

Department of Women's Studies and Feminist Research  
Course Outline  
WS 2164F: GENDER & FASHION  
Autumn 2018



**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. K. Olson ([kolson2@uwo.ca](mailto:kolson2@uwo.ca))

**OFFICE:** Lawson Hall 3227 (661-2111 x 84525)

**OFFICE HOURS:** Tuesdays, 4:00-5:00 PM or by appointment

**TIME AND PLACE OF CLASS:** Mondays, 1:30-4:30, SEB 1200

**REQUIRED TEXT:**

- J. Craik. 2009. *Fashion: The Key Concepts*. Berg/Bloomsbury Academic. Ppk.  
=FKC
- Other readings will be available on our OWL site or online.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** This course is designed to give students an introduction to the role played by fashion in the construction of gendered identities (in addition to learning about fashion history, fashion in relation to sexuality, and fashion as identity).

Topics to be covered include: what clothing can tell us about empire, gender, sexuality, class, race, industry, revolution, nation-building, identity politics and globalization; fashion as art; drag queens and kings; fashion and sustainability; fashion journalism; the metrosexual; the history of the stiletto; veiling; and fashion subcultures such as goth and punk. We will also examine the trends of athleisure, anti-fashion, slow fashion, and normcore. Although the focus of much of the course will be on Western fashion, we will also look at Asian and African designers and influences (Harajuku fashion, Pei and Yamamoto; hip-hop and *The Black Panther*), as well as indigenous fashion.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

On successful completion of this course students are expected to be able to:

- \*Reflect upon and communicate the ways that individuals use fashion to make statements about gender and identity
- \* Understand the performativity of gender in relation to fashion
- \* Have an understanding of fashion history and style trends
- \*Identify different ways of understanding fashion (in relation to history, class, philosophy, health, society, literature, and popular culture)
- \* Critically reflect on the uses of fashion in the media
- \* Know and compare multiple theoretical and disciplinary perspectives and viewpoints concerning fashion

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES/TRANSFERABLE SKILLS:**

Students completing this course are expected to have acquired:

- an understanding of the importance of historical perspective, and how social norms and customs, as well as categories of gender, are products of time, events and context
- strong writing, research, analytical, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills

**NOTE FROM THE DEAN OF ARTS and HUMANITIES:** You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that you have not taken an antirequisite course. Lack of prerequisites may not be used as basis of appeal. If you are not eligible for a course, you may be removed from it at any time, and you will receive no adjustment to your fees. These decisions cannot be appealed.

**PLAGIARISM:** Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

### **POLICY ON ACCOMMODATION FOR MEDICAL ILLNESS:**

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf)  
[downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> [under the Medical Documentation heading] Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed

tests, exams and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Office of the Dean of their home faculty and provide documentation. **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION CANNOT BE GRANTED BY THE INSTRUCTOR OR DEPARTMENT.**

**WESTERN ACCESSIBILITY POLICY.** Western has many services and programs that support the personal, physical, social and academic needs of students with disabilities. For more information and links to these services: <http://accessibility.uwo.ca>

**EMOTIONAL/MENTAL DISTRESS** Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

## **GRADES:**

Midterm: 25%

Analysis of a fashion ad: 15%

Fashion journal: 30%

Final exam: 30%

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= 100%

The **midterm and final exam** are designed to test student knowledge of readings and lecture material and are multiple-choice. The **analysis of a fashion ad** is a short deconstruction of a print or video fashion ad (3 pages double-spaced) and is due **Mon Oct 22<sup>nd</sup>**. The **fashion journal** is a handwritten, electronic, or video journal consisting of four weeks' worth of personal reflection on fashion systems, the fashion of yourself and those around you and is due **Mon Dec 3<sup>rd</sup>**. Illustrations encouraged. Writing prompts to follow.

## **NOTES TO STUDENTS:**

1. Since the tests are given in class time, there can be no conflicts. **More than one test on the same day does not constitute a conflict.** Plan your schedule ahead of time. All exams are **multiple-choice**.
2. Exam questions will be based on lectures as well as assigned readings. Failure to complete the required readings before an exam does not constitute a valid reason for postponing that exam. **Plan your schedule ahead of time.**
3. Those who miss classes or parts of classes remain responsible for the material they have missed. The instructor and the TA will not review the contents of lectures or repeat announcements for those who arrive late or miss classes. I post **very** basic powerpoints on OWL, but class attendance is still **essential** to understand the details of the lecture.
4. The final grade is calculated on the basis of your performance on the exams **only**. **You cannot do an extra assignment to make up for a poor performance on an exam.** Nor can I re-weight exams except in cases of documented medical or personal crisis.

5. I am happy to speak to you about your grade based on your performance in the class. I am not willing to discuss your grade based on: 1) the grades you usually receive in other courses; 2) the grade you feel you deserved; 3) the grade you need to get into a special programme.

