

# FASHION, GENDER, AND IDENTITY

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## SUBJECT DESCRIPTION

This subject explores the social and political representations of gender and identity in fashion by studying the conditioning of the body and body image in western society. It challenges students to question fashion imagery and to analyse its message surrounding gender and cultural identity. It engages with fashion theory regarding the construction, performance and representation of gendered and sexual identities. The representation of appearance and its projection through media and cultural production is a key theme of this subject and provides the opportunity for students to engage in different modes of representation such as film, advertising, fashion photography, texts, and magazines.

## SUBJECT OBJECTIVES

On completion of this subject, students should be able to:

1. research, source and debate ideas as the basis for informed design development
2. analyse and interpret information to inform new avenues of personal research
3. explore creative interpretation of ideas into design solutions
4. explore a wide range of references to inform individual design practice
5. present appropriate visual and written representation of ideas and designs.

## CONTRIBUTION TO COURSE AIMS AND GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

This subject introduces students to historical and current theoretical debates in fashion and textile design. The subject explores a wide range of issues that have, and continue to, inform contemporary fashion design practice and encourages professional responsibility. This subject contributes to the Course educational aims to produce graduates with high levels of:

- Creativity and Innovation.
- Communication and Interpersonal Skills.
- Practical and Professional Skills.
- Critical Thinking and Research Skills.
- Appropriate professional and personal Attitudes and Values.

This subject allows students to put into practice knowledge already gained in the course, it also provides an opportunity to extend or deepen their learning in specific areas.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

The activities for this subject are centered on research and informed social and political analysis. Students are expected to conduct research, attend all lectures and tutorials and follow suggested progress patterns for each of their project work.

## CONTENT

The subject is facilitated through a combination of lectures and design studio. Where relevant, site visits are contented into the program to promote research methods and inquiry. Lectures promote theoretical inquiry and observation of case studies and pre-empt design studio, they are forums for explanation and contextualisation of briefs. The subject covers the following topic areas:

1. The language of clothes: semiotics of fashion.
2. Further issues of 'difference', for instance, cultural, disability, age, class structures, etc.
3. The status of fashion: Haute couture to mass market.
4. Thinking outside the square – challenging design practice through project work.

- WEEK  
**1** | INTRODUCTION. WHY TAKE FASHION SERIOUSLY?  
Discuss various artists and see Kenneth Anger, *Kustom Kar Kommandos*
- WEEK  
**2** | SUBCULTURAL IDENTITY: STYLE AND RESISTANCE  
Clark. et.al: *Subcultures, Cultures and Class*  
Cosgrove: *The Zoot Suit and Style Warfare*
- WEEK  
**3** | LOCATING FASHION AND GENDER IN MODERNITY  
Hollander: *Sex and Suits*
- WEEK  
**4** | THE SUIT  
Guest lecture by Justine Taylor of OPUS 9  
Kutcher: *The Three Piece Suit*  
Hollander: *The Genesis of the Suit*
- WEEK  
**5** | KEEPING THE FAITH: RELIGIOSITY AND RESPECTABILITY IN 19TH CENTURY BLACK AMERICA  
Guest lecture by Dr. Kevin Su  
Klassen: *The Robes of Womanhood*  
Schmidt: *A church Going people*
- WEEK  
**6** | QUEER STYLE AND QUEER IDENTITY  
Cole: *Macho Man*  
Creed: *Lesbian Bodies*
- WEEK  
**7** | BORN THIS WAY. LESBIAN STYLE FROM THE PARISIAN SALONS OF THE 20TH CENTURY TO LADY GAGA.  
Clark: *Commodity Lesbianism* Ciasullo: *'Making her (In)Visible: Cultural Representations of Lesbianism and the Lesbian Body in the 1990s*
- WEEK  
**8** | FASHION, FEMINISM AND IDENTITY  
Wilson: *Feminism and Fashion* Church Gibson: *Redressing the balance*

WEEK  
**9** | *FASHION AND REPRESENTATION*  
Karaminas: *Image. Fashionscapes*  
Barthes: *Fashion Photography*

WEEK  
**10** | *MASCULINITIES. THE MAKING OF FASHIONABLE MEN*  
Conekin: *Fashioning the playboy*  
Osgerby: *Playboys in Paradise*

WEEK  
**11** | *FASHION AND ORIENTALISM*  
Guest lecture by Sue Osmond  
Gilbert: *From Paris to Shanghai*  
Kawamura: *The Japanese Revolution in Paris Fashion*

