

**The Graduate Center
The City University of New York**

MALS 71200/IDS 81660

Fabric of Cultures: Systems in the Making

W/6:30-8:30/Room 5383

Instructor: Prof. Eugenia Paulicelli

**Office hours: W: 5:00-6:00 or by appointment (Comparative
Literature # 4116-11)**

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Course Description

The course takes the form of an interdisciplinary exploration of the art of making, craftsmanship and technology in today's globalized world. It calls attention to the larger systems that influence the state of fashion, craft and aesthetics constantly under development and in flux. The course focuses on specific case studies such as the Made in Italy, Made in New York etc. within a transnational context and in relation to gender, race, class and labor.

Bringing to the fore new systems developing within the industry, the course emphasizes the intersection of tradition, sustainability, social justice, ethics and beauty as they influence new collaborative modes, design and production.

The course draws on writings from critical theory, history, fashion studies, material culture, literature, and the objects that are part of a digital archive project and exhibition at the Art Center, Queens College (October-December 2017).

Students will be encouraged to critically understand and examine fashion in the context of today's digital world with particular attention given to the important expanded field of inquiry, Digital Humanities. In addition, the course features guest speakers, field work and a research lab component that requires students to carry out a creative project. A visit is scheduled to the Brooklyn/Pratt Fashion + Design accelerator and other sites.

The readings for each section refer to topics and thematics that will be further developed later on in the course. Students are required to engage with the readings, respond to the class blog assignments and produce written essays, all of which are requirements for the course.

Learning Objectives:

Students at the end of the course should:

1. Be cognizant of fashion as an industry and a symbolic force that is both local and global;
2. Be familiar with definitions and understand how and why fashion is not only clothing;
3. Be able to actively use digital archives and collect data for the CUNY FASHION STUDIES COLLECTION in Artstor Shared Shelf;
4. Be cognizant of a new field identified with fashion and digital humanities;
5. Be aware of the relationship between fashion and different domains, from intellectual property and branding to individual liberty, as well as equality issues relating to, gender, race and class.
5. Connect their knowledge of the case studies presented in the class;
6. Understand clothing and fashion in the larger geopolitical context and in different historical epochs with attention to craft, technology and sustainability.

Requirements:

1. Active class participation and engagement, including an oral presentation;
2. Complete the Op-Ed assignment, including writing a 750 word op-ed (column) on an issue relevant to fashion and sustainability, social justice, labor, law, craft and technology, traditional folk dress/fashion, uses and re-uses. The text should be ready for the fashion revolution day. Please see the website below.
3. Complete by March 15 the uploading and cataloging of items for the CUNY Fashion Studies Collection;
4. Complete the Final Project, which can either be a paper of at least 15-20 pages (5,000 words) on the basis of an outline and bibliography or another kind of project, digital, artwork or a combination. The best projects will be published on the Fabric of Cultures site and included in a future publication. All projects need prior approval of instructor.

Grading Scale:

Attendance, Class Participation (including social media posting, lab project etc., and Presentation: 20%

Choice of the following: Op-Ed/Column assignment ; 20%

Uploading in Artstor Shared Shelf in the CUNY Fashion Studies Collection: 20%

Final Project (including preliminary steps): 40%

Please Note that all detailed instructions have been posted on Blackboard

Required reading materials are posted on Blackboard.

Please remember that my main objective for the class is to support you during the learning stages of the semester. However, it is required that you do all assignments as best you can and that you turn them in on time. Failure to do so will impact your grade and hamper your learning experience.

For over two hundred years, advances in technology have had economic, artistic and cultural effects on the fashion industries. One such early advance is the punch card used in looms thanks to which Joseph Marie Jacquard, a textile manufacturer from Lyons, France, mechanized the production of patterned knitted fabrics such as damask, brocade and tapestry. His was one of the innovations in textile manufacturing and machines that triggered the industrial revolution. Technological progress is at the core of the economic and cultural transformations that have driven economic and cultural shifts; fashion and textile are integrals component of these changes.

Fashion is a behavioral phenomenon that intersects with media, race, gender, personal and collective identities, labor and technology. Fashion and identity--personal, collective, transnational--are the results of the multilayered fabric of cultures. They are also the manifestation of a dynamic process, a dialogue between self and other. Self and identity are not defined on the basis of closure and homologous relations, but in terms of interplay between similarities, differences, reuses and translations. Identity is a process of negotiation and understanding, a journey of becoming. This process, although expressed through different aesthetic results, is very much at work in the textiles and clothing we examine in the course.

