



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore

SO/CU302 – Fashion, Images, and the City of Milan. A Sociological Perspective on Modern Italian Fashion

Prof. AMBROGIA CEREDA

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Modern Italian fashion and the role of Milan as a fashion capital are considered pivotal factors in the development of Made in Italy and they are identified with the diffusion of prêt-à-porter. This is the typology of fashion internationally known and often celebrated as the invention of the designers of 1960-70s. During the course this idea will be analyzed and discussed in order to reconfigure the origins of Italian fashion system: an organization established in the mid-twentieth century and related to a necessity for high-end mass marketing, and thrived on late-century global overconsumption. Practical sessions of research on the field will help detect how the main components of Italian fashion are now intertwined (i.e. adherence to the markings of a rich cultural heritage, an instinctive progression toward the globalization of fashion via various modernist aesthetics, and an ability to reinvent image ideals through advertising and promotion).

COURSE CONTENTS

The first part of the course will be dedicated to understand the cultural, historical and social factors that influenced the development of Italian fashion. The focus will be on Florence and Tuscany, Milan and the industrial area surrounding the city, so to provide a socio-historical framework for the most salient features of the evolution of the Italian aesthetic. In order to better understand the transformations occurred in this sector, a comparative analysis will be made of other styles, in which western and eastern cultural elements have conflated and are now shaping different levels of the production. Particular attention will be dedicated to the relations with Chinese and Japanese fashion.

The second part of the course will focus on the role of the body in contemporary fashion. Some of the ways will be presented in which fashion defines bodily appearance via the 'narrations' of magazines and advertising in order to identify how visual resources influence people's everyday life through the 'aura' of Italian fashion.

The last part of the course will analyze the role of fashion in Milan: the main actors on the contemporary scene will be considered and discussed. A special attention will be dedicated to the practice of cool hunting as an increasingly popular means to relate production of fashion to a plurality of consumption styles. This part of the course will include off-class sessions of ethnographies (urban observation) meant to experiment a real cool hunt in specific locations in the city of Milan.

PREREQUISITES

None



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METHOD OF TEACHING

Lectures will be held by employing different sources (frontal lectures, slides, documentaries, shows and films), visits and classroom debates will be held as an important part of the course.

Students are expected to complete the readings before each class in order to take active part in the lectures. A part of the course will be dedicated to cool hunting, and will be arranged in order to allow preparation for fieldwork, the fieldwork itself (urban observation), and the analysis of the material collected. At the end of this module, students will organize their field notes and draw from them topics for class discussion.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Lectures will be held by employing different sources (frontal lectures, slides, documentaries, shows and films), visits and classroom debates will be held as an important part of the course.

CREDITS

6 ECTS

GRADING

Attendance and class participation	20 % of final grade
Group assignments/class presentation	20 % of final grade
Midterm test	25 % of final grade
Final written exam	35 % of final grad.

COURSE READINGS AND MATERIALS

All the readings will be available in a course pack and the lecturer's slides will be available on Blackboard

INSTRUCTOR BIO

Ambrogia Cereda held a PhD in Sociology and Methodology of Social Research at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore of Milan, where she collaborates with ModaCult Centre for the study of fashion and cultural production. She is currently lecturer at FIT Milan. She has worked on various projects in the field of consumption, design, and fashion-advertisement. Her main research interest is the interrelationship between body image, identity, and gender. She also has extensive experience working on the issues related to sociology of cultural production and cultural anthropology and she is currently working on the field of emotions.

E-MAIL ADDRESS

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