

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON WHY WE DRESS THE WAY WE DO

Coordinator: Sara Petitt

In our current environment clothing has taken on a great political meaning. From disputes about Muslim girls wearing veils in schools in England to wearing short sleeves and skirts in Mea Shearim in Israel, differences in dress standards have become explosive issues. Dress has long been codified in history with only certain classes being able to wear specific colors and fabrics. What messages does our clothing give to others? Do we feel less comfortable being alone in an elevator with someone dressed in Goth or covered with piercings and tattoos than we would with someone conventionally dressed? Did androgyny in dress pave the way to acceptance of gay marriage? Give voice to dress restrictions you faced growing up and even now.

Readings and other Required Materials: Course-pack: price TBA. The text in the course-pack refers primarily to readings from *The Visible Self* by Eichner, Evenson and Lutz; Fairchild Books, 2008, Third Edition.

Sara Petitt is a Coordinator of Fabric Styling at FIT and has been a textile designer as well as a fine artist for most of her life.

***** Syllabus *****

Week One

Introductions: Discussion about course-pack and readings. The classification of dress, meaning of dress in culture and society and interpretations of dress.

Week Two

Physical appearance and dress. Dress codes and gender norms.

Week Three

Politics in culture and dress. Controversies about international second hand clothing trade.

Week Four

Art, aesthetics and dress. Conformity or individuality.

Week Five

Body image in relation to different periods of history and culture. Dress and the future.

Week Six

Body modification, piercings, tattoos, cross dressing. Punks and Goths.