Mass Media & the Fashion Industry

UNH Course Code: COM321
Subject Areas: Communication, Media Studies, Fashion Design
Level: 300
Prerequisites: Introductory courses in Communication or Media Studies are advised
Language of Instruction: English
Contact Hours: 45
Recommended Credits: 3

Description
A few weeks a year, Paris’ Right Bank becomes the stage for one of the most highly media-driven industry events of the year—the Paris Fashion Shows. Photographers, journalists, designers, creators and models come together from around the world to produce this trend-setting “event of the year” purposefully conceived to sustain and drive the fashion industry for another season. Fashion houses, avant-garde designers, buyers and sellers all tune in to see who is most being watched, talked about, photographed, praised and criticized at in magazines, on television and online. Through onsite research and in-class analysis, you will develop a critical eye and insightful analysis for understanding this spectacular media phenomenon as well as the fundamental role mass media plays in the success of the larger fashion industry.

In this course, you will explore the relationship between mass media and the fashion industry from 19th century Paris to today’s new media platforms and globalized communication networks. And while the fashion industry provides an arena for conventional media business it also involves a coded and complex dialogue among creators, corporations, tastemakers and the masses. The first half of the course addresses therefore the primary forms of conventional fashion media (journalism, photography, film, new media) while the second half of the course emphasizes the media dialogue and diplomacy a well as its value arbitration (representation, taste, status, trend, globalization).

As an integral part of this course, you will consider the various interactions between fashion and media by personally conducting interviews or fashion show reports along with a trend analysis in order to gain practical experience in the ways of fashion journalism. The course includes a shared blog component for posting of assignments and critiques of your visits to fashion industry headquarters or exhibitions.
Learning Objectives

Disciplinary and Cultural Knowledge Skills (Cognitive Skills)
• Acquire a chronologically nuanced vocabulary appropriate to the fashion industry
• Explain the role that media plays in the fashion industry
• Describe Paris’ particular role in the fashion world
• Use both local and international scholarship to inform your knowledge of fashion media
• Identify host country-specific manifestations of media treatment of fashion

Critical Thinking Skills (Oral and written)
• Use standards of critical thinking to assess the role played by fashion media
• Describe fashion as a source of cultural meaning
• Critically analyze French fashion and its related media

Attitudinal Skills (Affective)
• Approach the fashion industry with newfound openness and appreciation
• Demonstrate respect throughout the course to fellow students and the instructor

Behavioral Skills
• Engage in a genuine dialogue about the relationship between fashion and media
• Express informed opinions about the contemporary value arbitration within fashion media
• Lead a class discussion on a theoretical topic related to the course themes
• Refine skills in interviewing and reporting with a fashion focus

Instructional Format
Class will meet once a week for 2 ½ hours. Course work is comprised of readings in advance of class, in-class lectures and discussions, individual and group exercises, student interviews and exposés, a research project, documentary films, and a number of instructor-led onsite research excursions to relevant course-related sites and institutions in the city. Some onsite study will be integrated into class-time while others will be assigned as out-of-class independent learning.

Please be advised: If you require any special accommodations or have any special learning needs, please inform the instructor and the onsite academic affairs staff on the first day of class.

Workload Expectations: In conformity with CEA policy, all students are expected to spend at least two hours of time on academic studies outside of, and in addition to, each hour of class time.

Forms of Assessment
The instructor will use numerous and differentiated forms of assessment to calculate the final grade you receive for this course. For the record, these are listed and weighted below. The content, criteria and specific requirements for each assessment category will be explained in greater detail in class. However, you must complete all grading assessment categories to receive a grade for this course. In addition, your work and behavior in this course must fully conform to the regulations of the CEA Academic Integrity Policy to which you are subject. Finally, all formal written work you carry out in this course (research papers, projects, studies, etc.) must be submitted in electronic format. Your instructor may also require that you hand in a hard copy of such work.