The Fabric of Cultures: Systems in the Making

<http://fabricofcultures.qwriting.qc.cuny.edu>

is a research and pedagogical lab and a platform for activism that aims at further understanding fashion and both local and global clothing as powerful manifestations of human and aesthetic expressions and as barometers of economic, social and technological transformations. Its aim is to pose questions on issues of equality, labor and care for the environment; and to raise awareness of the ecological damage for which the fashion industry is responsible.

The Fabric of Cultures was also an exhibition curated by Eugenia Paulicelli and held at the Art Center at Queens College in the Fall of 2017 and on which some of the work for the course will be based.

Here you can see a short video:

Time: 1':29''

<https://vimeo.com/239682210>

Fabric of Cultures Lab:

Up-cycling and Reuse. We will explore this phenomenon with workshops conducted by Kat Roberts and Callen Zimmemann. Other special lectures will also include Ray Garcia, Dicky Yangzom, and others. Details will be announced in the course of the semester.

ArtStor Shared Shelf: <http://www.artstor.org/>

On the first day of class I will collect your **preferred** email address. It will be given to Jacquie Hopely so she can include you as contributors to the **Cuny Fashion Studies Collection** that we have established. This is one of the requirements of the course.

Course websites:

The Fabric of Cultures: see above

Facebook Cuny Fashion Studies: <https://www.facebook.com/CUNYFashion/>

Instagram: FabricofCultures

Twitter: CunyFashion

ArtStor Shared Shelf and Cuny Fashion Studies Collection:

Jacqui Hopely Monkell: Jacquelyn.hopely@qc.cuny.edu

Visual Resources Coordinator

Queens College, CUNY

Important Sites for the class and fashion research:

Fashion Revolution: <http://fashionrevolution.org/>

Fashion Research Network: <http://fashionresearchnetwork.co.uk/>

Fashion Studies Journal: <http://www.fashionstudiesjournal.org/who-we-are/>

Google fashion site:

<https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/beta/project/fashion>

International Textile and Apparel Association: <http://itaaonline.org/>

Required Texts:

Eugenia Paulicelli ed. *The Fabric of Cultures. Systems in the Making*, New York:

ArtCenterQueens College, 2017. It is also available as an ebook, please see: The

catalogue of the exhibition, *The Fabric of Cultures: Systems in the Making*, is available at:

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/8826494878/ref=oh_aui_detailpage_o02_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1

*Availabe as PDF on Blackboard

Kate Fletcher, *Craft of Use. Post-Growth Fashion*, London and New: Routledge, 2016

Selected Textual Resources, Please note that these are only some of the many references to scholarship in the growing field of fashion related research and publishing. I would be happy to work with you individually regarding the bibliography and discuss your specific research interests.

Chris Anderson, *Makers. The New Industrial Revolution*, Crown Business New York: 2012

Sandy Black et al, *The Handbook of Fashion Studies*, Bloomsbury: 2013. We will be using several essays from this collection

Christopher Breward, *Fashion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Andrew Brooks, *Clothing Poverty. The Hidden World of Fast Fashion and Second Hand Clothes*

Sass Brown, *Refashioned: Cutting Edge Clothing from Up-cycled Material.*

Jennifer Craik, *Fashion. The Key Concepts*, Berg: 2009

Diana Crane, *Fashion and its Social Agendas, Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing*, The University of Chicago Press: 2000

Bonnie English, *A Cultural History of Fashion in the 20th and 21st Centuries. From Catwalk to Sidewalk*, Bloomsbury: 2013

Margaret Chin, *Sewing Women. Immigrants and the New York City Garment Industry*, Columbia University Press: 2005

Kate Fletcher, *Craft of Use. Post-Growth Fashion*: Routledge: 2016

Richard Florida, *The Flight of the Creative Class*, Harper Collins: 2005

Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Doubleday: 1959

Tansy Hoskins, *Stitched-up : The Anti-capitalist Book of Fashion*

Heike Jenss, ed. *Fashion Studies. Research Methods, Sites and Practices*, Bloomsbury: 2015

Safia Minney, *Slow Fashion. Aesthetics Meets Ethics*

Thuy Linh Nguyen Tu, *The Beautiful Generation, Asian Americans and the Cultural Economy of Fashion*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011.

