

in the

FASHION & B THE BODY

United States



INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Sean Trainor | Adjunct Lecturer | Department of History | University of Florida
LECTURE MEETING: MWF 12:50-1:40am (Period 6) | 22 Aug. – 7 Dec. (Fall 2016) | LOCATION: FLI 0105

CONTACT INFORMATION AND OFFICE HOURS:

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INTRODUCTION AND COURSE OBJECTIVES

If one were to ask a sampling of Americans, “Are fashion and body care more important than voting?” most respondents would likely say “No.” And yet, while Americans voters go to the polls, at most, once every few months, they dress and groom themselves every day. Indeed, while voting may determine our society’s leaders, fashion and body care shape our world in ways every bit as profound. Today, as for much of human history, these areas are at the heart of the world economy. The apparel industry alone is valued at three trillion dollars and accounts for one-fiftieth of global GDP. More frighteningly, clothing production is responsible for 10% of global carbon emissions – five times more than all air travel combined.

The importance of fashion and body care is nothing new. In the nineteenth century, cotton – the lifeblood of that era’s garment industry – almost single-handedly gave rise to modern industrial capitalism in Europe and insured that American slaveholders would maintain a suffocating grasp on their human property until the Civil War. Since then, cotton producing, textile manufacture, and the clothing trade have transformed much of the rest of the world: bringing the benefits of economic modernization to some while consigning others to lives of dangerous, tedious, and low-waged (or occasionally un-waged) labor.

The significance of fashion and body care is not merely economic, however. Fashion and body care also profoundly shape our identities, our culture, and our sense of the world. The drab, nineteenth-century business suit, for instance, offered newly-minted male citizens of the United States a way to make sense of democratic citizenship. It also provided a means by which some Americans – most often black Americans – were excluded from democratic citizenship. Cosmetics, meanwhile, presented early-twentieth-century women with a novel sense of self-confidence as they played an increasingly visible role in public life. Simultaneously, these products also reinforced the sexualization of women’s bodies and compelled women to spend more time (and more money) on their appearance.

In light of all this, my goals for this course are twofold. First, I hope to instill a sense of the profound importance of fashion and body care – in both the past and present. Second, I hope to complicate your understanding of fashion and body care. Some of you may have arrived in this class believing the subjects of the course are either immutably good or hopelessly evil. I hope to convince you that they are, by turns, both and neither – protean forces that, like capitalism, religion, war, and sex, defy easy judgments.

COURSE TEXTS

This is a reading-intensive course. While students are not required to purchase any texts, they will nevertheless be expected to read between 50 and 100 pages of material each week. All readings will be available on the Canvas course management system.

GRADING AND EVALUATION

- Please note: there is no final exam in this course. -

- *Attendance: 20%*
- *Participation: 30%*
- *Group Discussion: 10%*
- *Midterm Paper: 15%*
- *Final Paper: 25%*

Attendance

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of both lecture and section meetings. If students arrive after attendance has been taken, they should speak to Dr. Trainor who will consider offering attendance credit on a case-by-case basis.

Students may miss up to three classes with no questions asked. Should they miss additional classes, they must request an excused absence from Dr. Trainor. For information on what constitutes an excused absence, students should consult UF's attendance policies:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

Participation

Classroom participation is a key component of this course. **Students are expected to participate in no fewer than two-thirds of all class sessions.** For those who do not feel comfortable participating in person, I will also award participation points for questions and comments proffered on the Canvas discussion board.

Group Discussion

Working in groups, students will be expected to lead a group discussion on a topic of their choice related to American fashion and body history between 1776 and the present. Details of this assignment can be found on the Group Discussion Prompt on Canvas.

