



UNIVERSITÀ
CATTOLICA
del Sacro Cuore

Fashion & Gender, an ever-changing relationship

PROF. CECILIA CORNAGGIA

Area of study:	Fashion and Design
Area Code:	SO/CU340
Method of Instruction:	In-person

DESCRIPTION

Fashion has a crucial role in shaping gender identity within society, but its codes are constantly changing. Focusing on the last centuries of European history, from the premodern era to today, this course aims to deepen the role of fashion in defining gender identity within society.

The course covers three main areas:

- 1) **Fashion and gender in history:** how fashion has shaped gender identity differently in different historical periods.
- 2) **Fashion representation:** the relationship between photography and fashion; how advertisements reinforce hegemonic gender roles; feminist perspectives in fashion advertising.
- 3) **Queer fashion:** how fashion has been used as a tool to express queer identities.

To address these topics, a body of sociological and anthropological literature will be proposed. Complementary to the theoretical part, the course will include:

- The viewing and discussion of some film extracts.
- A field trip in which we will explore the link between fashion and representation.
- A group research project on fashion representation aimed at reflecting on gender models in fashion today.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course aims for the students:

- a. To understand how the relationship between fashion and gender has changed through history in the Western context.
- b. To introduce students to social research methods, with a focus on visual techniques and ethnography.
- c. To help students critically assess the meaning of fashion representations in a gendered perspective.

PREREQUISITES

The course aims to introduce students to the sociology of fashion, exploring the relationship between fashion and gender. In the course nothing will be taken for granted. Therefore, there are no specific prerequisites.



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METHOD OF TEACHING

Seminar with film viewing and group research activity.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to:

- a. Regularly attend class sessions (max 5 unjustified absences)
- b. Be active in the learning process, taking part in classroom discussions;
- c. Deliver one group research assignment and present it to the class;
- d. Pass the midterm and final tests.

Participation and Attendance Policy (a; b)

This course is expected to be interactive. Students are expected to actively contribute to class discussions. Therefore, students' participation will be assessed in terms of active and meaningful involvement in class discussions. Note that participation is not merely class attendance: I take notice of participation in class discussions. I also recognize that emergencies, illness etc. may cause you to miss the class. If you are unable to attend, it is your responsibility to obtain any notes from your colleagues and communicate with your team members for the group assignment outside of class. To pass the exam, students must attend at least 75% of the lessons (max 5 unjustified absences).

Group Assignment (c)

In order to foster cooperative learning and peer comparison, students will be responsible for participating in a group research activity. Each group will consist of 4-5 students. The final product will be a group assignment to be delivered and a final presentation that each group will present at the end of the semester (Lesson 21).

Midterm and final tests (d)

Each test (midterm and final test) consists of a written exam with three open questions (total points: 31). The evaluation is made considering the number of responses, their relevance and completeness, the appropriate use of specific terminology, the clarity of the exposition, the reasoned and coherent structuring of the discourse, and the ability to link subjects.

CREDITS

6 ECTS

GRADING

Students will be evaluated on: (1) group assignment and in-class presentation; (2) midterm test; (3) final test. The final grade for the course will be calculated based on following distribution:

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|---|--------------------|
| • Group assignment + class presentation | 40% of final grade |
| • Midterm test | 30% of final grade |
| • Final test | 30% of final grade |

COURSE READINGS AND MATERIALS

All readings and lecture slides will be available on Blackboard (<http://blackboard.unicatt.it>).



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A SELECTION OF BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Crane, D. (2012). *Fashion and its social agendas: Class, gender, and identity in clothing*. University of Chicago Press.

Croll, J. (2014) *Fashion that changed the world*. Prestel.

Geczy, A., & Karaminas, V. (2013). *Queer style*. A&C Black.

Goffman, E. (1979). *Gender Advertisements*.

Wolf, N. (2002). *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women*. Perennial. (1st ed. 1990).

INSTRUCTOR BIO

Cecilia Cornaggia (born July 1992, Italy) holds a PhD in *Sociology, Organisations, Cultures* at the Catholic University of Milan, where she collaborates with the research centre ModaCult. Her main interests concern sustainable consumption in both fashion and food sector, and gender studies. She teaches Sociology of fashion at Istituto Secoli, Milan, and Sociology of Culture at Bergamo University, Bergamo.

E-MAIL ADDRESS

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