

**Fashion & Desire**  
AFR 372E (30283)/ TXA 365 (53637)/WGS 340 (46972)

Spring 2017

**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,” Patrick Kelly to Kanye West, Josephine Baker to Beyoncé, 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, capitalism consumerism, suffocating conformity and humorous play amongst other topics.

*\*Please Note:*

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

**Requirements & Assignments**

**1. Class Attendance:** Each student is required to attend *every* class session. Attendance will be noted. 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.).

*\*Note: The use of laptops, tablets and mobile phones in NOT permitted in the classroom*

**3. Informed participation:** Each student is required to complete the assigned readings and will bring hardcopies of these readings to class. Students will come to class on time and prepared with questions and comments on each reading.

**4. Reading Responses:** A one-page reading response will be posted **by 5pm on the Sunday 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 conversation page. ***The first reading response is due on Sunday 2/5 at 5pm.*** These pages will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. Students will receive no credit for late posts.

**5. Discussion facilitation:** Each student will choose two class sessions in which to co-facilitate discussion with another classmate. ***Facilitation sessions will be chosen at the***

***end of class on Thursday 1/25.*** Facilitators are expected to draft questions and design activities for discussion based on the assigned readings and are required to read all conversation pages posted for that week. Students will receive a grade for these facilitations. **Discussion facilitators are NOT required to write conversation pages for the week of their facilitation.**

**6. Final project proposal:** Students will choose final project groups (of at least four people) and write a **2-3 page proposal** (12pt. Times New Roman font, double spaced). This proposal will explain the form of the final project and the texts the group will be using. These texts must include course related readings/films, but may also include outside resources. This proposal will be **accompanied by a briefly annotated bibliography** (the bibliography does NOT count toward the minimum page limit). The proposal and bibliography are **due on Thursday 10/16 at the start of class. Late proposals will penalized for every day they are late** (i.e. A → A- if one day late, A → B+ if two days late, etc.). Extensions may be considered only under extenuating circumstances and in emergency situations. When possible, advance notice is encouraged and documentation will be required.

**7. Final project:** Each group will complete a **final project to be accompanied by a 4-5 page explanatory script** (12pt. Times New Roman font, double spaced). The project will be **due on 12/10** (the first day of Final Exams). **Late papers/projects will penalized for every day they are late** (i.e. A → A- if one day late, A → B+ if two days late, etc.). Extensions may be considered only under extenuating circumstances and in emergency situations. When possible, advance notice is encouraged and documentation will be required.

- For the **Final Project**, groups 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 **MUST** engage directly with texts/films assigned for the course and themes raised by the course. Outside sources are encouraged but not required. The artistic work will be accompanied by a written guide/script/description of at least 4 pages. I strongly encourage a representative from each group to come to office hours prior to submitting your project proposals.

Please Note:

\* 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](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.

\* 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](http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd).

### **Course Grade Percentages**

Reading Responses	10%
Class participation/ Discussion facilitation	20%
Final project proposal (due 3/8)	30%
Final project (due 5/10)	40%

### **Required Texts:**

#### **\*New York Times online student subscription required**

<https://www.nytimes.com/subscriptions/edu/lp8LQFK.html?campaignId=6K67F&gclid=CNGj7LGDy9ECFUW1wAodtxUGBg>

Ford, Tanisha

2015 Liberated Threads: Black Women, Style, and the Global Politics of Soul.  
Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

*[Full text available online at <http://www.lib.utexas.edu>]*

Hansen, Karen & D. Soyini Madison

2013 African Dress: Fashion, Agency, Performance. London: Bloomsbury.

*[Full text available online at <http://www.lib.utexas.edu>]*

Jennings, Helen

2011 New African Fashion. Munich: Prestel

Miller, Monica

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

*[Full text available online at <http://www.lib.utexas.edu>]*

Tulloch, Carol

2004 Black Style. London: V&A Publishing.

These texts are available at the University Co-Op and have been put on reserve at the Perry-Castañeda Library. Additional required readings (book chapters, articles, etc.) are also available as pdf documents on Canvas.

