

AS/HUMA 4180 3.0A (WS20-21)

**Europe à la mode:
Fashion and the Critical Methodologies of European Studies
W 16:00-19:00 (eClass/ Zoom)**

COURSE INSTRUCTOR

Susan Ingram

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Coordinator, Graduate Diploma in Comparative Literature

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Office hours via Zoom: please email to arrange a mutually convenient time

"A gentleman can be made with two yards of cloth" –
Cosima de' Medici

"Fashion is not something that exists in dresses only.
Fashion is in the sky, in the street, fashion has to do with
ideas, the way we live, what is happening" –
Coco Chanel

"Why brilliant fashion-designers, a notoriously non-
analytic breed, sometimes succeed in anticipating the
shape of things to come better than professional
predictors, is one of the most obscure questions in
history; and, for the historian of culture, one of the most
central"
Eric Hobsbawm (*The Age of Extremes* 178)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What makes "fashion" a European idea? What makes "Europe" a fashionable idea? Is "Europe" still a fashionable idea, and if so, for whom? What role has fashion played in the growing critique of Eurocentrism? Taking the field of fashion as our subject matter, we will explore the many methodologies which are part of European Studies and read closely material that allows for a multi-faceted understanding of fashion and its relationship to Europe. The course provides a comprehensive overview of the study of European culture and a strong basis from which to proceed to theoretically oriented graduate studies.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students demonstrate that they can:

- recognize the main cultural developments of European modernity and the cultural institutions and mechanisms through which fashion has become a dominant force
- think critically about Eurocentrism and other taken-for-granted cultural processes of meaning-making
- analyze written, visual, and material texts relating to fashion

The course is an upper-level Humanities seminar being held by necessity online. Focus will be on developing students' research and communication skills in the online environment on the basis of readings and assignments. The three-hour "face-to-face" time (W 16:00-19:00) will be for workshoping material. It is your chance to ask questions about the readings and discuss the issues they raise. There will be no live or asynchronous lectures.

It is extremely important to keep up with the readings and the assignments, as it is much more difficult to catch up in the online environment. If you find yourself falling behind, please schedule an "office hour" with me so that we can find a way for you to get back on track.

EVALUATION

- **5 summaries and 5 research-finding reports** to be completed in the first half of the course:
 - The summaries of each of the readings, no longer than two pages double-spaced in length each, should be submitted directly to me via email (singram@yorku.ca) by Monday of the following week (i.e. the readings for Wed. 13 Jan. are due by Mon. 18 Jan., etc.)
 - The questions to be addressed in the research-finding reports will be distributed via a discussion forum each Thursday and ideally findings will be posted by/on Tues. so that they can be discussed in the Wed. session.
 - 25% (pass/fail)
- **5 well-researched presentations** in the second half of the course (done in Powerpoint, Keynote, Prezi, Google Slides, or something similar) – on European urban institutions that explain how the institution of choice compares and relates to Berlin, to be posted by Mon. so that they can be discussed in the Wed. session
 - 5 x 10% = 50%
- **a final reflection** on the course readings and online materials in a format of your choice. Creative components are encouraged. Formats should be cleared with me first. If written, it should be ~1500 words and double-spaced; if a video, it should be ~15 min. and accompanied by a written summary.
 - 25%

READINGS

- are all available on the eClass site.

RECOMMENDED READING

- <http://www.europeanafashion.eu/portal/home.html>
- <https://www.fashionresearchnetwork.com/>

Important Links are available on the homepage of the eClass site: <https://eclass.yorku.ca/eclass/my/>:

- Mental Health and Awareness
- Academic Honesty Policy
- Learning Skills Services
- Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities

SCHEDULE

13 Jan.: Introductions: What is Fashion?

Malcolm Barnard, "Etymologies and Definitions of Fashion and Clothing" and "Fashion, Clothing and Meaning." *Fashion as Communication*. London and NY: Routledge, 1996, pp. 7-24, 69-95.