Midterm Paper

Students will submit a 4-6 page midterm essay on Friday, 14 October. The prompt for this paper will be available on Canvas. **All papers should be submitted electronically via Canvas and must be double spaced, with one-inch margins, in twelve-point, Times New Roman font. Electronic copies of papers should be submitted to the Canvas drop box in either .doc or .docx format.**

Final Paper

At the end of the semester, students will be required to submit a 4-to-6-page paper on a major theme or development in American fashion and body history between 1776 and the present. This paper must utilize both primary and secondary sources. Details of this project will be available on Canvas. As with the midterm paper, **all essays should be submitted electronically via Canvas and must be double spaced, with one-inch margins, in twelve-point, Times New Roman font. Electronic copies of papers should be submitted to the Canvas drop box in either .doc or .docx format.**

LATE PAPERS

Late papers will be marked down one half letter grade for each day that they are late, unless students provide their instructor with documentation of extenuating circumstances.

GRADE SCALE

94-100 = A

90-93.9 = A-

88-89.9 = B+

82.5-87.9 = B

80-82.4 = B-

78-79.9 = C+

72.5-77.9 = C

70-72.4 = C-

68-69.9 = D+

62.5-67.9 = D

60-62.4 = D-

Less than 60 = F

EMAIL / CANVAS MESSAGE POLICY

Students should expect a response to questions, comments, or concerns in 24 hours or fewer.

GRADING POLICIES

Grading policies for this course are compliant with those of the university. To learn more about these policies, please visit <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

COLLEGE ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report

any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

ONLINE COURSE EVALUATIONS

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

All course readings are available on the Canvas course management system. Readings are due on the day for which they are assigned (i.e. readings listed under 8 January are due by class time on 8 January).

WEEK 1

- MONDAY, 22 AUGUST (Introduction: Why should we care about fashion and body history?)
- WEDNESDAY, 24 AUGUST (Discussion: The Fabric[s] of Our Lives)
 - **Assignments:**
 - Write a 250-word reflection on one of the following topics and come to class prepared to discuss the contents of your reflection.
 - *Option 1:* Select an item of clothing in your wardrobe or a routine act of grooming and describe why it is meaningful to you.
 - *Option 2:* Select an item of clothing or a grooming tool that you wear or use regularly and imagine its history (i.e. think about the materials from which it was made, the people who designed it, the people who made it, the people who shipped and sold it, etc.).
 - *Option 3:* Briefly describe one way in which clothing, style, body care, or fashion has impacted your life or that of a friend or family member.
 - **Readings:**
 - W. Caleb McDaniel, "How to Read for History"
- FRIDAY, 26 AUGUST (Introduction to Group Discussion Project)
 - **Assignment:**
 - Take Syllabus Quiz on Canvas
 - **Readings:**
 - Group Discussion Project Prompt

WEEK 2

- MONDAY, 29 AUGUST (Cotton and the Making of Modern Fashion)
 - **Readings:**
 - Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (Knopf: 2015), "Introduction"
- WEDNESDAY, 31 AUGUST (Slavery and the Making of a Cotton Empire)
 - **Readings:**
 - Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (Knopf: 2015), "Slavery Takes Command"
- FRIDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER (Introduction to Final Paper)
 - **Readings:**
 - Final Paper Prompt

WEEK 3

- MONDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER (Labor Day – **NO CLASS**)
- WEDNESDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER (Victorian Women’s Fashion in Theory and Practice)
 - **Readings:**
 - Valerie Steele, *Fashion and Eroticism: Ideals of Feminine Beauty from the Victorians Era to the Jazz Age* (Oxford: 1985), “Introduction” and “Victorian Fashion”
- FRIDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER (The “Problem of Fashion” in Victorian America)
 - **Readings:**
 - Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America* (Yale: 1982), “Preface” and “Sentimental Culture and the Problem of Fashion”

WEEK 4

- MONDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER (Victorian Women’s Fashion: Liberatory or Oppressive?)
 - **Readings:**
 - Valerie Steele, *Fashion and Eroticism: Ideals of Feminine Beauty from the Victorians Era to the Jazz Age* (Oxford: 1985), “The Corset Controversy”
- WEDNESDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER (Women’s Fashion: Towards Modernity)
 - **Readings:**
 - Valerie Steele, *Fashion and Eroticism: Ideals of Feminine Beauty from the Victorians Era to the Jazz Age* (Oxford: 1985), “The Changing Ideal of Feminine Beauty”
- FRIDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER (Introduction to Library Resources)