### **Films**

**\*Netflix subscription required** [<https://www.netflix.com/>]

Aponsah, George and Cosima Spender  
2004 The Importance of Being Elegant  
[<http://features.georgeamponsah.com/video/78965998>]

Friendly, David & Mick Partridge  
2015 Sneakerheadz [Available on Netflix]

Haynes, Eric  
2009 Ozward Boateng: Why Style Matters [<https://vimeo.com/131734547>]

Jenkins, Sacha  
2015 Fresh Dressed [Available on Netflix]

Lespert, Jalil  
2014 Yves Saint Laurent [Available on Netflix]

Spooner, James  
2003 Afro-Punk [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fanQHFAxXH0>]

Waldman, Michael  
2015 Christian Louboutin: The World's Most Luxurious Shoes  
[<https://vimeo.com/153749065>]

### **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.*

#### **Part 1: The Americas**

##### ***Week #1: Fashion Improv***

**1/18**

Improvational Fashion Shoot

**1/20**

Review & preparation workshop

##### ***Week #2: Introductions***

**1/23**

Introduction to the course and each other

**1/25**

Introduction to the course and each other

**[Choose Two Facilitation Sessions]**

1/27

Review & preparation workshop

***Week #3***

1/30 **No Class**

2/1 **No Class**

2/3

Review & preparation workshop

**[2/5 (Sunday) Post first Reading Response by 5pm]**

**Week #4: Race, *Celebrity* & *Crossover Aesthetics***

2/6 [27 pgs.]

Friedman “Fashion’s Racial Divide” [10]

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/12/fashion/fashions-racial-divide.html?action=click&contentCollection=Fashion%20%26%20Style&module=RelatedCoverage&region=EndOfArticle&pgtype=article>

Moss “A History of Hip Hop and Fashion” [3]

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/25/t-magazine/nas-fresh-dressed-style.html>

Standen “Kanye West Talks Yeezy Season 4” [8]

<http://www.vogue.com/13473191/kanye-west-spring-2017-interview/>

Trebay “The Scene at Kanye’s Show” [6]

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/07/fashion/kanye-west-fashion-week-season-4.html>

***Collection:* Yeezy Spring 2017**

<http://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/spring-2017-ready-to-wear/kanye-west-adidas-originals>

**Film:** Fresh Dressed [Available on Netflix]

2/8 [27 pgs.]

Caramanica “Hooking Up” [7]

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/08/t-magazine/hip-hop-fashion-style.html>

Schneier “Rihanna Brings Smoke, Mirrors and Transparent Tops” [6]

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/13/fashion/rihanna-new-york-fashion-week-first-collection-for->

[puma.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Ffashion&action=click&contentCollection=fashion&region=stream&module=stream\\_unit&version=search&contentPlacement=1&pgtype=sectionfront](http://puma.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Ffashion&action=click&contentCollection=fashion&region=stream&module=stream_unit&version=search&contentPlacement=1&pgtype=sectionfront)

Schneier “Rihanna on Her New See-Through, Stiletto-Heeled Puma Collection” [5]

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/13/fashion/rihanna-puma-fenty-new-york-fashion-week.html?action=click&contentCollection=Fashion%20%26%20Style&module=RelatedCoverage&region=EndOfArticle&pgtype=article>

Verner “From Humble Sneaker to Luxury Style Icon” [6]

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/27/fashion/trends/from-humble-sneaker-to-luxury-icon.html>

Kurutz “For Sneakerheads, An Exhibition That Chronicles the Culture” [3]

[https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/09/fashion/for-sneakerheads-an-exhibit-that-chronicles-the-culture-of-their-beloved-shoes.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Ffashion&action=click&contentCollection=fashion&region=stream&module=stream\\_unit&version=search&contentPlacement=5&pgtype=sectionfront](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/09/fashion/for-sneakerheads-an-exhibit-that-chronicles-the-culture-of-their-beloved-shoes.html?rref=collection%2Fsectioncollection%2Ffashion&action=click&contentCollection=fashion&region=stream&module=stream_unit&version=search&contentPlacement=5&pgtype=sectionfront)

