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Course title:	Fashion in 20th Century Germany
Track:	A-Track
Language of instruction:	English
Contact hours:	72 (6 per day)
ECTS-Credits:	6

Course description

Fashion in 20th Century Germany is designed to introduce students to the fashion and textile industry in Germany. The thrust of this course is to understand the social, psychological, economic, and ethical aspects of fashion within German culture and how Germany has influenced world fashion. It is appropriate for beginners and experts in the field of fashion and centers on field trips, site visits and oral presentations.

Berlin has a fascinating recent history. In the 20th century alone it saw a successive change of no fewer than five very different types of national governments. It has been destroyed and rebuilt, liberated and occupied, divided and re-unified. The history of Berlin shows the importance of fashion: politically, socially, psychologically, and culturally. Clothing and appearance have been manipulated and controlled by each of the different regimes and governments in order to achieve different goals. Fashion has been used as entertainment, social control, propaganda, and global business ventures. A study of fashion in Germany can only be successfully achieved by experiencing Berlin first hand - where artifacts can be viewed and locations important to the understanding of fashion in Germany visited. We will visit museums and locations that are only found in Berlin to enhance the classroom experience and foster experiential learning.

Topics include an introduction to fashion, pre-WWII fashion, Nazi Germany fashion, the effect of WWII on world fashion, and current topics in German fashion. This course is enhanced by site visits to museums and centers of fashion in Berlin.

Student profile

Students interested in a variety of subjects (psychology, sociology, anthropology, fashion, economics, aesthetics, politics) will find this course provides an innovative way to examine and understand identity, society and culture. Though an interest in fashion will be beneficial, it is not necessary, as this course is designed to introduce novices to an understanding of fashion and its underpinnings.

Prerequisites

It is recommended for students to bring a device for taking pictures – a camera, a smartphone, or alike.

Course Requirements

- * Fashion update: The student will create a short presentation delivered to the class to answer the question “what do we need to know about fashion now?” Presentation must include visuals (e.g. PowerPoint presentations or poster boards or artifacts).
- * Zeitgeist board: The student will create two poster boards that represent the Zeitgeist and related dress of a decade of the 20th century. Students will present their posters to the class in an oral report.

- * Ethics debate: Should “hate couture” be declared illegal?: Clothing is a form of non-verbal communication and is viewed as a form of expression. Some people use clothing laded with hate symbols to express their ideology (e.g., swastika, US Confederate flag). This is often known as “Hate Couture.” Students will be divided into two teams to debate the issue. The pro team will advocate to declare hate couture illegal while the con team will advocate it should not be illegal. Students will need to demonstrate an understanding of ethical decision making by invoking an ethical framework of their choosing to justify their position.

- * Street Style report: The student will document street style in Berlin by using a camera or phone camera to record the appearance and style of everyday people. The student will briefly interview each person to ask about their style of dress and what influences their style. A minimum of 10 people is expected. The student will transfer the images to PowerPoint, poster, or similar other and present their findings to the class in an oral presentation of 10-15 minutes.

- * Research presentation 1: Classic definitions of drag relate it to gender where a man impersonates a female persona or woman impersonates a male persona for comedic, political, or aesthetic purposes. Yet, the term drag can also be applied to impersonations of race, ethnicity, and class (e.g., black face, yellow face). Why is gender-drag acceptable but other forms of impersonation not acceptable? Students will give a presentation (either singularly or in pairs, depending on class size) on this issue where they will need to discuss if they feel gender-drag is unethical. Students will need to demonstrate an understanding of ethical decision making by invoking an ethical framework of their choosing to justify their position.

- * Research presentation 2: Students will research a fashion/style topic of their choosing as it relates to German fashion/style. Examples include: *How marketing fashion has changed in Berlin from the beginning to the end of the 20th century*; *how tattoos are perceived by different generations in Germany*; *the role of religion in fashion and style in German*, etc. The methods of research are up to the student. The students will present their findings in an oral report.

Grading

Fashion update	10%
Zeitgeist boards	10%
Ethics debate	20%
Street Style report	10%
Research presentation 1	20%
Research presentation 2	20%
Participation	10%

Reading

A course reader with the required literature will be provided at the orientation meeting.

Course schedule

Date	Program
Monday, June 5, 2017	Day 1 Introduction to Fashion Discuss fashion, dress, and appearance; sumptuary laws; process from concept to consumer; theories of fashion change; traditional Bavarian Tracht.
Thursday, June 8, 2017	Day 2 German fashion and dress How has German dress changed through history? Site visit: <i>Museum of Decorative Arts</i>
Monday, June 12, 2017	Day 3 The Weimar Era Fashion as entertainment, gender-bending, and art; consumption and overconsumption Assignment due: <i>Fashion Updates</i>
Thursday, June 15, 2017	Day 4 Fashion as entertainment What is the relationship between fashion and entertainment? Site visit: <i>Film Museum</i>
Monday, June 19, 2017	Day 5 Zeitgeist Boards Presentation and discussion of Zeitgeist boards Assignment due: <i>Zeitgeist boards</i>
Thursday, June 22, 2017	Day 6 History of Jews and clothing industry in Germany Site visits: <i>Jewish Museum Berlin</i>
Monday, June 26, 2017	Day 7 The Nazi Era Social control of appearance; marketing the Nazi identity; eradication of Jews from the fashion industry; how does social control impact identity?
Thursday, June 29, 2017	Day 8 West and East Germany Fashion as propaganda, underground fashion, and industry impacts; consumption of goods Site visit: <i>GDR Museum or Ramones Museum</i>
Monday, July 3, 2017	Day 9 Reunified Germany Fashion as luxury, big business, ethical considerations Assignment due: <i>Research 1 presentations</i>
Thursday, July 6, 2017	Day 10 Berlin Fashion Week Assignment due: <i>Ethics debate</i> Site visit: <i>Berlin fashion week venue</i>
Monday, July 10, 2017	Day 11 Place and fashion How does geographic place impact style? Site visit: <i>Berlin fashion centers</i> Assignment due: <i>Street Style Reports</i>
Thursday, July 13, 2017	Day 12 Conclusion Review; what is German fashion? Assignment due: <i>Research 2 presentations</i>