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Fashion, Images, and the City of Milan. A Sociological Perspective on Modern Italian Fashion

PROF. AMBROGIA CEREDA

Area of study:	Fashion and Design
Area Code:	SO/CU302
Method of Instruction:	in-person and live-streaming (dual mode)
Participation:	synchronous/live and asynchronous

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 analysed 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 (physical/digital environment) 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 and on contemporary fashion as a “technique of the self”. 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 analyse 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 narratives of fashion as increasingly popular means to relate production of fashion to a plurality of consumption styles. In compliance with the current governmental policies on safety and health, the this part of the course might include off-class sessions (urban observation) meant to experiment a real fieldwork in specific locations of the city of Milan.

Prerequisites

None



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Method of instruction

In-person and live-streaming (Dual Mode)

- Lectures will be held by employing different sources (frontal lectures, slides, documentaries, shows and films), classroom debates will be held as an important part of the course. All students are expected to complete the readings before each class in order to take active part in the lectures.
- An assignment (presentation) will be given to the students attending the course in **synchronous mode** focused on fashion images.
- Two written exercises (open questions) will be given to the students attending the course in **asynchronous mode** about fashion images and bodily techniques.
- For the **students who attend the course in synchronous mode** some lectures will be dedicated to the construction of a research, and will be arranged in order to allow the preparation for fieldwork, the fieldwork itself (in digital/physical environment), 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. This work will be evaluated as a **final project**.
- **Students who attend the course in asynchronous mode** will receive guidelines and references to develop **individual projects**, based on the reconstruction of the “cultural biography” of a fashion item/brand.

Course requirements

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

Credits

6 ECTS

Grading

Attendance and participation	20% of final grade
Assignments	20% of final grade
Midterm test	25% of final grade
Final/individual project	35% of final grade

Course readings and materials

All the readings collected in a course pack will be available on Blackboard along with the lecturer's slides.

Instructor bio

Prof. Ambrogia Cereda is adjunct professor in Sociology of culture at eCampus University, Como. She 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 and she is also lecturer at Istituto Marangoni, Milan campus, where she teaches Social communication. 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



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extensive experience on the issues related to sociology of cultural production and cultural anthropology with a special concern for the field of emotions studies.

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