WEEK 5

- MONDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER (Men’s Tailoring and Customized Uniformity)
 - **Readings:**
 - Michael Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy: A History of Men’s Dress in the American Republic, 1760-1860* (Chicago: 2003), “The Reinvention of Tailoring”
 - WEDNESDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER (Men’s Business Suits and the Uniform of Democracy)
 - **Readings:**
 - Michael Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy: A History of Men’s Dress in the American Republic, 1760-1860* (Chicago: 2003), “A Fashion Regime”
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- FRIDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER (Introduction to Midterm Paper)

- **Readings:**
 - Midterm Paper Prompt

WEEK 6

- MONDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER (America Immersed: The Return of the Bath in Victorian America)

- **Readings:**
 - Katherine Ashenburg, *The Dirt on Clean: An Unsanitized History* (North Point, 2007), "Wet All Over at Once: America, 1815-1900" and "Soap Opera: 1900-1950"

- WEDNESDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER (Modern America and the Cult of Cleanliness)

- **Readings:**
 - Katherine Ashenburg, *The Dirt on Clean: An Unsanitized History* (North Point, 2007), "The Household Shrine: 1950 to the Present"

- FRIDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER (Group Discussion #1)

WEEK 7

- MONDAY, 3 OCTOBER (Romantic Beards, Patriarchal Beards, and Muscular Moustaches)

- **Readings:**
 - Christopher Oldstone-Moore, *Of Beards and Men: The Revealing History of Facial Hair* (Chicago, 2016), "Beards of the Romantic Imagination," "Patriarchs of the Industrial Age," and "Muscles and Mustaches"

- WEDNESDAY, 5 OCTOBER (Racist Beards, Bearded Women, and Bearded [?] Presidents)

- **Readings:**
 - Sean Trainor, "The Racially Fraught History of the American Beard," *The Atlantic* (Jan. 20, 2014)
 - Sean Trainor, "Lessons of the Bearded Lady," *The Atlantic* (Dec. 5, 2015)
 - Sean Trainor, "The Beard That Wasn't: Abe Lincoln's Whiskers," *The Appendix* (Apr. 1, 2015)

- FRIDAY, 7 OCTOBER (Group Discussion #2)

WEEK 8

- MONDAY, 10 OCTOBER (Cosmetics and the Rise of Women's Entrepreneurship)

- **Readings:**
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- Kathy Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (Metropolitan: 1998), "Introduction" and "Beauty Culture and Women's Commerce"
- WEDNESDAY, 12 OCTOBER (Cosmetics: Liberatory or Oppressive?)
 - **Readings:**
 - Kathy Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (Metropolitan: 1998), "Promoting the Made-Up Woman" and "Shades of Difference"
- FRIDAY, 14 OCTOBER (Homecoming – **NO CLASS**)

- **Assignments:**

○ MIDTERM PAPER DUE (SUBMIT VIA CANVAS)
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WEEK 9

- MONDAY, 17 OCTOBER (New Bodies for New [and Old] Men)
 - **Readings:**
 - John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America* (Hill and Wang, 2001), "Introduction" and "Who is the Perfect Man?: Eugen Sandow and a New Standard for America"
- WEDNESDAY, 19 OCTOBER (Eugen Sandow and the Rise of Bodybuilding)
- FRIDAY, 21 OCTOBER (Library Research Day)

WEEK 10

- MONDAY, 24 OCTOBER (Library Research Day)
- WEDNESDAY, 26 OCTOBER (X-Rays and Armpits)
 - **Readings:**
 - Rebecca M. Herzig, *Plucked: A History of Hair Removal* (New York University: 2015), "'Smooth, White, Velvety Skin': X-Ray Salons and Social Mobility" and "Unshaven: 'Arm-Pit Feminists' and Women's Liberation"
- FRIDAY, 28 OCTOBER (Going Brazilian)
 - **Readings:**
 - Rebecca M. Herzig, *Plucked: A History of Hair Removal* (New York University: 2015), "'Cleaning the Basement': Labor, Pornography, and Brazilian Waxing"

