DRESS, IDENTITY, & SOCIETY
MALSA 620A
WEDNESDAYS 6-8:50
SPRING 2013

PROFESSOR: Dr. Nancy Nelson Hodges

CONTACT INFORMATION:
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Office Hours: 1:30-2:30 M and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Dress is an intensely personal phenomenon, in that it helps us to express our innermost thoughts, feelings, and desires. At the same time, dress is completely socially situated as it functions to make such thoughts, feelings, and desires public. In this course, dress, in the form of modifications made to the body and supplements placed on the body, is the starting point for an exploration of the self in society. We will examine the ways by which the dressed body communicates our personal and social identities through its intersections with such factors as gender, age, social roles, ethnicity, and culture. Our study of dress will be contextualized through an interdisciplinary examination of how time and space are critical to understanding the meanings that are both embedded within and expressed through the dressed body.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND READINGS:

- Other readings may be assigned and accessed via Blackboard e-reserves

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

On completion of this course, the student will be able to:

- Define the theoretical foundations of dress and identity.
- Identify and explain the factors influencing the use and interpretation of dress as a form of non-verbal communication.
- Evaluate and discuss approaches to understanding dress, the body, society, and identity.
- Assess the importance of contextual factors operating to define dress and identity in social terms.
- Apply knowledge of dress and identity to understanding and exploring issues and problems specific to the dressed body in society.
**EVALUATION:**

The course is conducted in a seminar format, with several content related readings assigned for discussion each week. Attendance is expected. If for some reason you have to be absent, notify me prior to the class by email. Because attendance is factored into the participation portion of the grade, it would be a good idea to connect with another student who was there to update you on what happened in class. Each student will be expected to participate in the discussion of all required weekly readings and any group activities/assignments pertaining to the topic under discussion.

Three papers will be assigned throughout the semester for which individual guidelines will be distributed. The first is a personal history paper that describes your experiences with dress. The second is an analysis of the use of dress within film. The third is a topical paper that addresses an aspect of dress, identity, and culture of interest to you. Papers will be evaluated based on depth of perspective and insight into the topic as well as integration of concepts covered during the course. A succinct presentation of the topical paper given during class time is also required. You will work with me to determine an appropriate topic for the paper. The presentation of findings will occur during the final two class meetings.

The breakdown for evaluation is as follows:
- 100 points (20%): Discussion/group activity participation
- 100 points (20%): Personal history paper
- 100 points (20%): Dress in film paper
- 200 points (40%): Topical paper and presentation
- Grades will be assigned on a scale of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, and F.

The UNCG Academic Honor Code and Integrity Policy will be followed. Students are expected to be informed of the guidelines of the UNCG Academic Integrity Policy and will be required to sign their names indicating their adherence to the stated guidelines on all major work submitted.
TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE:

Week One: January 16
Topics:
- Introductions
- Course Content and Expectations

Week Two: January 23
Topics: Introductory Concepts
- Definition of Dress
- Factors Influencing Dress
- Dress and Identity

Week Three: January 30
Topics: Dress and Identity
- Gender
- Age

Week Four: February 6
Topics: Dress and Identity
- Theories of Modesty and Immodesty
- Ethnicity, Race, and Religion

Week Five: February 13
Topics: Dress and Identity
- Culture and Cultural Context
- Theories of Adornment and Protection

Week Six: February 20
DUE: Personal History Paper
Topics:
- Dress and Beauty Ideals

Week Seven: February 27
Topics:
- Dress and The Body

Week Eight: March 6
Individual Meetings for Topical Paper

Week Nine: March 13
NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK
Week Ten: March 20
Topics:
- Fashion and the Fashion System

Week Eleven: March 27
Due: Film Analysis Paper
Topics: Dress and Popular Culture
- Theory of Communication
- American popular culture
- Movies and television

Week Twelve: April 3
**Wear your favorite T-shirt to class**
Topics:
- Subcultures and Style
- What is American style?

Week Thirteen: April 10
Topics:
- The globalization of dress

Week Fourteen: April 17
Topics:
- Dress, Identity, Culture and the Future

Week Fifteen: April 24
Topics:
- Topical Paper presentations

Week Sixteen: May 1
Due: Topical Paper
Topics:
- Topical Paper presentations
- Wrap-up