## **CLASS SCHEDULE:**

### **PART ONE: theories of fashion; history of fashion and the body**

#### **Sept 10:**

- Introduction to course.
- What is fashion?
- Fashion as maker and marker
- Performance theory/fashion as inner theatre
- Theories of fashion: cycles and structures; symbols and codes;

**Reading:** FKC pp. 1-14, 19-48, 105-121

- History of fashion: the head (hats and hairstyles).

**Reading:** L. Cross. 2008. Fashionable hair in the eighteenth century: theatricality and display. In G. Biddle-Perry and S. Cheang, eds. *Hair: Styling, Culture, and Fashion*. Berg: 15-26; S. Cheang and G. Biddle-Perry. 2008. Hair and human identity. 243-253. In G. Biddle-Perry and S. Cheang, eds. *Hair: Styling, Culture, and Fashion*. Berg; C. Hughes. *Hats*. Bloomsbury: 36-63.

- History of fashion: neck and shoulders (ruffs, cravats)

#### **Sept 17:**

- History of fashion: the waist (corsets, male and female)

**Reading:** V. Steele. 2001. *The Corset: A Cultural History*. Yale Univ. Press: 1-33.

- History of fashion: the chest (bras, swimwear)

**Reading:** FKC: 278-280

- History of fashion: the hips (pockets, bustles, crinolines, farthingdales, petticoats, hoopskirts, mantuas)

**Reading:** <https://mic.com/articles/133948/the-weird-complicated-sexist-history-of-pockets#.mp0Pu6RAW>

- History of fashion: the genitals and legs (codpieces, hose, skirt length, trousers, bloomers, breeches, jeans, pantyhose, underwear)

**Reading:** FKC 124-126

- History of fashion: the feet (shoes)

**Reading:** E. Semmelback. 2008. *Heights of Fashion: A History of the Elevated Shoe*. Bata Shoe Museum: 5-66; H. Persson. 2015. Objects of desire: the cult of shoes. In H. Persson, ed. *Shoes: Pleasure and Pain*. V&A publishing: 11-21; R. Bain. 2015. Suffering for beauty. In H. Persson, ed. *Shoes: Pleasure and Pain*. V&A publishing: 66-75; FKC 127-129

#### **Sept 24:**

- The Eurocentric fashion system

**Reading:** FKC 63-92, 96-101

- Fashion magazines/ fashion journalism

**Reading:** K. N. Best. 2017. *The History of Fashion Journalism*. Bloomsbury: 217-242

**Watch:** *The September Issue* (2009)

- The runway/modern designers
- Pop culture and fashion

**Reading:** FKC 245-271

- Pop music and fashion
- Fashion, aesthetics, and art

**Reading:** Anne Hollander. 1975. *Seeing Through Clothes*: pp. 83-156; 311-390. KFC 171-183, 186-190

## **PART TWO: Modern fashion**

**Oct 1:** NO CLASS (Dr Olson away on a lecture tour)

**Oct 8:** THANKSGIVING. No class.

**Oct 15:**

- The business of fashion

**Reading:** FKC 205-232

- The politicization of fashion

**Reading:** FKC 284-285, 292-305

- Fashion and sustainability

**Reading:** <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-44968561>

- Fast fashion/slow fashion

**Watch:** <http://truecostmovie.com/>

- Second-hand clothing

**Reading:** FKC 242-243

- Globalization and fashion

**Reading:** FKC 240-241

- Consumerism

**Reading:** FKC 147-148

**Oct 22:**

- Modern fashion trends: normcore
- Modern fashion trends: athleisure
- Modern fashion trends: hippies: 1960s - today/Coachella
- Modern fashion trends: subcultures: emo, goth, punk

**Reading:** C. Spooner. 2004. *Fashioning Gothic Bodies*. OUP: 159-197; FKC 288-292

- Modern fashion trends: the man-repeller/ anti-fashion
- Modern fashion trends: the color black

**Reading:** FKC 42-47, 51-53, and also

[https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2018/jul/26/the-bright-side-why-women-fell-out-of-love-with-black?CMP=fb\\_gu](https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2018/jul/26/the-bright-side-why-women-fell-out-of-love-with-black?CMP=fb_gu)

- Feminism & fashion, gender, identity

**Reading:** FKC135-143; and also:

<http://msmagazine.com/blog/2012/01/17/if-the-clothes-fit-a-feminist-takes-on-fashion/>

<https://www.vogue.com/article/finding-feminism-in-fashion>

### **Oct 29: \*\*in-class midterm**

#### **Nov 3:**

- Retro vs vintage; rockabilly
- Historical sewing/costumers
- *Mad Men* and the 60s: nostalgia

**Reading:** H. Jenss. 2015. *Fashioning Memory: Vintage Style and Youth Culture*. Bloomsbury: 1-9, 15-36; A. Dove- Vieban. Mourning becomes *Mad Men*: notes on

nostalgia: <https://ivc.lib.rochester.edu/mourning-becomes-the-mad-men-notes-on-nostalgia/>

**Watch:** any episode of *Mad Men*

- Street fashion and Instagram; Bill Cunningham

**Watch:** *Bill Cunningham New York* (2010)

#### **Nov 10:**

- The sexualization of fashion/fashion & eroticism
- Fetish and fashion

**Reading:** V. Steele. 1996. *Fetish: Fashion, Sex, and Power*. OUP: 11-55

- Prostitution and fashion/fashion porn
- Fashion and aging: advanced style, Iris Apfel.

