SAMPLE SYLLABUS – This syllabus is provided as a sample. Some course content may vary.

NYU Steinhardt
DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA, CULTURE, AND COMMUNICATION

E59.1345
FASHION AND POWER

Course Description:

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:

This course aims to develop your knowledge and skill-set and by the end of the course students should be able to:

- Analyze mass culture, the culture industry and the production of culture
- Demonstrate an understanding of the economic, social and cultural aspects of fashion
- Critique the role fashion and style play in visual self-presentation
- Demonstrate an understanding of the economic, social, and cultural aspects of fashion
- Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship of modernity to style and visuality
- Demonstrate a critical analysis of celebrity culture and how it functions

Course Readings:

Books:
Anne Hollander, *Sex and Suits: The Evolution of Modern Dress*

All articles available in a course reader which is mandatory.

Course Requirements and Assignments:
Students are required to do all of the reading, attend all classes, complete all assignments, and participate fully in class discussion. Attendance is mandatory and will be taken each class meeting. Attendance grade may be affected by your promptness and level of attention during class lecture. You are allowed two absences without explanation, after which there is a deduction of half a grade off the final grade for each unexcused absence.

Use of computer in the classroom is a privilege. You may use a computer in the classroom ONLY for taking notes. If you abuse this privilege by checking email or going on the Internet, you will be marked as absent for that class period. All other electronic devices (cell phones, MP3 players, etc.) must be turned off and put away during class time.

There are two papers, a midterm, and a final exam (which will be cumulative but concentrate primarily on the second half of the course). These assignments will be worth the following portion of your grade:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 1</td>
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<td>Midterm</td>
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<td>Paper 2</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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Paper 1 will be a 5-8 page paper on a topic related to the rise of modern fashion or fashion images. You will be given a choice of topics to choose from several weeks before the assignment is due. Paper 2 will be 10-12 pages on an approved topic of your choice. Proposals for these papers will be due in Week 10. The midterm and final exams will consist of short answers and longer essay questions.

You will receive details about each assignment/exam separately. All assignments must be completed and handed in on time to avoid a grade reduction. If you are unable to turn in an assignment due to illness or a personal emergency, you must provide written documentation that will allow you to be excused, or discuss your situation with me in a timely manner. Do not wait until the end of the semester to sort things out. Remember: this is YOUR responsibility.

**Grading:**

You are responsible for the material covered in class and in the reading. You will be evaluated on the following:

1) the level of your engagement with the class materials (as demonstrated in your written work and class participation)
2) your capacity to explain your ideas and analysis in articulate and well-written forms
3) your ability to creatively explore those theories and methodologies

All of your work will be graded on two primary evaluative scales:

1) how well it demonstrates an understanding of the theories and methodologies of the class
2) how well it articulates and structures its argument

You must complete ALL of these assignments in order to pass the class. Failure to complete one of them will result not only in an F for that assignment, but a failing grade in the course.

Grades will be assigned as follows:
A outstanding, thoughtful and insightful work and analysis, showing an ability to think beyond the basic course material
A-/B+ above average work, demonstrating effort and keen understanding of conceptual ideas
B/B- average work, needs improvement on ideas and argument
C+/C shows little effort, lacks clarity and/or argument
C- and below fulfilling the bare minimum and showing little understanding of the material

If you have concerns regarding a grade on a given assignment, you must appeal it in writing, stating the reasons why you feel the grade is inaccurate, within 48 hours of receiving the graded assignment. No late appeals will be accepted for review.

INTRODUCTION

Week 1

Class 1: Introduction

Class 2: Fashioning the Self
Reading:
Erving Goffman, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (excerpt)
Anne Hollander, Sex and Suits, Introduction

Week 2

Class 3: Modern Life
Reading:
Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life.” From On Individuality and Social Forms
Walter Benjamin, “Paris, Capital of the 19th Century”

Class 4: What is Fashion
Reading:
Anne Hollander, Sex and Suits, Chapter 2: The Work of Fashion
Georg Simmel, “Adornment.” In *The Rise of Fashion*

**Week 3**

**Class 5: The History of Fashion**
Reading:
Anne Hollander, *Sex and Suits*, Chapter 3: The Genesis of the Suit
Elizabeth Wilson, “The History of Fashion”

**Class 6: Fashion and the Masses**
Reading:
Anne Hollander, *Sex and Suits*, Chapter 4: Modernity
Christopher Breward, “Early Twentieth Century: Clothing the Masses”