**Film:** Sneakerheadz [Available on Netflix]

**2/10**

Review & preparation workshop

### ***Week #5: Liberating Threads***

**2/13** [28 pgs.]

Ford “Introduction: Black Women and the Making of Modern Soul Style” p. 1-13

Ford “Soul Style on Campus” p. 95-104, 117-121

**2/15** [27 pgs.]

Cooper “Dancehall Dress” in Tulloch *Black Style* p.68-83 [16]

Berger “Black Dandies, Style Rebels with a Cause” [6]

[http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/06/16/black-dandies-style-rebels-with-a-cause/?\\_r=0](http://lens.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/06/16/black-dandies-style-rebels-with-a-cause/?_r=0)

Jacobs “Black Designers in Focus at FIT” [5]

[https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/07/fashion/black-designers-fashion-institute-of-technology-ann-lowe-duru-olowu.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/07/fashion/black-designers-fashion-institute-of-technology-ann-lowe-duru-olowu.html?_r=0)

**Exhibition:** Dandy Lion: Articulating A Re(De)defined Black Masculine Identity

View videos & photos at:

[http://shantrelleplewis.com/?p\\_category=dandy-lion-articulating-a-redefined-black-masculine-identity](http://shantrelleplewis.com/?p_category=dandy-lion-articulating-a-redefined-black-masculine-identity)

**2/17**

Review & preparation workshop

### ***Week #6: Free, Fine & Dandy***

2/20 [25 pgs.]  
Miller *Slaves to Fashion* p. 1-25

2/22 [28 pgs.]  
Miller *Slaves to Fashion* p. 219- 246

2/24  
Final Project Proposal preparation workshop

***Week #7: Black Style Beyond a Boundary***

2/27 [20 pgs.]  
Miller *Slaves to Fashion* p. 247-266

3/1 [24pgs.]  
Miller *Slaves to Fashion* p. 267-290 [24]

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

**Website:** <http://www.afropunk.com/>

3/3  
Final Project Proposal preparation workshop

**Part 2: Europe**

***Week #8: The British Invasion***

3/6 [49pgs.]  
Tulloch *Black Style* p.10-21, 84-121

3/8 [37pgs.]  
Tulloch “Style-Fashion-Dress: From Black to Post-Black”  
Ogunnaike “Is Ozwald Boateng the Next British Invasion”  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/29/arts/television/29boat.html>

Appel “Britain’s ‘Rudeboys’ Ride Again”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/05/arts/international/britains-rudeboys-ride-again.html>

**Website:** [www.returnoftherudeboy.com](http://www.returnoftherudeboy.com)

**Film:** Ozward Boateng: Why Style Matters [<https://vimeo.com/131734547>]

**[Final Project Proposals Due]**

**[Midterm course evaluations completed at the end of the class session]**

**3/10**

Review & preparation workshop

*Week #9*

**3/13**

**Spring Break**

**3/15**

**Spring Break**

**3/17**

**Spring Break**

*Week #10: Afropean Style Diaspora*

**3/20**

[31pgs]

Mercer “Black Hair/Style Politics” p.97-128

**3/22**

[20 pgs.]

Summers “Patrick Kelly in the Present Tense” p.210-218

BMA Press Release “Patrick Kelly: A Retrospective”

Silva “Delta Force”: <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/22/magazine/delta-force.html>

Wellington “Honoring a Talent Cut Short”



[http://www.philly.com/philly/columnists/elizabeth\\_wellington/20140427\\_Honoring\\_a\\_talent\\_cut\\_short.html](http://www.philly.com/philly/columnists/elizabeth_wellington/20140427_Honoring_a_talent_cut_short.html)

**Exhibition:** Patrick Kelly: Runway of Love

Review exhibition & watch videos at:

<http://www.philamuseum.org/exhibitions/799.html>

**3/24**

Review & preparation workshop

***Week #11: Gay Paris***

**3/27**

[25 pgs.]

