Fashion and Digital Media
Summer 2020
Dr. K. Van Cleaf
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Office hours: Tuesday 12-1 PM
Wednesday 12-1 PM, 5-6 PM
By Appointment

This course examines what happens when one of the oldest forms of communication, fashion, meets up with the newest, digital media. Fashion and digital media provide platforms for self-expression, contesting social values, and employ a global network of people. Using fashion as a case study, we will explore the ways digital media and emerging technologies operate, as well as the influence fashion and digital media have on each other. More than any other industry, digital media has completely reconfigured the fashion world, such that: bloggers have usurped famous magazine editors at fashion shows, the retail industry is collapsing as online shopping takes off, platforms such as Instagram create new forms of social status and power. While digital media creates new jobs, communities, and celebrities in the fashion world, it also aggravates existing social inequalities. We will read from diverse disciplines including communications, sociology, anthropology, media studies, fashion studies, and marketing.

Required Texts:

All readings will be distributed via URL on the schedule, email, or online at:

www.fashioningsociology.com.

Objectives:
- Students will develop a unique understanding of digital media by studying it from the vantage point of the fashion industry.
- Students will study how fashion and digital media create community, culture, identity, new forms of work, and resistance.
- Students will learn about the historical connections between fashion and technology.
- Students will learn about the ethical issues, such as plagiarism, in both fashion and digital media.
- Students will be able to trace how federal regulations and immigration policies impact both digital media and the fashion industry.
- Students will develop an understanding of how gender, race, class, sexuality, and other forms of minority status aid and abet the digital media fashion industry.

Meeting Times (VIA ZOOM):
LINK HERE:
TUESDAY: 1-4 PM (approximately)**.** One-on-one meetings: 4-5:00
WEDNESDAY: 1-4 PM (approximately). One-on-one meetings: 4-5:00
THURSDAY: 1-4 PM Technical Help, website/workshare, and Quiz Review
(We will take a scheduled break at 2:15 each day)

We will meet together as a class on Tuesday and Wednesday to discuss the upcoming week, go over assignments, talk about ideas, and share interpretations/work. At least once during the semester, students will present a short *concept connect* (see below) to the class via ZOOM. You will be able to copy paste links to your examples into the chat feature so we can all click and look together (or I can make you a co-host and you can share your screen, whatever works best for you!). Thursdays we will meet on Zoom from 1-3 PM to help each other learn new technologies, and offer guidance on setting up websites, sharing our work, and offering feedback. I will also offer quiz review on Thursdays. I will send out the link to the quiz after we conclude review, and you will have 24 hours to complete it. I will be available for office hours 12-1 on Wednesdays and Thursdays and 5-6 on Wednesdays, or by appointment.

In order to successfully complete this course, you should have access to a computer and a reliable internet connection. Please double-check that you are able to meet these system requirements for using Zoom.

> **Zoom Etiquette & Expectations:** You are expected to attend our synchronous class meetings held M/W/Th from 1-2:30pm, and to adhere to the following guidelines:
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> – Leave the **video on** for the duration of the meetings. We are trying to mimic the classroom experience as closely as possible, which includes most people being able to see each other.
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> – Please turn your **audio off except when you want to speak**, to minimize background noise while others are speaking.
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> – Please **use the "raise hand" function** to contribute to discussion.
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> – Feel free to use virtual backgrounds as long as they don't eat up too much of your bandwidth and interfere with your audio/video quality.
>
> – We are a scholarly community in pursuit of the free and open exchange of ideas. By registering for this class, you agree to treat each other and the professor with respect. To that end, during our first class meeting, we will collectively generate a list of guidelines for respectful discussion.

Attendance:
Fordham's university-wide policy is that 3 unexcused absences results in a failing grade. If you miss four or more and due to an emergency, family, personal, or medical reason, you must notify both myself and your class dean of the issue at hand with appropriate documentation. It is your responsibility to get readings/assignments for missed days from other students, and you are encouraged to come to my office to discuss topics you're unclear on.

Part of our overall learning experience is sitting, thinking, and talking together. I realize this is a challenge in a completely online environment, but I have designed the course with plenty of time for interaction and sharing ideas.

Course Workload:
Online Zoom Meeting Participation and Concept-Connect (25%): Participating in at least 85% (roughly 12-13 class periods) of our online class meetings are required to receive full credit for online participation. Additionally, to receive full credit, I am looking for thoughtful and generous discussion. I will ask students to share their individual work from their journals, and this counts towards participation.

> **Concept-Connect:** Once during the semester you will have to bring in an example of an outside media supplement (an image, a campaign, a speech, video, article, hashtag trend, song…anything) that illustrates ONE concept from our scheduled reading for that day. You should spend no more than a few minutes explaining the concept itself. You do not have to

summarize the scheduled reading. In fact, if you do summarize, I will deduct points! You *do* have to show and tell us how your media object exemplifies ONE key aspect of the reading. Finally, please have ONE discussion question over the reading/your presentation for the class. You don't have to 'ask' the class, but you should be able to point out a tension or the underlying assumptions/structure of the text. We will schedule these the first week/day of class.

