2017-2018

Cool Britannia: How Fashion Shaped British Culture

Category: Art (should be History?)
Code: IS 279
Level: 4
Credits: 15

Teaching Pattern

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<th>Week 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar</td>
<td>2 x 2hrs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Trip</td>
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<td>Tutorial</td>
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*In addition to the above formal teaching sessions, you will be expected to do approximately 126 hours of independent study over the 4 weeks.

*Additional Field Trip fee of £80.00

Outline

This module examines historic inspiration that forms today’s innovative fashion and designers by studying the fascinating social and cultural history of Britain.

You examine how the cultural background of the 18th and 19th centuries influenced British fashion then and now; focussing on aspects of cool fashion such as royal costume, 18c dandy, Victorian aestheticism, art deco era, wartime recycling, and subculture of mods, rockers, goths, skinheads and punks.

You will learn how to read fashion, what your clothes say about you and examine key style developments through lectures, seminars and trips to museums and galleries including London’s Victoria & Albert Museum, National Portrait Gallery, Museum of London and Brighton & Hove Art Gallery.

Assessed Learning Outcomes

- Identify key developments in the history of London as a centre for the design and production of fashion from 1800 to the present day.
- Analyse these developments using a variety of theoretical approaches.
- Apply and demonstrate an understanding of relevant debates and approaches in both essays and presentations.

Structure
Week 1: Dress for Excess: The 18th and 19th century
Our first informal seminar will be an introductory one. We will get to know one another, discuss the structure of course, its aims and its modes of assessment. Some of the key issues and debates covered in the course will be introduced through tutor presentation.

Allocation of presentation topics. Group exercise on description and visual analysis.

From Rococo to Romanticism
How did dress and fashion change in the late 18th century; the rise of popular fashion magazines in the early nineteenth century and early department stores in Georgian London.

Georgian and Regency Fashion and the Dandy.
Fit and cut were all important in the new style of men’s fashion. The shirt and cravat played an important part in the dressing of elegant men. In an era of generally moral restraint, breeches and leggings were tight and showed off the figure, while the outline of women could clearly be seen through their thin dresses and low necklines. An age of elegance and also provocativeness.

Field trip: Brighton Museum and Art Gallery, Fine Art and Costume Galleries

Week 2: Victorianism and Beyond
Essay tutorials throughout the week, in one-to-one sessions

Victorianism and Aestheticism
The romantic style with tiny waists and huge skirts ballooning into the crinoline and later the bustle had an impact on social habits and health, and restraints on women’s activities. This led to the lighter, flowing robes of the Aesthetic Movement – ‘hygienic’ fashion.

Particular Style: Art Nouveau, Edwardian and WWI
The period in London fashion that was strongly influenced by current movements in art that promoted ‘art for art’s sake’ and believed in a highly sensual and decorative style that glorified self-sufficient beauty. The rise of the department store and the idea of “shopping for pleasure”. Gordon Selfridge opened his store in Oxford Street in 1909 and the idea of “shopping for pleasure” was born - a new concept which changed the way clothes were purchased and worn. All compared with the practical clothing for women war workers.

Field trip: The Museum of London’s fashion galleries

Week 3: Fashion in the 20th century
Particular Style: Art Deco and Interwar
The iconic, colourful and theatrical style of Art Deco and how the fashions of the twenties and thirties were adapted for everyday use. Shorter skirts and freedom of movement for the liberated women who bobbed her hair and used cosmetics.

**Britain in wartime: 1940s and postwar colour (1950s/1960s)**
Restraints of wartime rationing on clothing and post-war ‘New Look’, when extra material was available – and used to great effect. The use of colour and style for the 1950s and the new ‘youth’ which led into the “Swinging Sixties”, height of London fashion and iconic Biba shops - a completely new shopping experience.

**Student presentations throughout week 2 and 3**

**Field trip: The Victoria and Albert Museum, London and possibly National Portrait Gallery, London**

**Week 4: Punk to Cool Britannia and the present Day**

**1970s/80s/90s (Punk, New Romantics, Goth)**

We will investigate what gave rise to and influenced London styles in the later 20th century, with reference to Punk, New Romantics and Goth. When and where did Punk become fashion or even couture?

Can fashion designers be artists? Should they be? How do fashion, pop culture, pop music and other art forms overlap and rely on each other?

**The Effects of Fashion: comparisons, contrasts, influences**
This is a fairly open session looking back at topics; threading them together and unpicking them: comparing and contrasting periods, style, gender and influences. We also consider the British class system and what sort of influence (or not) this had on fashion.

**Student presentations throughout week 3 and 4**

**Course round up and discussion and a fun quiz to end our course.**

**Contact**

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Indicative Reading List

Core Reading List:

It is not necessary to buy the core reading and any required reading will be provided as photocopies or electronically.

Core reading:


Recommended texts:

*Ackermann’s Repository of Arts, Literature, Commerce, Manufactures, Fashions, and Politics* (London, 1809-1829)


Bolton, Andrew and Harold Koda (2011) *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty* (MET)

Bolton, A. *Anglomania: Tradition and Transgression in British Fashion* (MET)

*British Style Genius*. (October 2008) TV, BBC 2, available on Youtube and in Sussex University Library.


Breward, C et al. (2002) *The Englishness of English Dress*


Evans, C. (2007) *Fashion at the Edge: Spectacle, Modernity, and Deathliness*


Laver, J. (1996) *Costume and Fashion (World of Art)*


Watt, Judith (2012) *Alexander McQueen: Fashion Visionary*

Claire Wilcox (ed.) (2015) *Alexander McQueen* (V&A exhibition catalogue)