Peter McNeil and Giorgio Riello, *Luxury. A Rich History*, Oxford University Press: 2016

Susanne K chler and Daniel Miller, eds., *Clothing as Material Culture*, Berg: 2005

Joseph Pine II, James Gilmore, *What Consumers Really Want. Authenticity*, Harvard Business School Press: 2007

_____.*The Experience Economy*, Harvard Business Review Press: 2011

Eugenia Paulicelli, Hazel Clark eds. *The Fabric of Cultures. Fashion, Identity, Globalization*, London: Routledge, 2009

Kathy Peiss, *Zoot Suit. The Enigmatic Career of an Extreme Style*, University of Pennsylvania Press: 2011.

Agn s Rocamora and Anneke Smelik, eds. *Thinking Through Fashion. A Guide to Key Theorists*, I.B. Tauris: 2015

Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman*, Yale University Press: 2008

Emma Tarlo and Annelies Moors, *Islamic Fashion and Anti-Fashion. New Perspectives from Europe and North America*, Bloomsbury: 2013

A good background for our course are the following books. Please check the folder with extra readings available to further your research and thinking.

Pietra Rivoli, *The Travels of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy: An Economist Examines the Markets Power and Politics of the World Trade* (Wiley: 2009)

Richard Sennet, *The Craftsman* (Yale U. Press: 2009)

Program
Class # 1
January 31

Introduction to the course – Fashion as a field of academic inquiry in time and space

Readings:

Lou Taylor, “Fashion and dress history: Theoretical and methodological approaches”; Pamela Church Gibson, “Analysing fashion” (from *The Handbook of Fashion Studies*, Bloomsbury, 2013); E. Paulicelli, *The Fabric of Cultures* (2017) “Introduction”

Background reading: Georg Simmel, *Fashion*

<http://sites.middlebury.edu/individualandthesociety/files/2010/09/Simmel.fashion.pdf>

Optional readings: Umberto Eco, “Lumbar thought,” 315-17; Pietra Rivoli, “Two for a penny,” 564-568.

Class # 2
February 7

Fashion and Materiality/Spaces of Fashion

Readings: Peter Stallybrass, “Worn worlds: Clothes mourning and the life of things”; Katherine Appleford, “Fashion and class evaluation”; Regina Lee Blaszyk, “The Hidden space of fashion production”; Sarah Fee, “Anthropology and materiality”

Class # 3

February 14

Fashion and Time/Fashion, Agency, Policy

Readings: Jane Schneider, “In and out of polyester” 3-27; Agnès Rocamora, “New fashion times: Fashion and digital media”; Mary A. Littrell and Judy Frater, “Artisan enterprise, cultural Property, and the global market”; Karen Tranberg Hansen, “Secondhand clothing and Africa: Global fashion influences, local dress agency, and policy issues”;

Discussion on theoretical Readings: Roland Barthes, “The Language of Fashion” and Anne, Smelik, “Gilles Deleuze/Fashion”

Optional Reading:

Jennifer Craik, “Fashion, tourism, and global culture”; Margaret Maynard, *Dress and globalisation*, “Ethnic dress or fashionably ‘ethnic’”; “Style and communication”; “Headwear: Negotiating meaning”

Class # 4

February 21

Science, Technology, and New Fashion

Readings: Sandy Black, “Introduction”; Bradley Quinn, “Technology and future fashion: Body technology for the 21st century”; Joanna Berzowska, “XS labs: Electronic textiles and reactive garments as sociocultural interventions”; Marie O’Mahony, “Advanced textiles for fashion in science, literature, and film”; Philip Sams and Sandy Black, “Fashion and science intersections: Collaborations across disciplines”

Theoretical discussion on Jessamyn Hatcher, “Little Freedom/Fashion After Rana Plaza

Class # 5

February 28

Sustainable Fashion in a Globalized World

Readings: Sandy Black and Regina Root, “Introduction”; Marsha Dickson, “Corporate responsibility in the global apparel industry: Toward an integrated human rights-based approach”; Margaret Maynard, “Fast fashion and sustainability”; Kate Fletcher, “Design for sustainability in fashion and textiles”; Simonetta Carbonaro and David Goldsmith, “Fashion and the design of prosperity: A discussion of alternative business models”; *The Fabric of Cultures*, 2017 pp.52-53

VISIT TO BROOKLYN/ PRATT Accelerator B. F. + D.A.