5 Weekly Online Quizzes (50%): These will be distributed via email and you will have a window of time to complete the quiz. Results will be emailed shortly after the closing time. We will discuss results the following week. The quizzes will be over our readings, discussions, and concept-connects from the week. Everything we discuss, share, and/or read could be on the quiz. These will be multiple choice, true/false, and possibly short answer. I will use google forms to create the quizzes. They are open note, book.

Online Fashion Journal (25%): Every week there will be 2-4 writing prompts and short answer essay questions. Some weeks I may allow you to choose questions to answer, some weeks you will have to answer all of them. You must complete these and, to get a good grade, will need to answer them thoughtfully. If you are unable to set up a website, I ask that you create a google folder to house all of your assignments and share the folder with me.

GRADING SCALE:

100=A+	79-77 = C+
99-93=A	76-72 = C
92-90=A-	71-70 = C-
89-87=B+	69-60 = D
86-83=B	Below 58 = F
82-80=B-	

RULES/POLICIES: No cheating, no plagiarism. Respect each other and different opinions.

1. **Final grades are FINAL:** I do not negotiate grades. Do not ask. I do not need to hear about your GPA, or what grade you *need* or *must* get. You are responsible for your grades. Regardless of what other faculty tolerate, I do not negotiate grades with students. ALL GRADES ARE FINAL. If you wish to learn more about why you earned the grade you were assigned, you must see me during my posted office hours. Nonetheless, students should remember that coming early and often for help *does not guarantee* that I will pass you. *In the final hour, you need to demonstrate proficiency in the material, no matter how hard you tried*. Coming to class, trying hard/studying many hours in college is a given. In the end, you must produce college-level work.

******I will probably change, delete or ADD readings to this schedule. I will always give you notice but you must come to class to stay abreast of any changes.**

******Please email me if you are having trouble with the course material in anyway.

******Plagiarizing in any way, shape or form will result in a zero for that assignment or test. I will report it to your advisor, class dean, and fill out a report for the academic integrity committee to review. I take this very seriously so please see me if you're nervous about properly citing your work. Please see the academic integrity policy below.

IMPORTANT!! Each class period will be a blend of discussions of readings and in-class activities. This course requires you to share your work, as well as offer **kind** and **thoughtful** critiques of your peers' work.

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SCHEDULE

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Fashion as Communication, Fashion as Technology

MODULE 1   **Fashion Theory / Tech Set up**

Intros

#OOTD (outfit of the day) post or the alternative assignment for next week.

Tech set up session: Wordpress, Wix, Tumblr….etc!

Simmel, George. 1957. "On Fashion" *American Journal of Sociology*, v 62, 6. 541-588. URL: http://sites.middlebury.edu/individualandthesociety/files/2010/09/Simmel. fashion.pdf

"The High Cost of High Fashion" by Minh-ha T. Pham URL: https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/06/fast-fashion-labor-prada-gucci-abuse-designer

Fiske, John.   1989   "The Jeaning of America" URL: https://people.southwestern.edu/~bednarb/critical-cultural/articles/fiske.pdf

"How Luxury Fashion Was Reduced to Logomania" by Eugene Rabkin, URL: https://www.highsnobiety.com/p/luxury-fashion-appeal-lost-today/

Assignments/Workload

1. Website/online journal set up with OOTD/about me post
2. Short post on Simmel, with examples from contemporary life.
3. Short post on Fiske, with examples from contemporary life.
4. Quiz 1 completed by May 29th, 5 PM.

MODULE 2   **Digital Media and Fashion**

Rocamore, A. 2017. "Mediatization and Digital Media in the Field of Fashion" (website)

"Shops aren't for shopping anymore" URL:

https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2018/06/shops-arent-for-shopping-anymore/563054/

Connell, Catherine. 2013. "Queer Fa(t)shion Blogging as Counterdiscourse" *WSQ*, 41

Assignments:
1. Find examples of the three forms of medization Rocamore discusses and post them on your journal, explaining how your examples illustrate her ideas.
2. Write a short post (500-750) words on how COVID 19 has changed, challenged, or accelerated the process of mediatization (you can focus on arenas beyond fashion if you'd like to!)
3. Find examples of "counter discourse" and "counter publics" online and create a short presentation to share during our ZOOM meeting. Write a short post on whether or not you think digital media can effect social change in the fashion world, or beyond. Is digital media changing our ideas and norms of beauty? Of a 'normal' size? Find and use examples!
4. Finish Quiz 2 by JUNE 5th, 5 PM

MODULE 3 Political Economy of Fashion: New Forms of Gendered Labor

Media, Markets, Gender: Economies of Visibility in a Neoliberal Moment bySarah Banet-Weiser, *The Communication Review*, 18: 53-70, 2015.

