

GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE

REPORT TO

THE ACADEMIC SENATE

GE-003-256

New GE course proposal:

Apparel Merchandising and Management 2350 – History of Fashion

New GE Area 3A (Arts)
and GE Area 3B (Humanities)

General Education Committee

Date: 3/11/2026

Executive Committee
Received and Forwarded

Date: 3/11/2026

Academic Senate

Date: 3/18/2026

Background

Examine the history of fashion as a visual art form that integrates aesthetic design with cultural meaning, demonstrating how dress functions as creative expression, social commentary, and a reflection of broader social and historical contexts. Fashion is explored as a visual language through which societies articulate values, beliefs, and ideals across diverse historical periods. Analyze visual imagery and cultural/historical practices through key fashion theories (e.g., Damhorst' Meaning of Dress framework) to understand how fashion shapes and reflects human experience. Critical reflection on sustainability and responsible fashion practices in the contemporary world is encouraged by situating fashion within its historical and cultural contexts.

Access to Microsoft Office Suite and Canvas is required.

Textbooks (Required):

- Kyoto Costume Institute (2020). Fashion History from the 18th to the 20th Century. Kyoto Costume Institute.

Articles (Available at CPP Library)

- Bagwell, L. S., & Bernheim, B. D. (1996). Veblen effects in a theory of conspicuous consumption. *The American economic review*, 349-373.
- Barron, L. (2021). The creative influence of history in fashion practice: The legacy of the silk road and Chinese-inspired culture-led design. *Fashion Practice*, 13(2), 275-295.
- Damhorst, M. L. (1985). Meanings of clothing cues in social context. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 3(2), 39-48.
- Gibson, R. (2003). Schiaparelli, surrealism and the desk suit. *Dress*, 30(1), 48-58.
- Lemire, B. (2016). Fashion, material culture & history. *Contemporanea*, 19(3), 456-463.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify major developments, styles, and cultural influences in the history of fashion across diverse historical periods.
- Apply critical thinking to connect fashion history with broader social, political, and economic contexts.
- Analyze fashion artifacts, images, and visual media as forms of artistic and cultural expression.
- Interpret the relationships among fashion, cultural contexts, social values, and identity through the application of relevant theoretical frameworks.
- Communicate informed perspectives on the historical and social meaning of fashion through written exams, analytical reports, and oral presentations.
- Critically reflect on sustainability and ethical responsibility in fashion as part of broader social and historical contexts.

Weekly Schedule

Week	Topics	Assignments / Activities
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1	Introduction: Meaning of Dress in Social/Historical Contexts - Functions and symbolism of clothing	<u>Weekly Assignment #1 (Learning Reflection):</u> The History in My Closet
2	Ancient Civilizations: Egypt, Crete, Greece, and Rome - Power, beauty, and cultural ideals	<u>Weekly Assignment #2 (Visual Analysis):</u> Classical Drapery and the Ideal Body
3	The Medieval Age: Fashion as Social and Political Symbol, Trade and Cultural Exchange, Silk Road	<u>Group Discussion:</u> Religion and Modesty: The Sacred Language of Dress
4	The Italian Renaissance: Rebirth of Art, Innovation in Dress Design, the Expansion of Global Trade	<u>Weekly Assignment #3 (Learning Reflection):</u> Revival of Classical Ideals and Proportion in Visual and Dress Design
5	Global Threads: Trade, Colonialism, Asia's Influence on Global Fashion, Art in the Early Modern Era (17th–18th Centuries)	<u>Group Discussion:</u> Portraiture, Fashion, and Symbolism in Northern Europe
6	The French Revolution and the Birth of Couture (Late 18th–Early 19th Century): Fashion, Politics, and Identity in the Directoire, Empire, and American Colonial Periods	<u>Weekly Assignment #4 (Learning Reflection):</u> How Dress Reflected Ideals of Democracy, Citizenship, or Resistance
7	Fashion Beyond the West: Asia, Africa, and the Americas Midterm Exam Review	Midterm Exam
8	The Edwardian Era and World War I (1900–1920): Class, Gender, and Technological Change in Fashion	Choose topics for final group project
9	The Age of Materialism: Veblen theory, Consumer Culture, and the Rise of American Fashion	<u>Group Discussion:</u> Consuming Status - Fashion in the Age of Materialism
10	Fashion and Art (1920s): Art, Fashion, and Modern Life	<u>Weekly Assignment #5 (Visual Analysis):</u> Elsa Schiaparelli's collaborations with Salvador Dalí and Jean Cocteau-Surrealist fashion as a form of wearable art.
11	Fashion, Film, and Society (1920s–1940s): Style Through Prohibition, the Great Depression, and Global Conflict	<u>Weekly Assignment #6 (Learning Reflection):</u> Fashion and Mass Media Between Wars
12	The “New Look” and Beyond (1950s–1960s): Postwar Prosperity, Cold War Culture, and the Civil Rights Movement	<u>Weekly Assignment #7 (Learning Reflection):</u> Fashion as a Reflection of Freedom, Individuality, and Capitalist Prosperity
13	Fashion and Protest: Style, Identity, and Resistance (in the 1970s–1980s): Vietnam war, Second Wave Feminist, Punk Subculture, Equality, and Pop Art Influence	<u>Weekly Assignment #8 (Visual Analysis):</u> Style as Resistance
14	The Global Age (1990s–2000s): Media, Globalization, Gender Identity, and Technology in Fashion	Final Group Presentation 1

15	The 21st Century and Beyond: Sustainability, Diversity, Digital Culture, and Future of Fashion	Final Group Presentation 2 Final Exam
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Midterm and Final Exam

- Format: Combination of short-answer and essay questions based on lecture topics, readings, and visual materials.
- Students will analyze visual sources (Fashion illustrations and photos) and connect them to historical contexts.
- Assessment Focus:
 - Understanding of chronological developments in fashion history
 - Ability to interpret visual and material culture as historical evidence
 - Use of critical thinking and written communication to construct well-supported arguments

Weekly Assignments:

Each week, students will complete either a Reading Reflection or a Visual Analysis related to the assigned topic. A total of eight weekly assignments will be submitted to the Canvas Discussion Board, where students will engage in thoughtful analysis and peer discussion.