Class Participation: 10%
Interview or Fashion Show Report 15%
Trend Case Study 25%
Class Participation: This grade will be calculated to reflect your participation in class discussions, your capacity to introduce ideas and thoughts dealing with the required texts, your ability to use language effectively, and your analytical skills in intellectual, constructive argumentation. When determining your class participation grade, traditional criteria such as material preparation, completed reading before class, and collaborative group work are all evaluated. But it is the active, meaningful and informed verbal and written contribution that you make that is most important to your overall participation grade. Indeed, willingness to share views in classroom discussions and the insightfulness of your comments and questions about assigned readings will all be taken into account when evaluating your participation. To demonstrate participation, each student will have one reading assignment for which they will help lead the class discussion on the reading and post a paragraph summary of the reading to the class blog. Additionally, it is important to demonstrate a positive and supportive attitude to the instructor and your classmates, and give full attention to class activities (i.e., cell-phones off, laptop for notes only, etc.). Whereas attendance and punctuality are expected and will not count positively towards the grade, laxity in these areas will have a negative effect. The instructor will use the following specific criteria when calculating your class participation grade:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Criteria for Assessing Class Participation</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>You make major and original contributions that spark discussion, offering both critical and analytical comments clearly based on readings and research and displaying a working knowledge of theoretical issues.</td>
<td>A+ (9.70–10.00)</td>
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<tr>
<td>You make significant contributions that demonstrate insight as well as knowledge of required readings and independent research.</td>
<td>A-/A (9.00–9.69)</td>
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<tr>
<td>You participate voluntarily and make useful contributions that are usually based upon some reflection and familiarity with required readings.</td>
<td>B/B+ (8.40–8.90)</td>
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<tr>
<td>You make voluntary but infrequent comments that generally reiterate the basic points of the required readings.</td>
<td>C+/B- (7.70–8.39)</td>
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<tr>
<td>You make limited comments only when prompted and do not initiate debate or show a clear awareness of the importance of the readings.</td>
<td>C (7.00–7.69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You very rarely make comments and resist engagement with the subject, attending class having manifestly done little if any preparation.</td>
<td>D (6.00–6.69)</td>
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<tr>
<td>You make irrelevant and tangential comments disruptive to class discussion, a result of frequent absence and complete un-preparedness.</td>
<td>F (0–5.90)</td>
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Interview or Fashion Report: By the second class meeting, you will decide if you would like to interview someone in the fashion industry or report on a fashion show. For either option you will write the same length (750-1000 words), post your text with images to the class blog and briefly present your conclusions to the class. Each class will start with one or two students presenting, so the due date for this assignment will vary for everyone.

Option 1 Interview: Survey profiles of figures in fashion and fashion media and invite for an email or personal interview. This may be anyone from a young blogger (whom you may already know) to a more significant
leader in the industry. All interviews should be 5-7 questions related to fashion and media. If the interviewee does not respond at length to your questions, you should offer an introductory paragraph or bio of the interviewee in order to meet the 750 word minimum. If you do not get a response from the interviewee by one week before your due date, let the instructor know and you may be permitted to interview someone about their fashion style.

**Option 2 Fashion Report:** During Paris fashion week there are many accessible shows and presentations. If you already have access to a live show this is an ideal choice. If you do not have access to a show you may view the collections from this season (no previous season permitted) online at Style.com. If you choose to use Style.com however, you must contrast your report with the review posted online. All reports should analyze at least 5 components of the collection: inspiration, colors, fabrics, label DNA and personal conclusions of the show's significance. In the case of a live show you should also consider the venue, music and front row in your commentary.

**Trend Case Study:** The instructor will explain in detail the specific approach and suggested content that will be integrated into your research, methodology and paper on an angle to be decided in conjunction with the instructor. You will submit to the instructor periodic updates on the progress of your research and these will count towards the overall assessment of your work.

In this exercise, your work will be evaluated according to the tenets and principles of scholarly academic research and Standard English usage and expository writing. Therefore, ensure that you are using a recognized handbook of style, a good dictionary, and that you are guided by the highest principles of academic integrity. The instructor will supply you with additional guidelines and advice on research topics, methods and resources for successfully completing your paper here in a “foreign” country.

