Instructor Contact and Course Information

RM 4212W Dress, Society, and Culture
3 Credits

College Of Design, Retail Merchandising Program Area

This course is writing intensive.

Instructor: Dr. Kathryn Reiley
Office: McNeal Hall 344
E-mail: kreiley@umn.edu (best way to contact me)
Office hours: Tues/Thurs noon-1
Telephone: (e-mail preferred)

Required Text:
All course readings, videos, and resources are available on the Moodle course site.

Course Description

Dressing the body is an everyday experience that is often taken for granted yet has a tremendous impact on the US economy. We dress our bodies to communicate consciously or unconsciously who we are and to receive personal satisfaction. Thus, dress is a nonverbal communication system of body modifications and supplements that have meaning dependent on time and socio-cultural space. Apparel retailers and designers are very interested in what motivates consumers to modify their bodies and subsequently purchase or acquire items to “dress” the body.

This course examines contemporary dress from cultures outside and within the United States. Dress is analyzed as a communication system that indicates individuality as well as position within specific social systems of kinship, economy, religion, and polity. Technology of a
particular society and types of dress are analyzed and understood as they link to patterns of behavior such as beliefs about morality, hygiene, ritual, and beauty.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of this course, students will have had opportunities to develop their skills in:

1. applying the definition of dress as body modifications and body supplements within a specific cultural context.

2. analyzing dress in real-life situations in relationship to specific physical and social environments as well as a motivation to consumer behavior.

3. interpreting and analyzing scholarly publications and popular commentary about dress.

4. appreciating the surface diversity of our appearance by understanding the common purposes dress serves (i.e., to protect, to communicate, to personally satisfy).

5. application of theories to understanding behaviors related to dressing the body.

6. writing and presentation of original ideas.

Upon successful completion of this course students will have increased their abilities to:

1. locate and critically evaluate information.

2. communicate effectively in written form.
**Course Activities**

You can participate and complete activities for this course at any time prior to their due date and time. Each week in this course you are assigned readings, to participate in at least one discussion forum (during some weeks you are assigned multiple forms), and to complete a short quiz. Twice during the semester you are assigned an examination. You have access to one week of material at a time. Each Friday the next week of material will be made available to you.

**Quizzes**

Each Monday you will have a quiz over the material assigned the previous week. The exceptions are the first week where you have a quiz over the syllabus and when an examination is scheduled. You will have a 15 hour window to complete an examination or participate in a quiz. This means you can take the quiz or examination anytime on a Monday between 8 in the morning and before 11 at night. If you forget to take the quiz or an examination, you will receive a 0.

Each quiz is timed. Once you open a quiz you typically have 10 minutes to complete it. The time is based on a recommendation from the faculty at the Center for Teaching and Learning. You need to study the course material before you attempt the quiz or you may not have enough time to complete the quiz. Each quiz will typically contain true/false statements, multiple choice questions, short answer, or a combination of objective questions. The quiz will cover the material assigned to you the previous week. The material assigned includes assigned readings and video materials. Each quiz is worth 20 points.

**Discussion Forums**

Each week you will be assigned to participate in at least one discussion forum. For some weeks several forums have been posted. Each forum is a graded activity. Each forum has dates and times indicated by which your post or postings must be completed. Each forum has specific directions. Read directions carefully.

Discussion will take place in groups. You have been randomly placed into discussion/work groups. For some forums, your individual posts are
graded and for others you are asked to reach agreement with your
group members to produce a final post on a topic and that final group
posting is what is evaluated. When a group is assigned to complete a
task, the score for the group will be assigned to all group members who
participated on time. Forum activities are worth 5 - 10 points. Half way
through the semester, you will be randomly assigned to another group
or the size of your group will increase so that you meet and interact with
a variety of class members. This change will be announced in advance.

Examinations

There are two examinations in this course. They are essay
examinations. You will be provided with a list of questions one week in
advance of the date of the examination. One of these questions will
appear on your examination. One question will be selected at random
for your examination. The first examination covers the first seven weeks
of the course and the last examination covers the last 8 weeks of the
course. The first examination will take place on March 11th and the final
will take place on May 13th. The examination will be available to you
from 8 in the morning until 11 at night on the date indicated. Once you
open the examination, you will have 50 minutes to compose your
response to the question selected. Please prepare all examination
questions prior to the examination and do not try to second guess which
question will be selected as your question is truly selected at random.
The examination is worth 100 pts.

Writing assignments

There are four writing assignments in this course. Three of the
assignments are short writing assignments. A short writing assignment
is between 3 to 4 pages of formal writing. Short writing assignments are
worth 20 - 50 points. Details concerning each writing assignment are
posted on the moodle site along with a grading rubric that will be used
to evaluate your writing.