WEEK  
**12** | *OF VOGUE AND CADILLACS. LEISURE, FEMININITY AND THE FASHION PUBLICATION*  
Mathews David Alison: *Vogues New World*  
Stewart: *Copying and Copyrighting Haute Couture*

**ASSESSMENT ITEM 1** | DESIGN EXERCISES THAT EXPLORE DESIGN IDEAS COVERED IN THE SUBJECT.

- TASK**
1. Taking elements of construction and design from a chefs uniform and a military uniform, design a third 'hybrid' uniform.
  2. Taking elements of construction and design from the traditional suit, design a 'unisex' or 'androgynous' suit.
  3. Taking elements of construction and design from the tracksuit, design a pair of casual unisex trousers.

**INCLUDE IN YOUR SUBMISSION:**

1. A design rationale of 200 words that explains your concept
2. At least three A4 pages showing your visual research and the development of your concept in sketches and annotations. Present your work in an A4 display folder.
3. One A3 finished colour rendering of each of your three your final looks. Include your name, subject number and task on the back of the renderings.

- CRITERIA**
1. Evidence of research that underpins to design practice
  2. Explore theoretical ideas into design solutions
  3. Interpretation of ideas into design practice

**ASSESSMENT ITEM 2** | ESSAY - WRITTEN COMPONENT ADDRESSING THEORETICAL MATERIAL COVERED IN THE SUBJECT.

LENGTH: 2000-2500 WORDS

- TASK**
- How does fashion aid in the social construction of gender? What does appearance say about who we are? Or, who we are not? Discuss using at least two examples. Your essay must contain an introduction, body, conclusion and bibliography and must not exceed 3,000 words. You must use Harvard referencing system (in text).

- CRITERIA**
1. Critically analyse and interpret information and research data
  2. Evidence of wide research practices
  3. Clear and concise presentation of ideas

## ASSESSMENT ITEM 3

### PERSONAL DESIGN PROJECT - A DESIGN OUTCOME THAT EXPLORES THE CREATIVE ASPECTS OF THE SUBJECT.

**TASK** | Philosopher Jacques Derrida's concept of "deconstruction," a term used to describe the process of uncovering the multiplicity of meanings in text, has been used to analyze everything from modern art to architecture. As applied to fashion, deconstruction has come to imply a decoding of both meaning and designer intent, as well as a descriptive term for certain structural characteristics.  
[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/vivw/hd\\_vivw.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/vivw/hd_vivw.htm)

#### CHOOSE ONE READING FROM THE FOLLOWING LIST:

Hackspiel-Mikosch, E. 2009, 'Uniforms and the Creation of Ideal Masculinity' in P. McNeil & V. Karaminas (eds) *The Men's Fashion Reader*, Berg, London.

Bruzzi, S. 2009, 'The Italian Job: Football, Fashion and That Sarong' in P. McNeil & V. Karaminas (eds) *The Men's Fashion Reader*, Berg, London.

Alford, H. 2009, 'The Zoot Suit: Its History and Influence' in P. McNeil & V. Karaminas (eds) *The Men's Fashion Reader*, Berg, London.

McLaughlin, N. 2009, 'Rock, Fashion and Performativity' in P. McNeil & V. Karaminas (eds) *The Men's Fashion Reader*, Berg, London.

Gilligan, S. 2009, 'Becoming Neo: Costume and Transforming Masculinity in the Matrix Films' in P. McNeil, V. Karaminas & C Cole (eds.) *Fashion in Fiction: Text and Clothing in Literature, Film and Television*. Berg, London.

OR

Use any of the readings from this course.

**TASK** | Design one haute couture look, which deconstructs the contemporary male business suit. You may design a male or female look. Use the theoretical perspectives in your chosen reading to influence your conceptual development.

#### INCLUDE IN YOUR SUBMISSION:

1. A design rationale of 500 words that explains your concept in light of the reading you have chosen or the issues that have been raised in one week's reading from your subject reader. This should be referenced using UTS Harvard.
2. At least five A4 pages showing your visual research and the development of your concept in sketches and annotations. Present your work in an A4 display folder.
3. One A3 finished colour rendering of your final look. Include your name, subject number and task on the back of the rendering.

- CRITERIA**
1. Evidence of theoretical research that underpins creative practice
  2. Evidence of critical analysis that informs new and innovative research
  3. Evidence of the exploration of creative ideas and theory into practice
  4. Evidence of research
  5. Evidence of visual material connected to ideas