/31: Wilson, "Adorned in Dreams"
  Roach and Eicher, "The Language of Personal Adornment"

Week 2: How to think about fashion
2/5: Hebdige, "From Culture to Hegemony"
  Davis, "Do Clothes Speak? What Makes Them Fashion?"
2/7: Wilson, "Fashion and City Life"
  Simmel, "Fashion"
  Wallace, "The Geography of Girlwatching in Postwar Montreal"

Week 3: Status and display
2/12: Veblen, Theory of the Leisure Class (excerpts)
2/14: Bourdieu, Distinction (excerpts)
  Young, "Signaling Status with Luxury Goods"

Week 4: Questioning trickle down fashion
  Marwick, "Conspicuous and Authentic"
2/21: Fiske, "The Jeaning of America"
  Dant, "Consuming or Living With Things?"

Week 5: Hip
2/26: Grief, "The Hipster In the Mirror"
  Aiello, "Field Guide to the Urban Hipster" (to be provided)
  One more reading, TBA
2/28: Frank, "Fashion and Flexibility"
  Gladwell, "Listening to Khakis"
  White, "Burn Down the House of Commons in Your Brand New Shoes"

Week 6: Subculture
3/5: Hebdige, Subculture: The Meaning of Style, Part One
3/7: Hebdige, Subculture: The Meaning of Style, Part Two

Week 7: Bodily Transgression
3/12: Stallybrass and White, "From Carnival to Transgression"
  Lundoff, "Tattoo Me"
  Vale & Juno, "Modern Primitives"
  Suggested: Interview with Don Ed Hardy (modernprimitives-donedhardy.pdf)
  **Personal Pinterest Board (at least 5 pins) due**

Week 8: Style Politics
3/26: Cosgrove, "The Zoot Suit and Style Warfare"
  Portwood-Stacer, "I'm Not Joining Your World': Performing Political Dissent through Spectacular Self-Presentation" (to be provided)
  **Keyword curation topics due (know your keyword and your theme)**
3/28: Mercer, "Black Hair/Style Politics"
Week 9: Cultural Appropriation
4/2: Tu, "The Cultural Economy of Asian Chic"
    Yang, "Why the Rise of Asia in Fashion Isn't As Beautiful As It Seems"
4/4: hooks, "Eating the Other"
    Hix, "Why the 'Native' Fashion Trend Is Pissing Off Real Native Americans"

Week 10: Fashion as Industry
4/9: Freudenberg, "Fashion, Sumptuary Laws, and Business"
    Wilson, "The Fashion Industry"
    **Keyword curations due**
4/11: Beard, "The Branding of Ethical Fashion and the Consumer: A Luxury Niche or Mass-Market
    Reality?" (to be provided)
    Made By Women pdf (choose any 2 chapters)

Week 11: Femininity and Patriarchy
4/16: Nelson, "Dress Reform and the Bloomer"
    Foucault, "Docile Bodies"
    Bartky, "Foucault, Femininity, and Patriarchal Power"
4/18: Bordo, "The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity"
    Wright, "Objectifying Gender"

Week 12: Gender Discipline
4/23: Jantzen, Ostergaard, & Vieira "Becoming a 'Woman to the Backbone': Lingerie Consumption and
    the Experience of Feminine Identity"
    Foucault, "Technologies of the Self"
4/25: Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination"
    Newton, "Role Models"
    Frye, "Politics of Reality"

Week 13: Lesbians
4/30: Inness, "Flunking Basic Gender Training"
    Kennedy and Davis, "'We're Going to be Legends, Just Like Columbus Is': The Butch-Fem Image
    and the Lesbian Fight for Public Space"
    Suggested: Austin, "Femme-in-ism"
    Suggested: Moore, "Lipstick or Timberlands: Meanings of Gender Presentation in Black Lesbian
    Communities"
5/2: Woolfe, "It's Not What You Wear"
    Stein, "All Dressed Up But No Place to Go"
    **Final paper outline due**

Week 14: Fetishism and Erotics
5/7: Steele, "Fashion and Fetishism"
    Read one of the following (you’ll be assigned one of the three)
    Kunzle, "The Special Historic and Psychological Role of Tight-Lacing"
    Gamman & Makinen, "Female Fetishism"
    Roberts, "The Exquisite Slave"
5/9: Wrap-up
    **Personal Pinterest Board (at least 10 pins) due**

**Final Paper due Thursday 5/16 by 6pm**