This course takes clothing seriously. It examines fashion both as a concept and as a global industry that grew massively during the early modern period (15th-17th centuries), contributing to making the world what it is. Taught by an ex-Vogue journalist, this seminar explores how clothes communicate and subvert ideas of distinction while also examining why many people have overlooked this power over time. In particular, the course focuses on the understudied relationship between fashion, wars, and other geopolitical catastrophes since only disasters provide the necessary ground zero for narratives of change that are fundamental for fashion’s constant regeneration.

**Course goals**

In this seminar, we have three primary objectives: 1) to establish a foundational grasp of the methodologies and inquiries that have shaped the study of fashion; 2) to learn how to critically analyze texts, images, and the conceptual frameworks that define history; and 3) to practice transdisciplinary research.

**Seminar structure, assigned reading, and participation**

As each seminar is 3 hours, we will divide it into two parts with a ten-minute break in between. Each course member is expected to attend every class, come prepared, and actively engage in discussions. Class preparation entails completing all assigned readings. During discussions, ask questions, formulate arguments, and respond to your peers' perspectives. However, engagement will not be evaluated.

Come to class having taken notes on what interests or surprises you. Read actively; that is, ask yourself questions. Check the pronunciation of names and the biographies of people whom you do not know. Look at high-resolution images of artworks online, identify their locations, and ponder why they have ended up there. Studying the early modern world requires you to familiarize yourself with multiple foreign cultures, so invest some time and energy into learning the specificities of each culture.

**Research projects and final presentations**

Over the semester, in addition to engaging with the readings, you will be tasked with completing two research projects.

1) The first project entails a reflection on a specific aspect of a fashion designer’s practice and business. This assignment serves as a research exercise and adopts the structure of a magazine article, for which you’ll have to send a pitch first. The goal is to begin
exploring how you can work with material related to fashion. During Week 3, we will use Christian Dior as a case study, but you don’t need to write your paper on him. You can choose any 20th- or 21st-century designer. You’ll submit a 250-word pitch with a couple of images and 4/5 sources by Week 4. The final paper (800 words for 3 credits, 1200 for 4, and 1600 for 5) is to be submitted by Week 5, after two weeks of research.

2) For the second assessment project, you will need to write an essay on any aspect of early modern (that is, pre-1750) fashion. (It’s 1800 words for 3 credits, 3000 for 4, 4400 for 5.) The project will progress through three stages. Firstly, you’ll submit an outline of your argument along with a bibliography by the end of Week 7. Following a one-to-one meeting, you’ll submit a first draft (of any length) by Week 9, receiving additional feedback. Finally, you’ll submit your final paper during Exam Week. If this is not sufficient, you’ll be given a couple more weeks to draft it again. The formatting should be consistent with that of an academic journal (so it needs to include a bibliography, references, captioned images, and so on). As for style, I prefer Chicago. Remember that Stanford has an Honor Code.

**Course texts**

All readings are accessible for download from the course's Canvas site or online through Stanford Libraries. However, PDFs and scans often do not faithfully reproduce illustrations and may lack endnotes, bibliographies, and introductions. So, it is advisable to visit the Bowes Library in the Art+Art History Department to examine the original copies, available on the course reserve.

**Student Hours**

I know that each of you comes from a different background and has different commitments. So, if you experience any problem, anxiety, or difficulty (emotional, economic, logistical), come to see me during office hours. If you play any sport that affects your schedule or have some OAE exemptions, let me know. You can come to see me anytime and for whatever reason. You don’t need to come to ask questions about the course material, to prove to me that you’re smart, or that you’ve done the readings. You can just come to ask me about things that you do not understand, seek recommendations, or speak about anything you’re interested in. If you’re in doubt, come to see me. Seeing me is easy. You can book an appointment online, up to 4 hours in advance, via calendly.com/elugli (you can also access it through my webpage). If you find a slot, that means I am available. My office hours tend to be on Wednesday afternoons. My office (#325) is on the third floor of the McMurtry building, which has a beautiful terrace.
My email is elugli@stanford.edu
My pronouns are he/him

Reading Schedule

Week 1. April 4

The day before class, go to Canvas and write down what is fashionable for you right now. It doesn’t matter if you think in terms of brands or specific items of clothing, or not even about clothing at all: just write down 4 or 5 items that you associate with “fashion.” Writing impulsively is part of the process. Then, look at what you wrote and see if there is a connection between the items on your list and what the word “fashion” means to you. Define the term on Canvas. (So it’s a two-part task, which is due by 6 pm on Wednesday). Only after completing this step, proceed to the readings, which consist of two very short articles. The graduate students (that is, those enrolled in ARTHIST418) also need to read the first chapter of Svendsen’s book “Fashion: A Philosophy.” All the PDFs are available on Canvas.

