

Fashion's Lens: Exploring Feminist and Gender Studies

Learning Outcomes

Students will gain a general understanding of fashion, feminism and gender issues. By the end of the course they will be able to recognise changes in the fashion industry in relation to the development of the feminist movement. In particular, we will focus on how clothing plays a fundamental role in the construction of gender identity.

Course Contents

We will start by revisiting significant milestones in the feminist movement from the 19th and 20th centuries, tracing its evolution to the present day. After establishing the socio-cultural context, we will consider the interconnectedness of fashion with issues such as gender equality, gender identity and sexual orientation. This exploration will encompass the historical evolution of beauty standards and their constant deconstruction and reinterpretation. Lastly, we will assess which fashion companies demonstrate the greatest sensitivity to concepts of inclusion and the promotion of diversity.

Teaching Methods

During the course there will be theoretical lectures during which students will be encouraged to engage actively in discussions to enhance learning. Additionally, pivotal case studies will be presented to strengthen the understanding of the topics covered and roundtable discussions will be organised to develop critical reflection.

Readings/Bibliography

At the end of each lesson teaching materials (slides) covering the topics discussed will be provided, along with a bibliography of relevant references. Among the selected resources will be articles, reports and contributions on single subjects and web pages for consultation.

Teaching Tools

The course will use PowerPoint presentations and various forms of online visual materials for teaching purposes. Additionally, students will be provided with a supplementary list of materials if they wish to learn more about the topics covered during the lesson.

Course Structure:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">● LESSON 1 (2H): Introduction to Feminist Studies Pt 1<ul style="list-style-type: none">- An outline of contents and objectives of the course- The origins of feminism and the relationship between fashion and women's condition
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● LESSON 2 (2H): Introduction to Feminist Studies Pt 2<ul style="list-style-type: none">- An overview of the main feminist movements of the 20th century- The history of women and female representation in art
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● LESSON 3 (2H): The Construction of Gender through Clothing<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Some key concepts such as transvestitism, cross-dressing and the aesthetic of the LGBTQIA+ community, with a focus on lesbian chic style- Reproduce or break gender norms? The evolution of beauty standards of the body
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● LESSON 4 (2H): Sexuality and Style<ul style="list-style-type: none">- An introduction to different perceptions of sexuality across time and space- Clothes to cover, clothes to reveal: the rehabilitation of female sexuality in the 20th century
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● LESSON 5 (2H): The Current Picture<ul style="list-style-type: none">- The contemporary moment: an analysis of fashion brands' commitment to gender issues- The Fashion Transparency Index: a round table on the current panorama

Bibliography

1. Butler Judith, *Gender Trouble Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York: Routledge, 1990.
2. Davis Fred, *Fashion, culture and identity*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
3. Hollander Anne, *Sexualities*, in Francesca Granata (ed.), *Fashion Criticism: An Anthology*, London: Bloomsbury, 2021.