HIST 077. Fashion: History and Theory
W 1:15-4:00 pm, Trotter 303

Professor BuYun Chen
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Office Hours: Friday, 1:00-3:00 pm
Office: Trotter 205

This course explores the theoretical frameworks and multiple methodologies that have been applied to the study and interpretation of fashion. Over the course of the semester, we will trace the historical development of fashion systems and fashion theory, with a special focus on East Asia. We will read key texts in fashion studies to reflect critically on how we define fashion in different historical and cultural contexts. Using textual, visual, and material sources, we will examine historical representations of dress, the politics of dress, fashion and the body, and consumption and modernity. Our approach will be interdisciplinary, embracing history, anthropology, art, and literature.

Course Requirements
Your grade for this course will be calculated as follows:

(1) Engagement 20%
Each member of the class is expected to attend every class, come prepared, and actively participate in discussion. Preparation for class involves completing the required readings and composing thoughtful blog posts each week. In discussions, you will be asked to participate by asking questions, posing arguments, and responding to your peers’ points of view. Come to class having thought about the material, made notes of what interested or surprised you, and be ready to discuss it.

(2) Think Pieces 20%
Over the course of the semester, you will be required to post weekly responses (300 words min., Moodle) to the assigned readings that address the themes and topics raised in the readings and/or in class. You should not summarize the week’s readings or discussions. The think piece is a space for you to work through the challenging questions or concepts of the week, post revelations or provocations, and experiment with new ideas or theories. You are also strongly encouraged to read each other’s think pieces.

Due on the Tuesday before our class meetings, by 9pm. All responses must be posted on Moodle. Late think pieces will not be accepted.

(3) Midterm Project: Genealogy of a Garment/Accessory/Style 20%
For this project, you will be asked to take an individual garment/accessory/style or a specific genre of clothing (for example, the three-piece suit) and trace its development across time and space. To help us better explore how fashion is a dynamic process that involves the creation, revision, and adaptation of style, this assignment calls upon you to show how a garment can illuminate the social and cultural context in which they circulated. More specific guidelines to follow.

Due Friday, March 4th, by 5pm. (6-8 pages; Formatting requirements: double-spaced, 12 pt. font, one-inch margins)
(5) Final Project: Fashion Reader

For the final project, you will be asked to collaborate with your classmates to produce a critical fashion reader that is designed to target students, scholars, or anyone interested in fashion in East Asia. The reader will bring together essays on key theoretical concepts, the histories of specific trends, and the greater historical, social, and cultural context. The range of topics to be included will be decided collectively, as a class. Each student will contribute one essay (10-12 pages) on one of the selected topics. Like any co-edited volume, you will be asked to collaborate with each other to decide on content and to compose the front matter (Title, Table of Contents, Introduction, Acknowledgements) and the back matter (Bibliography, Index). Formatting should be consistent with that of a published book. Class time will be allotted to work on the catalogue. Your grade for this project will be an average of: 1) the individual essay and 2) the group catalogue.

**Individual essay due Friday, April 29th, by 5pm.** (10-12 pages; Formatting requirements: double-spaced, 12 pt. font, one-inch margins)

**Reader due Friday, May 13th, by 5pm.**

**Policy on Extensions** Extensions will be granted only in the case of medical emergency (upon submission of written proof) or formal notification by a class dean. Late assignments will be penalized by the deduction of one-half of a letter grade per day.

**History Department Policies on Attendance & Communication** Students are required to attend all classes. **Unexcused absences will result in a lower grade for the course.** If you are having a medical or personal emergency, please contact the Dean’s Office as well as the instructor of the course. It is your responsibility to inform your instructor as soon as possible. It is essential that you check your email on a regular basis since I will contact you via email. I also expect you to use email to contact me.

**Disability Accommodations** If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact Leslie Hempling in the Office of Student Disability Services (Parrish 113) or email lhempli1@swarthmore.edu arrange an appointment to discuss your needs. As appropriate, she will issue students with documented disabilities a formal Accommodations Letter. Since accommodations require early planning and are not retroactive, please contact her as soon as possible. For details about the accommodations process, visit the Student Disability Service Website at http://www.swarthmore.edu/academic-advising-support/welcome-to-student-disability-service. You are also welcome to contact me [the faculty member] privately to discuss your academic needs. However, all disability-related accommodations must be arranged through the Office of Student Disability Services.

**Course Texts**
All readings are available for download from the course’s Moodle site or as an E-Book accessible via Tripod.

**Topics and Reading Schedule**

**FOUNDATIONS**

**Week 1** 01.20 Introduction
Syllabus.

**Week 2  01.27  Coming to terms with the F-word: Theory**


**Week 3  02.03  Coming to terms with the F-word: Method**


**Week 4  02.10  Was Fashion a European Invention?**


**THE BODY**

**Week 5  02.17  The Gendered Body**


**Recommended**


**Week 6  02.24   The Body as Project**


**Week 7  03.02   The Body as Practice**


**Recommended**


**Week 8   SPRING BREAK**

**THE SELF**

**Week 9  03.16   Between Self and Society**


**Week 10 03.23 Self-fashioning**


**Week 11 03.30 A Matter of Taste**


**THE ECONOMY**

**Week 12 04.06 “The favored child of capitalism”**


**Week 13 04.13 Orientalism and its Aesthetics**


Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2015.


**Week 14  04.20  The Urban Spectacle**


**Conclusion**

**Week 15  04.27  Reflections on the F-word**