Students will write 1,500-2,000 words (6-8 sides double-spaced) on the relationship between a trend, the fashion industry, the fashion media and the public. You must submit your trend case study topic (historic or current trend) by class 6. You will research the trend and demonstrate a synthesis of class knowledge, supported by independent research materials. You should identify how and when the trend emerged (in fashion and/or the masses), what designers demonstrated this trend, what media covered this trend, and how it was worn by tastemakers or the masses. You must submit the paper in electronic format. On class 14, either send it by e-mail or bring it to class on your USB key and be prepared to present your conclusions to the class, posting a one paragraph summary to the class blog.

**Midterm:** Short answer and essay question based on the readings and class discussions.

**Final Examination:** One cumulative essay question based on readings and class discussions. Please note that class exams are designed to establish and communicate to you the progress you are making towards meeting the course learning objectives listed above. They are comprised of questions and exercises that test your abilities in three important areas of competency: the amount of information you master; the accuracy of the information you present; and the significance you ascribe to the facts and ideas you have integrated across your study in this course.

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<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Numerical Grade Low Range</th>
<th>Numerical Grade High Range</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Quality Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>9.70</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>97.0 - 100%</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>9.40</td>
<td>9.69</td>
<td>94.0 - 96.9%</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>9.39</td>
<td>90.0 - 93.9%</td>
<td>3.70</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>8.70</td>
<td>8.99</td>
<td>87.0 - 89.9%</td>
<td>3.30</td>
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Please be advised: Any grade dispute you encounter in this course must immediately be discussed with the instructor and definitively resolved before the last week of class. Only end-of-term assignments graded after the end of your program are subject to CEA’s formal grade appeal procedure. For more information, see CEA Academic Policies.

CEA Attendance Policy
Every student is expected to attend all scheduled class sessions on time and be thoroughly prepared for the day’s class activities. In compliance with NEASC and UNH accreditation requirements, CEA instructors compile regular attendance records for every course and take these records into account when evaluating student participation and performance.

- In this course, a maximum of four days of accumulated absences due to sickness, personal emergency, inevitable transport delay and other related impediments will be tolerated.
- Your final course grade will drop one full letter grade (e.g. A- to B-) for missing five days of class and another full letter grade for missing six days of class, regardless of the reason for your absence.
- You will automatically fail a course if your absences exceed six days of class.

Furthermore, to comply with immigration and financial regulations, you must maintain full-time student status and attend at least 12 hours of class every week in accordance with this policy. Consequently, the Dean and Program Director will dismiss from all CEA courses, programs, activities and housing any student who fails to maintain full-time status.

Arriving Late for Class: Consistently arriving late is disruptive and shows a lack of respect for instructor and fellow students. For persistent lateness, the instructor deducts percentage points from the total 10% earmarked for Participation as indicated in the syllabus. Missing a significant portion of one of your classes may constitute a full day’s absence. If you arrive late due to serious and unforeseen circumstances, or if you must leave class early due to illness or emergency, you must inform the instructor. The instructor will determine if the amount of class time missed constitutes a full or partial absence.

ceaClassroom: CEA's Moodle CMS
CEA instructors use the open source course management system (CMS) called Moodle that creates an interactive virtual learning environment for students and educators alike. This web-based platform provides you with 24/7 access to the course syllabus, daily schedule of class lectures and assignments, non-textbook required readings, and additional resources directly related to your studies. Moodle includes the normal array of forums, up-loadable and downloadable databases, wikis, and related academic support designed for helping you achieve the many course learning objectives. The ceaClassroom website is located here https://www.ceaClassroom.com/.

During the first week of class, the CEA academic staff and instructors will provide you with log-in
information and corresponding passwords to access this site. They will also help you navigate through the many functions and resources Moodle provides. While you may print a hard copy version of the syllabus that is projected on the first day of class, it is the class schedule on Moodle that is the definitive and official one, given that the instructor will be announcing updates and additions there and nowhere else. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have access to all Moodle materials related to your course and that you monitor Moodle on a daily basis so as to be fully informed of required course assignments and any scheduling changes that might occur.