**Watch** *Advanced Style* (2014) OR *Iris* (2015)

- The plus-sized woman

**Reading:** FKC 168-170

- Disability and fashion

**Reading:**

<https://www.autostraddle.com/i-looked-at-my-body-and-said-yes-where-disability-and-style-meet-326851/>

#### **Nov 17:**

- Black fashion: *Black Panther* and hip-hop

**Reading:** H. Alford. 2009. The Zoot suit: its history and influence. In P. McNeil and V. Karaminas, eds. *The Men's Fashion Reader*. Berg: 353-359; M. Miller. 2013. Fresh-dressed like a million bucks: black dandyism and hip-hop. In K. Irvin and L. Brewer, eds. *Artist, Rebel, Dandy: Men of Fashion*. Yale Univ. Press: 149-173.

- Japan: Harajuku fashion; Asian designers (Pei, Yamamoto, Miyake)

**Reading:** FKC 159-161, 183-186

- indigenous fashion/ cultural appropriation

**Reading:** E. H. Matthes. 2016. Cultural appropriation without cultural essentialism? *Social Theory and Practice*, 42. 2: 343-366.

**Also:**

<https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/opinion/why-fashion-needs-cultural-appropriation>

<https://medium.com/@sonyahallett/cultural-appropriation-whose-culture-is-it-anyway-and-what-about-hybridity-3d3398a6d9d6>

- Veiling

**Reading:** F. El Guindi. 1999. *Veil: Modesty, Privacy and Resistance*. Berg: 129-145; FKC 306-315.

### **Nov 24:**

- 'Gay' fashion: men

**Reading:** S. Cole. 2013. Queerly visible: gay men, dress, and style 1960-2012. In V. Steele, ed. *A Queer History of Fashion: From the Closet to the Catwalk*. Yale University Press: 135-161. **Also:**

David Sedaris: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/03/28/david-sedaris-shops-for-clothes-in-tokyo>

- 'Gay' fashion: women

**Reading:** E. Wilson. 2013. What does a lesbian look like? In V. Steele, ed. *A Queer History of Fashion: From the Closet to the Catwalk*. Yale University Press: 167-190; V. Karaminas. 2013. Born this way: lesbian style since the eighties. In V. Steele, ed. *A Queer History of Fashion: From the Closet to the Catwalk*. Yale University Press: 193-216

- Drag queens and kings/ camp

**Reading:** <https://www.vogue.com/projects/13541679/drag-kings/> And: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/style/article-long-live-the-queens-how-drag-culture-went-mainstream/>

And:

[https://daily.jstor.org/unspeakable-linguistics-camp/?mc\\_cid=79b4aa8dbd&mc\\_eid=6614913b0c](https://daily.jstor.org/unspeakable-linguistics-camp/?mc_cid=79b4aa8dbd&mc_eid=6614913b0c)

- The *Queer Eye* reboot

**Reading:** <https://thebaffler.com/latest/the-queer-art-of-failing-better-penny>

**Watch:** *Queer Eye* Season 1 ep. 4 ("To Gay or Not Too Gay"); and Season 2 ep. 5 ("Sky's The Limit")

### **Dec 3**

- Men's fashion

**Reading:** FKC 143-146

- Sex and suits

**Reading:** G. A. Ross. 2011. *The Day of the Peacock: Style for Men 1963-1973*. V&A Publishing: 49- 64, 69-83; A. Hollander. 1994. *Sex and Suits: The Evolution of Modern Dress*. Bloomsbury: 97-115, 174-199; FKC 122-123

- Uniforms

**Reading:** E. Hackspiel-Mikosch. 2009. Uniforms and the creation of ideal masculinity. In P. McNeil and V. Karaminas, eds. *The Men's Fashion Reader*. Berg: 117-129; FKC 148-158 (uniforms, male and female).

- The dandy / metrosexual



**Reading:** O. Vainshtein. 2009. Dandyism, visual games, and the strategies of representation. In P. McNeil and V. Karaminas, eds. *The Men's Fashion Reader*. Oxford and New York: Berg. 84-107; FKC 93-95, 166-167. Also: Mark Simpson, Meet the Metrosexual:

<https://www.salon.com/2002/07/22/metrosexual/>

- Men in heels and skirts/ glam rock/the peacock

C. Breward. 2015. Men in heels: from power to perversity. In H. Persson, ed. *Shoes: Pleasure and Pain*. V&A publishing: 128-139.