Part I: Introduction: Definitions

Readings:

Grad (ARTHIST418) students also read:

Further Reading:

Part II: Fashion and Death
In class, we will read together and analyze:
**Week 2. April 10**
Origins of Fashion, with Prof. BuYun Chen (Swarthmore College)

Reading:

Grad students also read:

Further Reading:

**Week 3. April 18**

Part I: The Couturier and the Fashion Designer

Readings:
1) Nancy J. Troy, *Couture Culture, A Study in Modern Art and Fashion* (2003), ch. 1
2) Watch: Rick Owens answers (delicious) questions, *I-D magazine* (Mar ’24) [please also watch any video where he talks about his house in Concordia, Italy]

For a general, but rather dry introduction to the figure of the fashion designer:

Further Readings:
After the break, we move to the seminar room in the Bowes Art Library

**Part II: Christian Dior and WWII**

Reading:

Grad students also read:

Further Readings:
R. Barthes, *The Fashion System*, 1967 [more on this in class]

You can also watch: “Dior and I” (dir. Frédéric Tcheng, 2014), it’s an interesting film

**Week 4. April 25 (NO CLASS)**

I’m at a conference: no class.

Submit your 250-word pitch with two images and a list of sources by 6 pm on Wednesday, April 24.
Week 5. May 2
Submit your paper by 6 pm of Wednesday.

Part I: Fashion and Plagues

Readings:

Further Reading:

Part II - Uniforms and Standardization

Readings:
4) Michel Pastoureau, The Devil’s Cloth: A History of Stripes (2003), esp. 7-32

Grad students also read:
5) A. Meneghin, ‘The livery of a Florentine employee in the fifteenth century: the rewards of a lifetime of service,’ History of Retailing and Consumption 1, 2015, pp. 47-62

Further Reading:
V. Groebner, Who Are You? Identification, Deception, and Surveillance in Early Modern Europe (2007) [this is a very good book]
T. McCall, Making the Renaissance Man (Reaktion 2023), esp. ch. 1 “Chivalry and Courtly Masculinity”, pp. 22-57
A. Engberg-Pedersen, Martial Aesthetics: How War Became an Art Form (2023)
Week 6. May 9

Part I: Lecture by Prof. Giorgio Riello (European University Institute)

(Tentative) Reading:

Part II: Fashion, a Global Disaster

Readings:

Grad students also read:

Further Reading:
E. Welch, Shopping in the Renaissance: Consumer Cultures in Italy 1400-1600 (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2005)
Werner Sombart, “The Emergence of Fashion,” in Economic Life in the Modern Age (Transaction Publishers, 2001), pp. 205-228
A. Appadurai, Modernity at Large (1996), esp. ch. 2 (“Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy”)
Week 7. May 16

Submit an outline of your final paper with a bibliography by Wednesday, May 15 at 6 pm. Also, if you have not done it already, it’s time to book a slot to see me.

Part I: Embodiment, Performance, Concealment

Readings:

Further Reading:

Part II: Pockets and Invisibility

Readings:
4) H. Carlson, *Pockets: An Intimate History of How We Keep Things Close* (2023), ch. 1

Further Reading:

**Week 8. May 23**

Meeting at the David Rumsey Center (10:30 am -11:50 am) followed by Special Collections (noon-1:20 pm)

**Early Modern Fashion and the State**

Readings:

Grad students should also read Mukerji’s first chapter [which is also on Canvas]

Further Reading:
Eugenia Paulicelli, *Writing Fashion in Early Modern Italy. From Sprezzatura to Satire* (Farnham: 2014), esp. ch. 3
**Week 9. May 30**

I've lightened the workload to allow you to focus on your research paper, whose first draft is due on Wednesday, May 29 at 6 pm

**Part I: Aesthetics**

Readings:

Further Reading:

**Part II: Taste**

Readings:

Grad students should also read:

Further Reading:

**Week 10. June 6**

**Conclusions**
No assigned reading
Submit your final paper by the end of Exam Week