

Fashion & Desire in the African Diaspora
AFR 330C (31060) / WGS 34084 (46060)

Professor Lyndon K. Gill

Description

This course explores historical and contemporary style in the African Diaspora. From head to toe, runways to street corners, art installations to music videos, “dandyism” to “swag,” we investigate the sartorial as a wearable art form and a political arena. We unfurl the tapestry of desires that encircles black fashion in the U.S. and globally, combing through the intertwined threads of passionate creativity, sexual fetishization, corporeal autonomy, capitalist consumerism, suffocating conformity and humorous play amongst other topics.

**Please Note:*

1) *This course carries a flag for Global Cultures.*

Requirements & Assignments

1. **Attendance:** Each student is required to attend *every* online class session (with their video cameras on for the duration of the class) and give their undivided attention to each session (i.e. No checking/posting on Facebook/Instagram/Twitter/TikTok etc., No texting/calling/direct messaging, No checking/responding to e-mails, No reading or doing assignments for this class or any other, No listening to music/podcasts or watching music videos, No online shopping, etc.). Students should log on (in as quiet and private an environment as possible) to every class session ready to interact with the professor and your classmates. Unexcused absences are unacceptable. More than one unexcused absence during the term will result in a reduction of the overall course grade for each session missed (A→A-, B+→B, etc.).

2. **Informed participation:** Each student will complete the assigned readings and have those readings on hand during our class sessions. Students will sign in to virtual class sessions on time and prepared with questions and comments on each reading.

3. **Reading responses:** Each week, students will post a **one-page reading response** by **11:59pm on the Monday before class**. These posts are intended to provoke conversation. The week’s assigned readings must be addressed directly, but no need to summarize. Critique, compare, and pose questions for discussion or clarification. Each post must comment on at least one other person’s reading response. **The first reading response is due on Monday 8/29 before 11:59pm**. These responses will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. Students will receive no credit for late posts.

4. ***Discussion facilitation:*** Each student will co-facilitate two class sessions. These sessions will be assigned. Students may exchange dates, but must inform the professor of this change at least one week prior to the facilitation. **Facilitators are required to meet with the professor during his virtual office hours prior to each facilitation.**

Facilitators are expected to draft questions for discussion based on the assigned readings and are required to read the reading responses posted for that week. The inclusion of course-relevant audio/visual material as a way to encourage conversation is highly encouraged. Students will receive a grade for these facilitations. **Discussion facilitators are NOT required to write reading responses for the week of their facilitation.**

5. ***Final project proposal:*** Students will be assigned final project groups (**shifts are allowed between groups until Thursday 9/29 and the professor must be informed of these changes**) and write a **2-3-page proposal** (12pt. Times New Roman font, double spaced) for a final project. This proposal will explain the form of the final project and the texts the group will be using. These texts must include course related materials (**at least one course text per group member**), but may also include outside resources. This proposal will be **accompanied by a brief annotated bibliography** (the bibliography does NOT count toward the minimum page limit). Each group will submit one proposal via Canvas and each group member will receive the same grade.

6. ***Final project:*** Each group will complete a ***final project to be accompanied by a 4-5 page explanatory essay and bibliography*** – annotations not necessary (12pt. Times New Roman font, double spaced). Each group will submit one final project via Canvas and each group member will receive the same grade. **This project is due the first day of final exams.**

- For the ***Final Project*** students will produce a creative work in the medium of their choice (performance, film, painting, sculpture, photography, literary text, web, etc. or using multiple media). This work will compare and contrast a fashion designer on our syllabus with another fashion designer of African descent, who is either not on the syllabus at all or mentioned only minimally. **The final project MUST engage directly with the materials assigned (at least one course text per group member) and themes raised by the course.** Outside sources are encouraged but not required.

****Please note for all group work:***

In an effort to keep this online course contactless, students will not be required to meet in person to prepare group facilitations, to prepare final project proposals or to complete final projects. Students may choose to meet in person at their own risk and are highly encouraged to follow proper safety protocols, but cannot require any group member to participate in person. However, necessary provisions must be made to include all online-only participants, who are required to participate fully in all group work.

***Please note for all assignments:**

1) **Late proposals and projects will be penalized for every day they are late** (i.e. A → A- if one day late, A → B+ if two days late, etc.). Students are required to **proofread** their material prior to submission (ideally, someone else will also read the material for grammatical/spelling/flow errors your eyes might miss). **Materials that show evidence of not having been proofread will be returned and marked late.** Extensions may be considered only under extenuating circumstances and in emergency situations. When possible, advance notice is encouraged and documentation will be required.