Schiro “Yves Saint Laurent, Giant of Couture, Dies at 71” [11]

**Film:** Yves Saint Laurent [Available on Netflix]

**Exhibition:** Yves Saint Laurent: The Perfection of Style (Seattle Art Museum)

<http://ysl.site.seattleartmuseum.org/>

Friedman “In the Studio with Christian Louboutin” [6]

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/02/fashion/in-the-studio-with-christian-louboutin-paris-fashion-week.html>

**Film:** The World’s Most Luxurious Shoes [<https://vimeo.com/153749065>]

Farra “Olivier Rousteing Talks Diversity” [3]

<http://www.vogue.com/13494360/olivier-rousteing-balmain-atelier-with-alina-cho-metropolitan-museum-lecture/>

Fury “Forty-Eight Hours in Paris” [3]

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/29/t-magazine/fashion/olivier-rousteing-balmain-diary-paris-fashion-week.html>

Menkes “Balmain: Journey into the Soul” [2]

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/28/fashion/at-balmain-olivier-rousteing-celebrates-his-youth.html>

**Collection:** Balmain Spring 2017

<http://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/spring-2017-ready-to-wear/balmain#coverage>

<http://www.vogue.com/fashion-shows/spring-2017-menswear/balmain#collection>

**3/29**

Review & preparation workshop

**3/31**

Review & preparation workshop

### **Part 3: Africa**

#### ***Week #12: Afropolitans***

**4/3** [25 pgs.]  
Rovine "African Fashion" p.89-103  
Jennings *New African Fashion* p.7, 8-17

Video: Sunday Style in Johannesburg  
<https://www.nytimes.com/video/fashion/100000002558746/sunday-style-johannesburg-south-africa.html>

**4/5** [22pgs.]  
Jennings *New African Fashion* p.156-157, 178-181, 192-195, 200-201, 208-211, 220-225

**Exhibition:** Vlisco: African Fashion on a Global Stage  
<http://www.philamuseum.org/exhibitions/845.html?page=1>

**4/7**  
Review & preparation workshop

#### ***Week #13: African Style***

**4/10** [28pgs.]  
Hansen & Madison *African Dress* p.1-14, 204-216

**4/12** [23pgs.]  
Summers "Images of Iman" p.231-238  
Jennings *New African Fashion* 20-29, 90-93, 113

**4/14**  
Review & preparation workshop

#### ***Week #14: Vintage Dream***

**4/17** [22pgs.]  
De Greef "Vintage Africa: Meeting Namibia's Hipsters" [on theguradian.com]  
Gondola "La Sape Exposed!" p.157-173

**Film:** The Importance of Being Elegant  
<http://features.georgeamponsah.com/video/78965998>

**4/19** [25pgs.]  
Jennings *New African Fashion* p.58-63, 102-105, 126-129, 138-141, 184-187  
Billard “Iké Udé: The Wildness of Clothes, But Not for Fashion” [on nytimes.com]

**4/21**  
Review & preparation workshop

***Week #15: AfroFuturistic Fashion***

**4/24** [19pgs]  
Udé *Style & Sympathies* [14]  
Paton “Breaking Menswear Barriers— in 2026” [5]  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/17/fashion/2026-photography-exhibit-race-gender-stereotypes.html?action=click&contentCollection=Fashion%20%26%20Style&module=RelatedCoverage&region=EndOfArticle&pgtype=article>

**4/26**  
Final Project preparation workshop

**4/28**  
Final Project preparation workshop

***Week #16***

**5/1**  
Evaluation Session

**[Final course evaluations completed at the end of the class session]**

**5/3**  
Final Project preparation workshop

**5/5**  
Final Project preparation workshop

**5/10** (First day of Final Exams)  
***Final Projects Due***

**Text Citations**

Gott, Suzanne & Kristyne Loughran

2010 Contemporary African Fashion. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Summers, Barbara

1998 Skin Deep: Inside the World of Black Fashion Models. New York: Amistad Press.

White, Shane & Graham White

1998 Stylin': African American Expressive Culture From Its Beginnings to the Zoot Suit. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

**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