

Fashion & Desire
AFR 372E (30675)/ WGS 340 (46065)

Fall 2018

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 Virgil Abloh, 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 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 9/10 at 5pm.*** These responses will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. Students will receive no credit for late posts.

5. 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 instructor during office hours prior to each facilitation. Facilitators are expected to draft questions and design activities 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 conversation pages for the week of their facilitation.**

6. Final project proposal: Students will be assigned final project groups (shifts are allowed between groups, but the professor must be informed of these changes at least one week before the proposal is due) 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). Each group member will receive the same grade.

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 the first day of Final Exams. Each group member will receive the same grade.

- 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.

Please note for all assignments:

* **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.

* For assistance with cultivating your ideas, outlining your written work and tips on proofreading/editing your polished writing, please make an appointment at the **Undergraduate Writing Center: www.uwc.utexas.edu**

* 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.

* 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%
Class participation/ Discussion facilitation	20%
Final project proposal (due 10/18)	30%
Final project (due 12/13)	40%

Required Texts:

***New York Times online subscription available for free through UT Libraries**
[\[http://www.lib.utexas.edu/news/\]](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/news/)

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

Lewis, Shantrelle P.

2017 Dandy Lion: The Black Dandy and Street Style. New York: Aperture.

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>]

Moore, Madison

2018 Fabulous: The Rise of the Beautiful Eccentric. New Haven: Yale University Press.

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]

Morgan, Andrew
2015 The True Cost [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>] same as In Louboutin's Shoes [on Netflix]

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

8/30

Improvisational Fashion Shoot

Week #2: Introductions: Fashion, Race & Exploitation

9/4

Introduction to the course and each other

9/6

[22pgs]

Givhan “Why Fashion Keeps Tripping Over Race”

<http://nymag.com/fashion/11/spring/71654/>

Wilson “Fashion’s Blind Spot”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/08/fashion/fashions-blind-spot.html?emc=eta>

Friedman “Fashion’s Racial Divide”

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

Blanchard “The True Cost”

<https://web.archive.org/web/20150812070240/http://www.telegraph.co.uk/fashion/events/True-cost-the-documentary-highlights-issues-with-fast-fashion/>

Scherstuhl “The True Cost Fumbles Its Attack on the Clothing Industry”

<https://www.villagevoice.com/2015/05/27/the-true-cost-fumbles-its-attack-on-the-clothing-industry/>

Film: The True Cost [Available on Netflix]

Week #3: Celebrity & Crossover Aesthetics

[First Reading Response due Monday 9/10 at 5pm]

9/11

[23 pgs.]

Knowles-Carter “Beyoncé in her Own Words”

<https://www.vogue.com/article/beyonce-september-issue-2018>

Street “The Story Behind Tyler Mitchell's Vogue Cover”

<https://www.cnn.com/style/article/vogue-september-cover-tyler-mitchell/index.html>

Schneier “The Stars of September”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/09/style/diversity-september-issue-magazines.html>

Friedman “Kanye West Finally Gets His Fashion Right”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/01/fashion/kanye-west-yeozy-season-6-photos.html>

Moss “A History of Hip Hop and Fashion”

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

Caramanica “Hooking Up”

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

Film: Fresh Dressed [Available on Netflix]

9/13 [22 pgs.]

Jacobs “Black Designers in Focus at FIT”

https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/07/fashion/black-designers-fashion-institute-of-technology-ann-lowе-duru-olowu.html?_r=0

Cooper “The Fashion Outlaw Dapper Dan”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/03/fashion/dapper-dan-harlem-gucci.html>

Safronova “Inside Dapper Dan and Gucci’s Harlem Atelier”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/20/fashion/gucci-dapper-dan-atelier-harlem.html?action=click&module=Well&pgtype=Homepage>

Verner “From Humble Sneaker to Luxury Style Icon”

<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”

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®ion=stream&module=stream_unit&version=search&contentPlacement=5&pgtype=sectionfront

Film: Sneakerheadz [Available on Netflix]

Exhibition Guided Tour After Class: Dawoud Bey: Forty Years in Harlem

Week #4: *Liberating Threads*

9/18 [23 pgs.]

Ford Liberated Threads p. 1-13

Ford Liberated Threads p. 95-104

9/20 [21 pgs.]
Ford Liberated Threads p. 117-121
Cooper “Dancehall Dress” in Tulloch *Black Style* p.68-83

Week #5: Diaspora Dandy

9/25
No Class - Review & Preparation Session

9/27 [24 pgs.]
Lewis Dandy Lion
pgs. 7-15, 32-45, 56-59, 63-65, 68-87, 98-102, 120-123, 136-137, 145-150

[Dawoud Bey: Forty Years in Harlem Exhibition Reflection Due at 9:30am]
<https://liberalarts.utexas.edu/caaas/events/event.php?id=47710>

Week #6: Free, Fine & Dandy

10/2 [25 pgs.]
Miller Slaves to Fashion p. 1-25

10/4 [28 pgs.]
Miller Slaves to Fashion p. 219- 246

Week #7: Black Style Beyond a Boundary

10/9 [20 pgs.]
Miller Slaves to Fashion p. 247-266

10/11 [24pgs.]
Miller Slaves to Fashion p. 267-290 [24]

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

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

Part 2: Europe

Week #8: Black Style: A British Perspective

10/16

No Class - Review & Preparation Session

10/18 [23 pgs.]