2) For assistance with cultivating your ideas, outlining your written work and tips on proofreading/editing your polished writing, please get in touch with the **Undergraduate Writing Center: www.uwc.utexas.edu**

3) Students are expected to comply with the University of Texas at Austin's **Honor Code** and its standards of academic integrity:

http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php

It is each student's responsibility to become familiar with this code and these university-wide standards; ignorance will be unacceptable as an excuse for violations. All written assignments may be scanned for plagiarism.

4) Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the University. To determine if you qualify, please contact the coordinating office at 471-6259 (voice), 232-2937 (video phone) or www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd.

Course Grade Percentages

Reading responses	10%
Virtual class participation/ Discussion facilitation	20%
Final project proposal (due 10/6 by 11:59pm via Canvas)	30%
Final project (due 12/8 by 11:59pm via Canvas)	40%

Required Texts

All of these texts are available for purchase at the University Co-Op or from online booksellers. I encourage you to support local Austin bookstores when possible. You might consider collectively buying texts or borrowing them from the UT Library system.

I suggest you get an individual or group subscription to the following:

New York Times online newspaper <https://www.nytimes.com/>

Vogue online magazine <https://www.vogue.com/>

Camerlengo, Laura L.

2021 Patrick Kelly: Runway of Love. San Francisco: Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco.

Cameron, Alexandra Cunningham

2020 Willi Smith: Street Couture. New York: Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum.

Miller, Monica

2009 Slaves to Fashion: Black Dandyism and the Styling of Black Diasporic Identity. Durham: Duke University Press.

Rovine, Victoria L. [**Available Online at <https://www.lib.utexas.edu/>**]

2015 African Fashion, Global Style: Histories, Innovations and Ideas You Can Wear. Bloomington: Indianan University Press.

Talley, André Leon

2021 The Chiffon Trenches. New York: Ballatine Books.

Way, Elizabeth

2021 Black Designers in American Fashion. London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts.

White, Shane and Graham White [**Available Online at <https://www.lib.utexas.edu/>**]

1999. Stylin': African-American Expressive Culture, From Its Beginnings to the Zoot Suit. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Reading and Assignment Schedule

**Please Note: It may be necessary to make slight changes to this schedule as the course progresses. You will always receive prior notice of any changes.*

Week #1: Introductions

8/23

Introductions & syllabus review

8/25

Introductions & syllabus review

Week #2: Fashion & Race

[First Reading Response due Monday 8/29 by 11:59pm]

8/30 [23pgs.]

Tillet & Friedman "It's Time to End Racism in the Fashion Industry" [9]

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/24/style/fashion-racism.html?searchResultPosition=1>

The Kelly Initiative Letter to the CFDA [2]

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1O18cVV1qkZedaOwVHUAXI0jSvtKcaUUH/view>

Friedman et al. "The Fashion World Promised More Diversity" [7]

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/04/style/Black-representation-fashion.html>

Friedman "the Incredible Whiteness of the Museum Fashion Collection" [5]

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/29/style/museums-fashion-racism.html>

9/1 [22pgs.]

"A Look at the Black Fashion Museum Collection and Designer Peter Davy" [6]

<https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/ugKydNNzX8ltJw>

Cohn "André Leon Talley on the Influential Black Fashion Designers" [8]

<https://www.harpersbazaar.com/fashion/designers/a32948143/andre-leon-talley-black-fashion-designers/>

Deiderich et al. "Virgil Abloh Dies of Cancer at 41" [6]

<https://wwd.com/fashion-news/designer-luxury/virgil-abloh-dies-of-cancer-at-1235004104/>

Browse & Read:

WWD "Virgil Abloh Through the Years"

<https://wwd.com/fashion-news/fashion-features/gallery/virgil-abloh-founder-of-off-white-dies-at-1235004103/off-white-show-runway-spring-summer-2018-pitti-immagine-uomo-92-florence-italy-15-jun-2017-2/>

Jenkins *Fashion & Race* online exhibition (Parts 1-3):

1) "Deconstructing Ideas, Reconstructing Identities."

<https://artsandculture.google.com/story/fashion-and-race-deconstructing-ideas-reconstructing-identities/mwJiG7yy43dsJQ>

2) "The Racialized Body and Fashionability"

<https://artsandculture.google.com/story/fashion-and-race-the-racialized-body-and-fashionability/iAJyTGdKAGxTLQ>

3) "The Intersection of Race and the Gaze in Fashion Photography."

<https://artsandculture.google.com/story/fashion-and-race-the-intersection-of-race-and-the-gaze-in-fashion-photography/PALiUBi-IA81JA>

Week #3: Stylin'

9/6

Final Project Proposal Workshop

Visit Exhibition: “Jamel Shabazz: Peace to the Queen” at the Carver Museum

<https://www.austintexas.gov/page/carver-museum-exhibits>

9/8

[30 pgs.]