20 Jan.: What is Fashion's Relation to Europe?

- Kwame Anthony Appiah, "There Is No Such Thing as Western Civilization" (BBC Reith lecture on Culture). *The Guardian* 9 Nov. 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/09/western-civilisation-appiah-reith-lecture>
- Carlo Marco Belfanti, "Was Fashion a European Invention?" *Journal of Global History* 3 (2008): pp. 419-443.
- Linda Welters, "Introduction: Europe and the People Without Fashion" <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=Ki48DwAAQBAJ&hl=en&pg=GBS.PT21>

27 Jan.: Historical Considerations

- Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, "Introduction: Fashion, Fetishism, and Memory in Early Modern England and Europe." *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. 1-14.
- Daniela Bleichmar, Vanessa R. Schwartz, "Visual History: The Past in Pictures." *Representations* (2019) 145 (1): 1-31. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/10.1525/rep.2019.145.1.1>
- Gilles Lipovetsky, "Chapter 2: A Century of Fashion." *The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy*, 1994. 55-87.

3 Feb.: Social and Spatial Considerations

- Paul Sweetman, "Shop-Window Dummies? Fashion, the Body, and Emergent Socialities." *Body Dressing*, eds. Joanne Entwistle and Elizabeth Wilson. Oxford and NY: Berg, 2001, pp. 59-77.
- chs 1 & 2 of Bradley Quinn, *The Fashion of Architecture*. London: Berg, 2003, pp. 15-61.

10 Feb.: Contemporary Considerations

- Aimee Hinds, "Couture and the Classics." 19 Nov. 2020
<https://eidolon.pub/couture-and-the-classics-55406e19d1d6>
- Minh-ha T. Pham, "Fashion's Cultural-Appropriation Debate: Pointless." *The Atlantic*, 15 May 2014, <https://fashionandrace.org/database/library/fashions-cultural-appropriation-debate-pointless/>
- Christopher Morency, "When Fashion Brands become Media, The Rules Change." *Highsnobiety*, Q4 2020, <https://www.highsnobiety.com/p/special-report-fashion-brands-become-media-content-social/>

READING WEEK

The main text for this part of the course is: Susan Ingram and Katrina Sark, *Berliner Chic: A Locational History of Berlin Fashion* (Bristol, UK: Intellect, 2011), which is available as an ebook in the York Library Catalogue:

https://ocul-yor.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/fulldisplay?docid=cdi_askewsholts_vlebooks_9781841504322&context=PC&vid=01OCUL_YOR:YOR_DEFAULT&lang=en&search_scope=MyInst_and_CI&adaptor=Primo%20Central&tab=Everything&query=any,contains,berliner%20chic&mode=basic

24 Feb.: "Introduction: Locating Berliner Chic," 15-26.

Aleks Eror, "Belgrade Is Not The New Berlin: What's Stopping Serbia's Capital From Rising to The Top?"

3 Mar.: Museums and Historiography (I)

- *Berliner Chic* chapters 1 & 2, 27-84
- Fiona Anderson, "Museums as Fashion Media"

10 Mar.: Photography (II)

- *Berliner Chic* chapter 3, 85-113
- Helmut Newton 7 Images That Changed Fashion Photography:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m2iyIS7lfeY>
- 1996 Interview with Helmut Newton
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4OTAt_VxoRk&feature=emb_rel_end

17 Mar.: Film (III)

- *Berliner Chic* chapter 4, 117-48
- Thomas Elsaesser, "Film Festival Networks: The New Topographies of Cinema in Europe [2005]." *European Cinema Face to Face with Hollywood*, Amsterdam UP, 2005, pp. 82-107:
<https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/35109>

24 Mar.: Music (IV)

- *Berliner Chic* chapter 5, 151-78
- Susan Ingram, "Translating Affect: David Bowie's Lazarus in German." *Delos: A Journal of Translation and World Literature*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2020, pp. 60–76, doi:10.5744/delos.2020.1006.

31 Mar.: Retail (V)

- *Berliner Chic* chapter 6, 181-207

7 Apr.: conclusions and final thoughts

- *Berliner Chic* chapter 7, 211-14