Tulloch Black Style p.10-21, 84-121

Tulloch “Style-Fashion-Dress: From Black to Post-Black” p.273-283

[Final Project Proposals Due at 9:30 am]

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

Week #9: Black Style: A British Perspective II

10/23 [28 pgs.]

Tulloch “Style-Fashion-Dress: From Black to Post-Black” p.283-297

Tulloch The Birth of Cool p.1-8, 199-201

Jennings New African Fashion p.138-141

Lewis Dandy Lion p. 18-19, 106-111

10/25 [27 pgs.]

Moore, Fabulous: The Rise of the Beautiful Eccentric p.61-75

Enniful “Edward Enniful Introduces the December 2017 Issue”

<https://www.vogue.co.uk/article/edward-enniful-editors-letter-december-vogue-2017>

Mower “Edward Enniful Talks Diversity”

<https://www.vogue.com/article/edward-enniful-cfda-media-award-interview>

Enniful “Rihanna Covers the September Issue”

<https://www.vogue.co.uk/article/rihanna-september-cover-british-vogue-2018>

Jennings New African Fashion p.58-63

Lewis Dandy Lion p.92-93

Boateng “Africanism” <https://www.vogue.co.uk/gallery/ozwald-boateng-africanism>

Video: Enniful X Rihanna

<https://www.vogue.co.uk/video/rihanna-meets-edward-enniful>

Film: Oswald Boateng: Why Style Matters <https://vimeo.com/131734547>

Week #10: Afropean Style

10/30 [26 pgs.]
Moore, Fabulous: The Rise of the Beautiful Eccentric p. 75-101

11/1 [23 pgs.]
Summers Skin Deep p.210-218
Silva “Delta Force”: <http://www.nytimes.com/2004/02/22/magazine/delta-force.html>

Sargent, Antwaun “Patrick Kelly Was the Jackie Robinson of High Fashion”
https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/kz77yv/patrick-kelly-was-the-jackie-robinson-of-high-fashion

Friedman & Paton “Louis Vuitton Names Virgil Abloh”
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/26/business/louis-vuitton-virgil-abloh.html?action=click&module=Well&pgtype=Homepage>

Exhibition: Patrick Kelly: Runway of Love
Review page & watch videos at:
<http://www.philamuseum.org/exhibitions/799.html>

Week #11: L’AfroParisien

11/6 [24 pgs.]
Schiro “Yves Saint Laurent, Giant of Couture, Dies at 71”
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/02/fashion/02laurent.html>

Friedman “In the Studio with Christian Louboutin”
<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/02/fashion/in-the-studio-with-christian-louboutin-paris-fashion-week.html>

Farra “Olivier Rousteing Talks Diversity”
<http://www.vogue.com/13494360/olivier-rousteing-balmain-atelier-with-alina-cho-metropolitan-museum-lecture/>

Paton “Olivier Rousteing on the Importance of Breaking the Rules”
<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/26/fashion/olivier-rousteing-balmain-paris-fashion-week.html>

Verner “Haute Stuff”
<https://www.vogue.com/article/balmain-44-francois-premier-evening-collection>

Trebay Virgil Abloh Tells Louis Vuitton's Story of Fashion

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/22/fashion/louis-vuitton-virgil-abloh-paris.html>

Collins "How Virgil Abloh Conquered"

<https://www.vanityfair.com/style/2018/08/virgil-abloh-louis-vuitton-designer-director>

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

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

Videos: The Future is Now & Balmain Fall 2018 Ready-to-Wear

<https://video.vogue.com/watch/balmain-fall-2018-collection-video-olivier-rousteing>

Film: The World's Most Luxurious Shoes <https://vimeo.com/153749065>
or In Louboutin's Shoes [Available on Netflix]

11/8

No Class – Review Preparation Session

Part 3: Africa

Week #12: African Fashion

11/13

No Class – Review & Preparation Session

11/15 [23 pgs.]

Rovine "African Fashion" p.89-103

Jennings "A Brief History of African Fashion"

Video: Sunday Style in Johannesburg

<https://www.nytimes.com/video/fashion/10000002558746/sunday-style-johannesburg-south-africa.html>

Exhibition: Vlisco: African Fashion on a Global Stage

<http://www.philamuseum.org/exhibitions/845.html?page=1>

Week #13: Thanksgiving Holiday

11/20

No Class

11/22

No Class

Week #14: Afropolitan Style

11/27 [23 pgs.]

Jennings New African Fashion

p. 7-17, 20-29, 90-93, 102-105, 113, 156-157, 178-181,

p. 184-187, 192-195, 200-201, 208-211, 220-225

Lewis Dandy Lion p.21-31, 138-144, 151-153

11/29 [22 pgs.]

Hansen & Madison African Dress p.1-11

Summers Skin Deep p.231-238

Iman “Iman Looks Back”

<https://www.vogue.com/article/iman-talks-david-bowie-vogue-september-issue-2017>

Week #15: Afrofuturistic Fashion

12/4 [28 pgs.]

Billard “Iké Udé: The Wildness of Clothes, But Not for Fashion”

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/31/fashion/ike-ude-the-wildness-of-clothes-but-not-for-fashion.html>

Gondola “La Sape Exposed!” p.157-173

Udé Style & Sympathies

Film: The Importance of Being Elegant

<http://features.georgeamponsah.com/video/78965998>

12/6

Course Evaluations

12/13 (First day of Final Exams)

Final Projects Due

Additional 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 as 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