White & White *Stylin'*:

[Available Online at <https://www.lib.utexas.edu/>]

“Introduction” p. 1-4 [4]

“The Long-Veiled Beauty of Our Own World” (excerpt) p. 208-218 [11]

“Suit Men from Suit Land” p. 248-262 [15]

Week #4: Fine & Dandy I

9/13

[25 pgs.]

Miller *Slaves to Fashion* “Introduction” p. 1-25

9/15

[28 pgs.]

Miller *Slaves to Fashion* Chap. 5: “You Look Beautiful Like That” p. 219- 246
(End at section “Future Perfect”)

Week #5: Fine & Dandy II

9/20

[25 pgs.]

Miller *Slaves to Fashion* Chap. 5: “You Look Beautiful Like That” p. 247-266 [20]
(End at section “Belle of the Ball”)

Lewis “Fashioning Black Masculinity” [5]

Watch: “Shantrelle P. Lewis on Dandy Lion”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErzWafq3hoo>

9/22

[24pgs.]

Miller Chap. 5: “You Look Beautiful Like That” p. 266-290 (To the end of the chapter)

Browse: Afropunk <http://www.afropunk.com/>

Watch: Spooner Afro-Punk <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fanQHFAxXH0>

Week #6: Black Designers in American Fashion

9/27 [31 pgs.]
Way Black Designers in American Fashion
Way “Introduction” p. 1-10 [6]
Square “Slavery’s War, Liberty’s Weft” p. 29-46 [12]
Way “A Matrilineal Thread” p. 47-67 [13]

9/29 [25 pgs.]
Way Black Designers in American Fashion
Way “Scott Barrie” p.219-238 [12]
Pritchard “Race Werk” p.239-259 [13]

[Last Day to Make Changes to Final Project Groups]

Week #7: Workshops

10/4
Final Project Proposal Workshop

10/6
Final Project Proposal Workshop

**[Final Project Proposals Due by 11:59pm
(one submission per group) via Canvas Email]**

Week #8: AfroQueer Couture

10/11 [30 pgs.]
Cameron Willi Smith: Street Couture
Cameron “Introduction” & “Timeline” p.9-19 [8]
Calmese “To Be American” p.65-67 [3]
Square “WilliWear to Streetwear” p. 71-73 [2]
Nichols & Jones “Wedding Dress for the Black Fashion Museum” p.77-79 [2]
Lisby “Ruth E. Carter on School Daze” p. 83-85 [3]
Barber “Real Clothes for Real Dance” p.101-111 [4]
Navies “Bill T. Jones on *Secret Pastures*” p.115-117 [3]
Brewer “Knowledge Through the Hand” p.121 [1]
Pritchard “Vernaculars of Black & Queer Remembering” p. 213-217 [4]

10/13 [27 pgs.]

Sargent “Patrick Kelly Was the Jackie Robinson of High Fashion” [5]

https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/kz77yv/patrick-kelly-was-the-jackie-robinson-of-high-fashion

Camerlengo *Patrick Kelly: Runway of Love*

Talley “Runway Jubilee” p. 9-11 [3]

Blum “Introduction: Patrick Kelly & Paris Fashion” p. 15-27 [12]

Lisby “From the Church Pew to the Runway” p. 29-35 [6]

Browse: <http://www.philamuseum.org/exhibitions/799.html> [1]

Week #9: Runway of Love

10/18 [27 pgs.]

Camerlengo *Patrick Kelly: Runway of Love*

Pritchard “Sex, Sexuality, and Signifying” p. 37-43 [5]

moore “Patrick Kelly’s Seat at the Table” p. 45-49 [4]

Barnes “Resurrecting Josephine” p. 51-57 [5]

Blum “Chronology” p. 162-174 [11]

Browse & Watch Video: <https://deyoung.famsf.org/exhibitions/patrick-kelly> [2]

10/20

Final Project Workshop

Week #10: The Chiffon Trenches

10/25

Final Project Workshop

10/27 [30 pgs.]

Talley *The Chiffon Trenches*

“Introduction” p. xi-xiv [4]

“I” p. 3-16 [14]

“II” p. 17-25 [9]

Carroll “Anna Wintour is Not the Star” [3]

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/15/books/review/the-chiffon-trenches-andre-leon-talley.html?smid=url-share>

Watch: Novack *The Gospel According to André* [Available on Amazon Prime Video]

Week #11: Afropean Fashion

11/1 [36 pgs.]

Tulloch *The Birth of Cool* p.1-8, 171-198

[Available online <https://www.lib.utexas.edu/>]

Watch:

BBC *Ozwald Boateng: Why Style Matters* <https://vimeo.com/131734547>

11/3 [28 pgs.]

