Women's Studies Seminar: Historical Perspectives on Gender, Fashion and Consumer Culture
Spring 2008
Tuesday, 9:50 to 12:50
Professor Jennifer M. Jones

Office: 101A Van Dyck Hall, College Avenue Campus
Hours: Wednesday, 1:30 -2:30 by appointment
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Purpose of Course:
This seminar will focus on the development of a distinctive culture of fashion and consumption in the West from the Renaissance through the 20th century. We will explore empirical case studies ranging from the rise of the department store in the 19th century to the birth of the new model of the flapper. The course will introduce students to the key theoretical literature concerning the history and of fashion and consumer culture as well as different methodological approaches. Each student will conduct an in-depth research project (roughly twenty pages) on a specific topic within the history of fashion and consumer culture. Projects must focus on a period before the 1980s.

Course Requirements and Grading:
• active participation in class discussions (25%)
• review essay on one week’s readings and leadership of discussion (10%)
• research proposal with primary and secondary bibliography (15%)
• rough draft (15%)
• final presentation (5%)
• final draft (30%)
All chapters and articles available as links on the course website to pdf documents.

Other recommended books (not purchased through Rutgers bookstore):

Christopher Breward, *The Culture of Fashion* (Manchester University Press, 1995)

**Weekly Schedule**
[Unless noted, all readings are available as web links to pdf files.]

**Week 1**
January 22 Introductions

**Week 2**
January 29 The History of Clothing and Fashion

Readings:

Background reading:

**Week 3**
February 5 Constructing the Female Consumer: from 18th-century shops to 19th-century department stores
Readings:

- Elaine Abelson, "Shoplifting Ladies," in *The Gender and Consumer Culture Reader*.

Background readings:

**Week 4**
February 12 Library Session
Class will meet for the whole class period in the Information Handling Lab #415. Alexander Library, fourth floor

Readings:
Research papers by former Rutgers students: "Fibres More Delicate," or "One, Two, Three O'Clock, Four O'Clock Shop"

**Week 5**
February 19 The Culture of Advertising

Readings:

- Anne McClintock, "Soft-Soaping Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising" in *The Gender and Consumer Culture Reader*.
- Susan Bordo, "Hunger as Ideology," in *The Consumer Society Reader*. 
Week 6
February 26 From the Flapper to the New Look

Readings:

Suggested background:

Week 7
March 4 Fashion, subcultures and resistance; discussion of research proposals (proposals due in class)

Readings:
- Kalle Lasn, "Culture Jamming" in *The Consumer Society Reader*.

Optional:

Week 8
March 11 NO CLASS; Sign up for individual conference to discuss research projects

Spring Break March 18

Week 9
March 25 NO CLASS; individual appointments, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., 101A Van Dyck

Work on rough drafts
Week 10
April 1 NO CLASS; individual appointments, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., 101A Van Dyck

Work on rough drafts.

Draft due via email (jemjones@rci.rutgers.edu) on Sunday, 9 p.m. April 6

Week 11
April 8 Writing workshop: discussion of rough drafts

Readings:
Your designated rough drafts

Week 12
April 15 NO Class: Sign up for individual conference to discuss final drafts

Week 13
April 22 Final Presentations

Week 14
April 29 Final Presentations

Final papers
due via email (jemjones@rci.rutgers.edu)
by 5 p.m. Wednesday, May 7