WEEK 11

- MONDAY, 31 OCTOBER (Origins of the Zoot Suit)
 - **Readings:**

- “Fashion Riot” segment of “American Apparel” on *BackStory: with the American History Guys*
- Kathy Peiss, *Zoot Suit: The Enigmatic Career of an Extreme Style* (University of Pennsylvania), “Making the Suit Zoot”

- WEDNESDAY, 2 NOVEMBER (The Zoot Suit and Why [Some] Men [and Women] Loved It)

- **Readings:**

- Kathy Peiss, *Zoot Suit: The Enigmatic Career of an Extreme Style* (University of Pennsylvania), “Going to Extremes”

- FRIDAY, 4 NOVEMBER (Group Discussion #3)

WEEK 12

- MONDAY, 7 NOVEMBER (Blue Jeans and the Invention of the Teenager)

- **Readings:**

- James Sullivan, *Jeans: A Cultural History of an American Icon* (Gotham: 2006), “Introduction: The Perfect Fit” and “‘A Hollywood-style Tough’: The 1950s and the Fabrication of the Teenager”

- WEDNESDAY, 9 NOVEMBER (Blue Jeans: Everyman’s Mark of Distinction)

- **Readings:**

- James Sullivan, *Jeans: A Cultural History of an American Icon* (Gotham: 2006), “Classlessness: The Politics of Fashion” and “After the Gold Rush: Stylizing Denim”

- FRIDAY, 11 NOVEMBER (Veteran’s Day – **NO CLASS**)

WEEK 13

- MONDAY, 14 NOVEMBER (Fast Fashion and Sustainability, Pt. I)

- **Readings:**

- Elizabeth L. Cline, *Overdressed: The Shockingly High Cost of Cheap Fashion* (Portfolio: 2013), “Introduction: Seven Pairs of \$7 Shoes” and “Fast Fashion”

- WEDNESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER (Fast Fashion and Sustainability, Pt. II)

- **Readings:**

- Elizabeth L. Cline, *Overdressed: The Shockingly High Cost of Cheap Fashion* (Portfolio: 2013), “China and the End of Cheap Fashion”
- Maya Singer, “The Clothing Insurrection: It’s Time to Take On the Fashion Supply Chain,” *Vogue* (Apr. 20, 2015)

- FRIDAY, 18 NOVEMBER (Group Discussion #4)

WEEK 14

- MONDAY, 21 NOVEMBER (Final Paper Check-In)
- WEDNESDAY, 23 NOVEMBER (Thanksgiving – **NO CLASS**)
- FRIDAY, 25 NOVEMBER (Thanksgiving – **NO CLASS**)

WEEK 15

- MONDAY, 28 NOVEMBER (Is Fashion Racist?)
 - **Readings:**
 - Moises Velasquez-Manoff, “Can a Dress Shirt Be Racist?,” *Backchannel* (Mar. 31, 2016)
 - Vanessa Friedman, “What Freedom Looks Like,” *The New York Times* (Apr. 13, 2016)
- WEDNESDAY, 30 NOVEMBER (Is Fashion Queer?)
 - **Readings:**
 - Alison Bancroft, “How Fashion is Queer,” *The Qouch* (Mar. 14, 2013)
 - Charlotte Gush, “The Binary is Boring: Moving Towards a Genderless Fashion Future,” *i-D* (Feb. 25, 2016)
- FRIDAY, 2 DECEMBER (Is Fashion Just?)
 - **Readings:**
 - Ione Gamble, “How Should We Tackle Fashion’s Body Image Issues,” *Dazed* (Mar. 2016)
 - Tyler McCall, “How Model Alliance Founder Sara Ziff Became One of the Leading Advocates for Models’ Rights,” *Fashionista* (Apr. 27, 2015)

WEEK 16

- MONDAY, 5 DECEMBER (Final Project Discussion)
 - **Assignments:**
 - **FINAL PAPER DUE (SUBMIT VIA CANVAS)**
 - WEDNESDAY, 7 DECEMBER (Conclusion)
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