Horyn “Yves of Destruction” [16]

<https://www.nytimes.com/2000/12/24/magazine/yves-of-destruction.html>

Friedman “The Truth About Olivier Rousteing” [8]

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/24/style/olivier-rousteing-adoption-film-balmain.html>

Cavanagh “The Staying Power of Olivier Rousteing” [4]

<https://www.harpersbazaar.com/fashion/designers/a38957618/0210-0213-the-staying-power-of-olivier-rousteing-march-2022/>

Watch: Bonnefont *Wonder Boy* [Available on Netflix]

Week #12: Afropolitanism I

11/8 [26 pgs.]

Rovine “Introduction: Fashion Matters” in *African Fashion, Global Style*
p. 2-27 [Available online <https://www.lib.utexas.edu/>]

11/10 [25 pgs.]

Rovine “Reinventing Local Forms” [part 1] in *African Fashion, Global Style*
p. 107-131 [Available online <https://www.lib.utexas.edu/>]

Week #13: Afropolitanism II

11/15 [26 pgs.]

Rovine “Reinventing Local Forms” [part 2] in *African Fashion, Global Style*
p. 131-156 [Available online <https://www.lib.utexas.edu/>]

11/17 [20 pgs.]

Rovine “Conclusion: What Fashion Shows” in *African Fashion, Global Style*
p. 233-252 [Available online <https://www.lib.utexas.edu/>]

Week #14: Fall Break

11/22

No Class - Holiday

11/24

No Class - Holiday

Week #15: Workshops

11/29

Final Project Workshop

12/1

Final Project Workshop

12/8 (First Day of Final Exams)

[Final Projects Due by 11:59pm (one submission per group) via Canvas Email]

Grading Schema

(Informed by “Grading Standards II” by Maxine Rodburg of the Harvard Writing Center)

The following are the standards I adhere to when I grade essays. Pluses and minuses represent shades of difference, as do split grades (e.g. B-/C+). I assign grades on the evidence of the essay submitted, not on effort or time spent.

A: An excellent piece of writing (this is not the same as perfect). This is an ambitious, perceptive essay that grapples with interesting, complex ideas, responds discerningly to counter-arguments, and explores well-chosen evidence revealingly. The discussion enhances— rather than underscores— the reader’s and writer’s knowledge (it doesn’t simply repeat what has been discussed in class). There is a context for all the ideas; someone outside the class would be enriched, not confused, by reading the essay. Its beginning opens up— rather than flatly announces— its thesis. Its end is something more than a summary. The language is clean, precise, and often elegant. As a reader I feel surprised, delighted, changed. There’s something new here for me, something only the essay’s writer could have written and explored in this particular way. The writer’s stake in the material is obvious.

B: This is a piece of writing that reaches high and achieves many of its aims. The ideas are solid and progressively explored but some thin patches require more analysis and/or some stray thoughts do not quite fit together well. The language is generally clear and precise but occasionally not. The evidence is relevant, but there may be too little. The context for the evidence may not be sufficiently explored, so that I have to make some of the connections that the writer should have made clear for me.

OR This is a piece of writing that does not reach as high than an ‘A’ essay, but thoroughly achieves its aims. This is a solid essay whose reasoning and argument may nonetheless be rather routine— in this case the limitation is conceptual.

C: This is a piece of writing that has real problems in one of these areas: 1) conception (there is at least one main idea but it is obscure and hard to get to); 2) structure (the logic behind the ordering of the text is far from clear); 3) use of evidence (there is no evidence presented or that which is provided is weak and/or the connections among the ideas are unclear or without context; the text is plagued by generalizations and absent substantial proof); 4) language (the writing is awkward and generally stands in the way of comprehension). Overall, the essay may be repetitive, poorly organized, and/or superficial in its treatment of the subject matter. In addition, punctuation, spelling, grammar, citations, and transitions may be problems as well.

OR This is an essay that largely summarizes any given text or other work (of art or analysis), but is written without too many major problems.

OR This is an essay that is chiefly a personal reaction to something. This is perhaps well written, but there is scant engagement with course content or other scholarly material; it is mostly opinion.

D: This is an essay that demonstrates very little effort to grapple seriously with the ideas it hopes to explore.

- OR** This is a piece of writing that is extremely problematic in many of the areas mentioned above: conception, structure, use of evidence, language, etc.
- OR** This is writing that does not come close to meeting the expectations of the assignment.
- F:** This is a piece of writing that should most definitely be re-conceptualized and revised drastically so that it can be re-submitted if that option is available.

Grading Scale

A+	100
A	99 – 95
A-	94 – 90
B+	89 – 85
B	84 – 80
B-	79 – 75
C+	74 – 70
C	69 – 65
C-	64 – 60
D+	59 – 55
D	54 – 50
D-	49 – 45
F	44 or less