Duffy, B. E., & Hund, E. (2015). "Having it all" on social media: Entrepreneurial femininity and self-branding among fashion bloggers. *Social Media + Society*, *1*(2), 1-11.

"Posting Instagram Sponsored Content is the New Summer Job" by Taylor Lorenz, *The Atlantic*, URL:

https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2018/08/posting-instagram-sponsored-content-is-the-new-summer-job/568108/

Adams Stein, J. (2017). "Labor, entrepreneurialism and the creative economy in neoliberal times." *Fashion Theory*, 21, 5, 609-615.

Assignments:

1. Find examples of both the "can-do" girl and the "at-risk" girl and share on your website. Do you think these categories are changing with the COVID 19 crisis? Or, are different groups falling into new categories? Explain.

2. How do you think the COVID 19 crisis will change the labor market for creative workers? Do you think we will see more neoliberal policies (as described by the authors) or fewer such policies? How are the creative workers and industries responding to the cricis?

3. Finally, consider the three tropes discussed in Duffy and Hund's article. Find one of the Instagram accounts they studied and look at recent posts: have the tropes changed with respect to the COVID crisis? What, if any, new narratives are being created? Or, how are the existing tropes taking into account any social changes?

4. Finish quiz 3 by June 12th, 5 PM

MODULE 4 Racial Fashioning of Digital Media

Pham, Minh Ha T. 2015 *Asians Wear Clothes on the Internet*. Raleigh: Duke Press.

Intro-Chapter 1

Pham, Chapter 1-2

Visit the Cooper Hewitt online exhibit of Willi Smith's work and life here: https://willismitharchive.cargo.site/

Visit the Fashion and Race database here: https://www.fashionandrace.com/

Assignments:
1. Explain how Pham connects the factory, garment workers to bloggers and others in the creative industries. What role does race play?
2. Why was there a "taste" for Asian fashion bloggers around 2008?
3. Do you think Asian fashion bloggers changed the Western European dominance in fashion and the beauty industries? Why or why not?
4. Do you find any examples of old stereotypes and racist narratives towards Asian people reemerging? Where? How? Describe and share examples.
5. What's the connection between fashion and patriotism? Or with fashion and the state?
6. Complete quiz 4 by June 19th, 5 PM.

MODULE 5: Fashioning a Digital Self

> Whitefield-Mandrano, Autumn. 2016 "Like" Me: How Social Media and 24/7 Surveillance are Shaping Women's –and Men's—Self Image" in *Face Value: The Hidden Ways Beauty Shapes Women's Lives.* Simon & Schuster: New York.

> Barker, Jessica. "Considering Snapchat Filters as Digital Adornment" *The Fashion Studies Journal*. URL: http://www.fashionstudiesjournal.org/commentary/2017/7/2/considering-snapchat-filters-as-digital-adornment

Assignments:

1. How has social media changed, challenged or ignored racial differences?
2. What are some ways social media engages with ideas about masculine beauty and feminine beauty differently?
3. Do you think our norms of masculinity are shifting? Find examples from Instagram accounts to support your hypothesis.
4. Final reflection post: what have you learned this semester? how do you think of fashion differently? How do you think of digital media differently? Feel free to write about any aspects of the semester, or summarize your previous posts.
5. Final quiz: due by June 25th, 5 PM (this is a Wednesday!)

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: A University, by its nature, strives to foster and recognize originality of thought. Originality can only be recognized, however, when people acknowledge the sources of ideas or works that are not their own. Therefore, students must maintain the highest standards with regards to honesty, effort and performance. As a Jesuit, Catholic University, Fordham is committed to ensuring that all members of the academic community strive not only for excellence in scholarship but also for integrity of character. In the pursuit of knowledge and personal development, it is imperative that students present their own ideas and insights for evaluation, critique and eventual reformulation. As part of this process, each student must acknowledge the intellectual contribution of others…. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating on exams, falsification, unapproved collaboration, and destruction of library materials. For further details,

consult the Standards of Academic Integrity on the University website
http://www.fordham.edu/academics/handbooks__publicati/undergraduate_academ/index.asp

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL ACCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS: The Office of Disability
Services at Fordham University helps to ensure equal educational access and opportunity for all
members of our community. In the Jesuit tradition of cura personalis, members of the ODS staff
work individually with each student to understand his or her strengths and limitations in order to
develop their most effective and comprehensive accommodation plan. Fordham will offer
reasonable and appropriate auxiliary aids and services to assist otherwise qualified persons in
achieving access to its programs, services, and facilities once students meet with ODS for an
initial intake meeting to develop an accommodation plan directly with the student in accordance
with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title III of the Americans with
Disabilities Act of 1990. Students seeking accommodation(s) should contact Erin Koch,
Assistant Director of Disability Services, (212) 636-6282 or disabilityservices@fordham.edu.