Optional Readings:

“Environments interact with technologies: 20th and 21st centuries,” 211-216; “New technological frontiers for dress and fashion: 21st century,” 217-229; Malcolm McCullough, “Abstracting craft: The practiced digital hand,” 310-316; Richard Barbrook and Pit Schultz, “*Digital artisans manifesto*: European digital artisans network,” 317-19; Norbert Winer, “What is cybernetics? From the human use of humans,” 303-309; Lucy E. Dunne, “Wearable technology,” 613-16; Sarah Scaturro, “Digital and democratic,” 586-588; Karl Marx, *Capital: The development of machinery*, 69-77

Class # 6

March 7

Guest Speaker: Ray Garcia, author and entrepreneur

Reading: *The Fabric of Cultures*: section on “Thinking Through the Object: Systems in the Making”

Class # 7

March 14

Readings: Kate Fletcher, *Craft of use* (Chapter 1, Use and using; Ch. 2, “Consumerism, sustainability”; Ch. 3 “Matter in motion”; Ch. 4 “Attentiveness, material and their use”; Jessamyn Hatcher, “ Little freedom: Immigrant labour and the politics of fast fashion after Rana Plaza”

Guest Speakers: Tessa Maffucci and Luisina Silva on research methods in Fashion Studies, the archive and the digital.

Class # 8

March 21

Fashion, Time and Space

March 21 (Class meets at the NYU Casa Italiana for a book presentation of Emanuela Scarpellini, University of Milan, Italy): *The stuff of nations/Made in Italy*

Readings: *Craft of Use*, Ch, 5, “Durability, design, and enduring use”; Ch. 6 Capabilities and agency”; Ch. 7, “Farewell and good travels”

Optional Readings: Glen Adamson, “Introduction” from *Thinking through craft*, 1-7 and “Introduction” from Adamson ed. *The Craft reader*, 1-5; 476-77; Rafael Cardoso, “Craft versus design: Moving beyond a tired dichotomy,” 321-332

Please note that on March 27th we will have a panel on currant research in Fashion Studies @ 5:00 in the MALS Lounge.

Class # 9

March 28

Sanda Miller, "Fashion as 'art' versus fashion as 'craft' revisited,"
Discussion of assigned readings for week # 8; Guest Speaker Prof. Nicholas Pappas,
Philosophy, CUNY Graduate Center

SPRING BREAK March 30 – April 8
April 11 follows a Friday Schedule

Classes # 10 and 11
April 18

Weaving workshop conducted by Caller Zimmermann

April 25
Denim Workshop with Kat Roberts

Please remember to post on the Fabric of Cultures site your text on "Fashion Revolution" Remembering Rana Plaza tragedy

Case Studies in The Fabric of Cultures Exhibition: Antonio Marras; Cesare Attolini Part 1 and Part 2 the work of students--Trupiano, Roberts, Finkel, Zimmermann—featured in the catalogue

Reading: Alexandra Palmer, "Looking at fashion: The material object as subject," 268-300;

In the third and final sections of the course, using digital research tools, students carry out in-depth research into an object of clothing of their choice among those chosen for uploading to artstor/shared shelf/CUNY Fashion Studies Collection. Students are encouraged to explore the various layers of information made available by digital archives, The fabric of Cultures, ArtStor, the Met, New York Public Library.

Completed student research projects will be posted on the Fabric of Cultures blog.

Class # 12
May 2rd

Discussion of Case Studies and Readings

Class # 13
May 10
Writing about Clothing: stories of gender, politics, race

Readings: Meena Alexander, Selected poems from *Raw silk*
Sandra Cisneros, "Huipiles"
Mary Jo Bona, "The portable rebozo. Cisneros's Caramelo and metafictional histories"
Marjane Satrapi, *Embroideries*
Students work on Fabric of Cultures Lab

Student Presentations and Work on Fashion Cultures Lab

Class # 14

May 16th

DATE (TBA) : Final Paper and Projects due

CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity

The [CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity](http://www.cuny.edu/about/info/policies/academic-integrity.pdf) (<http://www.cuny.edu/about/info/policies/academic-integrity.pdf>), as adopted by the Board, is available to all students. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in the City University of New York and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion.

Use of Student Work

All programs in New York State undergo periodic reviews by accreditation agencies. For these purposes, samples of student work are occasionally made available to those professionals conducting the review. Anonymity is assured under these circumstances. If you do not wish to have your work made available for these purposes, please let the professor know before the start of the second class. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Evaluations

During the final four weeks of the semester, you will be asked to complete an evaluation for this course by filling out a questionnaire.