**Required Readings**

Listed below are the required course textbooks and additional readings. Whether you buy your books from our locally affiliated merchants or whether you acquire these before arrival, you must have constant access to these resources for reading, highlighting and marginal note-taking. It is required that you have unrestricted access to each. Additional copies will be placed on reserve in the Academic Affairs office for short-term loans. Access to additional sources required for certain class sessions will be provided in paper or electronic format consistent with applicable copyright legislation. In addition, the Academic Affairs Office compiles a bank of detailed information about the many libraries, documentation centers, research institutes and archival materials located in the host city and accessible to CEA students. You will be required to use these resources throughout your studies. Direct access to additional resources and databanks are available to you through the online library of the University of New Haven.


**Course Reader Resources (hereafter CR):**


Recommended Readings:
Please consult http://www.bergfashionlibrary.com/ which can be accessed by subscribing academic institutions. Berg is also the leading publisher in fashion theory books.


Kim Hastreiter, “Mopping the Street, Design Quarterly, No. 159 (Spring, 1993), pp. 33-37


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<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Student Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction to Syllabus Overview of Fashion &amp; Media</td>
<td>Introduction Activity</td>
<td>Readings</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>• FR: A Brief History of Modern Fashion 1-4 only), pp 6-46.</td>
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<td>• CR: Jennifer M. Jones, “Repackaging Rousseau,” pp. 939-967</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Fashion Journalism The Fashion Magazine</td>
<td>Lecture &amp; Discussion Group activity with fashion magazine and journalism samples</td>
<td>Readings</td>
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<td>• CR: Excerpts Mallarmé’s La Dernière Mode (includes sketches without numbers, please follow reader)</td>
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<td>• Excerpts Mallarmé’s La Dernière Mode, Introduction (total 28 pages includes sketches without numbers, please follow reader)</td>
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<td>• FR: Fashion Theory, pp. 77-105.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Fashion Photography</td>
<td>Lecture &amp; Discussion Group activity with fashion photos</td>
<td>Readings</td>
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<td>• Bring a fashion photo example to class</td>
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## Mass Media & the Fashion Industry

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| 5       | Fashion & Film | Lecture & Discussion. Viewing of Robert Altman's *Prêt-à-Porter* (1994) | **Readings**<br>• Preview of video samples related to readings<br>• CR: Stella Bruzzi “Cinema and Haute Couture” pp.3-34.<br>• Online: Amy Spindler, "Style: It's All About Yves."
| 6       | The Fashion Show & The Press | Brief Lecture & Discussion. Excursion to fashion show or exhibit TBD | **Readings**<br>• Trend topics due<br>• Online: Amanda Fortini, “How the Runway Took Off: A Brief History of the Fashion Show”
| 7       | Fashion & The Shift To New Media | Lecture & Discussion. Group review of fashion links | **Readings**<br>• Come to class with an accessible link to a fashion new media site and preview www.showstudio.com<br>• FR: The Postmodern Age, pp. 59-72<br>• FR: Fashion at the Edge, pp. 11-117.<br>• Online: Imran Amed, "The Business of Blogging"
<p>| 8       | Midterm | Exam | <strong>Readings</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Review all Class Readings &amp; Course Materials |</p>
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<td><strong>Readings</strong></td>
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- FR: Fashion and Identity, pp. 121-158.  
- FR: From Haute Couture to the Street, pp. 311-343.  |
- FR Fashion and the Body, pp. 229-249.  
- CR: Patrícia Soley-Beltran, “Fashion Models as Ideal Embodiments of Normative  |
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Fashion &amp; the Global Dialogue</td>
<td>Lecture &amp; Discussion</td>
<td><strong>Readings</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Student Final Presentations</td>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td><strong>Readings</strong></td>
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<td>Review all Class Readings &amp; Course Materials</td>
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<td>Trend Case Study papers due</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>Exam</td>
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