The fourth writing assignment is a group research paper. This is a 10
page formal writing assignment that requires an in-depth investigation of
some aspect of dress. Details on this writing assignment are available
on the moodle site and you will have an opportunity to develop your
topic as part of the weekly required forums/discussions. This
assignment is worth 150 points.
In summary, you are evaluated in this course on the skill and knowledge you demonstrate as a result of your participation in the following activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Point value</th>
<th>Total point value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examinations</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>5 - 10</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Assignments</td>
<td>20 - 150</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total possible</td>
<td></td>
<td>850</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Release of Work Statement**

Students understand that enrollment in this course grants consent for their work to be selected for inclusion in college or departmental publications (online or in print). Your instructor may select to use your work to represent her/his skills as an instructor in a teaching portfolio (online or in print).

**Grading**

Once the course has been completed, student's scores for all required course activities will be summed and then divided by the total possible points. This process will produce a percentage. Final grades will be assigned by using the scale listed below.

- **A** 92%  
  A- 90% : Signifies achievement that is **outstanding** relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements (WOW factor is evident).

- **B+** 86%  
  B 80% : Signifies achievement that is **significantly above** the level necessary to meet the course requirements.

- **C+** 76%  
  C 70% : Signifies achievements that meet the course requirements.

- **C-** 69%  
  D 65% : Signifies achievements that is worthy of credit even though it **fails to meet** course requirements.
F 65% : Indicates coursework was completed but at an achievement level unworthy of credit. Academic dishonesty in any form is also grounds for an F.

**Workload**

Once registered in the class, a student is expected to complete weekly activities. These weekly activities include reading assigned readings, viewing assigned video material, participating in assigned discussions, completing assigned quizzes (or examinations), and completing writing assignments. There are due dates and times indicated for every assigned activity in this course. Please take note of them. Review all of the activities for the week so that you can plan your time accordingly. You have something assigned every week of the course and activities due every week of the course.

Please raise questions/comments as you encounter them by emailing the instructor at kreiley@umn.edu. **Students are expected to seek help when needed.** Please ask questions well in advance of the date and time they are due. Frequently what puzzles you puzzles others and I can clarify problems for everyone especially if I know about them. Students who need accommodations for their learning are responsible for working with the instructor from the beginning of the semester and relevant University offices. Students may not make commercial use of their notes of lectures or University-provided materials without consent of instructor.

**Accepting and returning assignments**

All assignments are to be completed or posted within the course moodle site. No exceptions. Feedback on specific assignments will be available via the moodle site.

**Grading Late Writing Assignments**

Writing assignments that are posted after the assigned date and time will be accepted and graded. A late deduction will so be applied. The late deduction is equal to 50% of the original point value of the assignment. For example, an assignment is worth 50 points and it is
posted 2 hours after the assigned due time. It is graded and receives a score of 45 pts. Then 25 points are deducted for failing to post the assignment at the designated time resulting in a final score of 20 points. The only exception to this policy will be if the lateness is related to a reason recognized by the University of Minnesota policy for an excused absence (e.g., extreme illness). Please plan your time and work accordingly. Plan to upload your writing assignments several hours before they are due.

**Make Up Work for Excused Absences**

With an online course a student does not meet in a class setting, thus they are never absent from class. Unlike a regular course where you can only turn in your paper at class time or take a quiz during scheduled class time, a student in an online course has a larger window of opportunity to complete assigned work. However, extreme and highly unlikely emergencies may develop. If the student is not able to post their assignments by the date indicated, complete a quiz or examination during the window of time allocated, or participate in a forum due to a reason recognized as excused by the University, appropriate documentation will need to be supplied to the instructor and alternative arrangements will be made to make up the work. Failure to provide appropriate documentation will result in a 0 on a quiz, examination, or forum participation, and the application of the “late” deduction for any writing assignment.

**Extra Credit Options**

There is no extra credit option in this course.

**Statements of Policy**

**Scholastic dishonesty and student conduct code:**
See [http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf](http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Student_Conduct_Code.pdf)

Discovery of academic misconduct on any one assignment, examination, or class activity is grounds for an “F” or “N” for the course.

**Sexual Harassment:**
See [http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/humanresources/SexHarassment.pdf](http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/humanresources/SexHarassment.pdf)

**Statement on climate of inclusivity:**
You are expected to participate in weekly discussions. This includes asking questions, being attentive to others comments, asking questions if you do not understand something, and to offer your opinion. The University of Minnesota is committed to providing a safe climate for all students, faculty, and staff. All persons shall have equal access to its programs and facilities without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation. Racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, ageism and other forms of bigotry are inappropriate to express in this class. Reports of harassment are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help.

**Statement on Academic freedom and responsibility:**
See [http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Academic_Freedom.pdf](http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Academic_Freedom.pdf)

**Availability of disability and mental health services:**
If you have any special classroom requirements please contact one of the offices listed below. They will work with you and, if necessary, they will contact the instructor to work out the details for any necessary accommodations.

- **Student Academic Success**
  - 340 Appleby Hall, Mpls
  - 612-624-3323

- **Counseling/Consulting Services**
  - 199 Coffey Hall, St. Paul
  - 612-624-3323

- **Disability Services**
  - 180 McNamara, Mpls
  - 612-626-1333

- **Center for Writing**
  - 10 Nicholson Hall, Mpls
  - 612-626-7579

**Student Mental Health and Stress Management**

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via [http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu/](http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu/).