**FASHION AND IMAGE PRODUCTION**

**Week 4**

**Class 7: Fashion Photography**
Reading:

**Class 8: Style and Vogue**
Reading:
Anna König, “*Sex and the City*: A Fashion Editor’s Dream?”
Susan Sontag on Richard Avedon British *Vogue*

**Week 5**

**Class 9: Fashion Icons**
Reading:
Valerie Steele, “Chanel in Context”
Rachel Moseley, “Trousers and Tiaras: Audrey Hepburn, a Woman’s Star”
Kathleen Craughwell-Varda, “Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis”

**Class 10: Supermodels and Superstars**
Douglas Kellner, “Madonna, Fashion and Identity”
Jennifer Craik, “Supermodels and Super Bodies”

**Week 6**
Class 11: Costume Design: Fashion and Hollywood
Reading:
Deborah Nadoolman, excerpts from Costume Design

Class 12: Costume Design in Hollywood
Reading:
Pamela Church Gibson, “The Rough with the Smooth': Male Costuming in Contemporary Hollywood”

FASHIONING GENDER, SEXUALITY AND THE BODY

Week 7

Class 13: Men’s Fashion: The Dandy, the “Metrosexual” and the Non-Fashion Guy
Reading:
Anne Hollander, Sex and Suits, Chapter 5: Nowadays
Christopher Breward, “The Dandy Laid Bare: Embodying Practices and Fashion for Men”

Class 14: The “Non-Fashion Guy”
Reading:
Tim Edwards, “Private Investigations: Interpretations on the Theme of the New Man” and “The Marketing of Masculinities”
Malcolm Gladwell, “Listening to Khakis”

PAPER 1 DUE

Week 8

Class 15: Androgyny
Reading:
Fred Davis, “Ambivalences of Gender: Boys Will Be Boys, Girls Will Be Boys”

Class 16: MIDTERM
Week 9

Class 17: The Body as Work of Art: Fashion and Spectacle
Reading:
Fiona Anderson, “Museums as Fashion Media”
Debora Silverman, “Selling Culture: Bloomingdale’s Diana Vreeland, and the New Aristocracy of Taste in Reagan’s America”

Class 18: Fashion at the Edge
Reading:
Natalie Kahn, “Catwalk Politics”
Caroline Evans, “Fashion at the Edge”
Daniel Wojcik, “Punk and Neo-Tribal Body Art”

THE FASHION INDUSTRY

Week 10

Class 19: Economies of Fashion
Reading
Joanne Enstwistle, “The Fashion Industry”

Class 20: The Business of Fashion
Reading:
Katy Chapman, “Inside Design: A Look at the Method Behind the Madness”

PAPER 2 PROPOSALS DUE

Week 11

Class 21: Traveling Fashion
Reading:
Peter Jackson, “Local Consumption Cultures in a Globalizing World”
Arthur C. Mead, “Made in China”
“Finding the Moral Fiber: Why Reform is Urgently Needed for a Fair Cotton Trade”
Richard McIntyre and Yngve Ramstad, “Not Only Nike’s Doing It: ‘Sweating’ and the Contemporary Labor Market”
Class 22: Global Markets
Reading:
Norma M. Rantisi, N.M. “The Designer in the City and The City in the Designer”
David Gilbert, “World Cities of Fashion”

Week 12

Class 23: Fashion as Consumption
Reading:
Louise Crewe and Alison Goodrum, “Fashioning New Forms of Consumption: The Case of Paul Smith”
Sharon Zukin, “B. Altman, Ralph Lauren, and the Death of the Leisure Class”

Class 24: Selling Luxury
Dana Thomas, Deluxe (excerpts)

BOTTOM UP: FASHION AND MASS CULTURE

Week 13

Class 25: Street Style
Reading:
Dick Hebdige, “Subculture: The Unnatural Break”
Stuart Cosgrove, “The Zoot Suit and Style Warfare”

Class 26: Style Politics
Reading:
Yuniya Kawamura, “Japanese Street Fashion: The Urge to Be Seen and To Be Heard”

Week 14

Class 27: Thrift Culture
Reading:
Angela McRobbie, “Second-hand Dresses and the Ragmarket”

Class 28: DIY Fashion
Tadashi Suzuki and Joel Best, “The Emergence of Trendsetters for Fashions and Fads: Kogaru in 1990s Japan”

**Week 15**

**Class 29: Mass Fashion and Fashioning Lifestyle**
Reading:
Sarah Berry, “Be Our Brand: Fashion and Personalization on the Web,”

**Class 30: Conclusion: Paper 2 DUE**

**May XX Final Exam**