- For Learning Reflection, students will respond to questions related to the weekly course topic. For example, at the beginning of the semester, students will conduct a self-exploration activity by examining their own closets to uncover the historical and cultural dimensions reflected in their personal wardrobes fostering an understanding of how dress conveys meaning across time and context.
- For Visual Analyses, students will examine one assigned image (fashion illustration, magazine, advertisement, or photos) describing its stylistic features and interpreting its historical or cultural significance.

Final Group Project & Presentation: “Fashion as Historical Narrative”

Working in small groups (3–4 members), students will select one topic from the list below or propose their own, with instructor approval. Each group will prepare a 15-minute presentation accompanied by a visual component.

Projects should demonstrate:

- Historical accuracy and depth of research
- Clear connection between fashion, art, and historical context
- Use of images, primary sources, or artifacts as analytical evidence
- Cohesive collaboration and balanced participation

This course addresses the following two program learning outcomes:

- Graduates of the program will demonstrate leadership skills and be change drivers to develop a sustainable textile, apparel and fashion retailing sector.
- Graduates of the program will formulate research questions related to apparel and textile business problems, conduct research studies, interpret results and propose meaningful solutions.

The course helps students understand how social, cultural, and technological changes have shaped the global fashion industry, preparing them to become leaders in sustainability and innovation. Through research, visual analysis, and discussion, students learn to question existing practices, interpret evidence, and propose informed solutions for a more responsible and forward-looking apparel and textile sector.

	Midterm and Final Exam	Weekly Assignment (Learning Reflection and Visual Analysis)	Final project
GE-SLO A. Oral Communication (OC)			V
GE-SLO B. Written Communication (WC)	V	V	
GE-SLO C. Critical Thinking (CT)		V	V
GE-SLO G. Intercultural Engagement (IE)		V	V
Area 3B A (Rubric)	V	V	V
Area 3B B (Rubric)	V	V	V
Area 3B C (Rubric)		V	V
Area 3B D (Rubric)	V	V	

	How AMM 2350 addresses the respective requirements
GE-SLO A. Oral Communication (OC): Students will express their ideas through acts of speech with an awareness of audience, purpose, and context.	Students will deliver a final oral presentation to discuss their analysis, and reflections on the selected topic.
GE-SLO B. Written Communication (WC): Students will express their ideas through the written word with an awareness of audience, purpose, and form.	Students will compose weekly learning reflections and visual analyses to articulate their understanding and perspectives on the week's topic.
GE-SLO C. Critical Thinking (CT): Students will engage in the logical process of inquiry to analyze information from multiple perspectives to develop reasoned arguments	Students will analyze fashion images using the Meaning of Dress framework introduced in class to critically interpret visual culture and deepen their understanding of fashion history.
GE-SLO G. Intercultural Engagement (IE): Students will integrate knowledge and relationships reflective of the diversity of human experience and forms of expression.	The course helps students understand how fashion reflects diverse cultures and human experiences across time.
Area 3B A (in Rubric): Course content centers the study of arts and the humanities as defined by GE policy. Specifically, students will cultivate intellect, imagination, sensibility and sensitivity. Students will respond subjectively as well as objectively to aesthetic experiences and will develop an understanding of the integrity of both emotional and intellectual responses. Students will cultivate and refine their affective, cognitive, and physical faculties through studying works of the human imagination.	Through reflective and analytical activities, students learn to interpret fashion's aesthetic, cultural, and historical meanings while valuing the integrity of personal perception and critical inquiry.

Area 3B B (in Rubric): Course content does NOT exclusively emphasize skills development and language courses integrate a substantial cultural component.	This course focuses on the historical and aesthetic development of fashion and encourages students to engage with the subject with interests
Area 3B C (in Rubric): Philosophy and civilization courses are designed to provide students with an understanding of the values that make a civilized and humane society possible. Courses will enable students to critically examine the philosophical ideas and theories around which different civilizations have been organized and explore the complex developments of those civilizations.	This course enables students to critically examine how fashion reflects and responds to the philosophical and social ideas that have shaped different civilizations.
Area 3B D (in Rubric): Course prepares students in philosophical ideas and theories around which different civilizations have been organized to understand and appreciate the principles, methodologies, and thought processes employed in human inquiry, and explore the complex developments of those civilizations. Courses should promote the capacity to make informed and responsible moral choices as well as encouraging a broad historical understanding.	The class covers theories regarding how fashion communicate social values students will apply the theory to interpret the value and societal situation of historical era. As the class progresses and discussing contemporary fashion, the class discuss ethical fashion behavior to promote to responsible moral choices within the context.

Resources Consulted

AMM provided both an ECO and example syllabus for the course, uploaded to Curriculog.

On November 26, 2025, General Education Committee sent out a solicitation email to the following constituencies:

- Department chairs
- Deans and associate deans

We asked to provide input via online survey to ensure that new GE course proposals aligned with the existing GE policy, including learning outcomes and concerns surrounding expertise. Responses were collected through mid-December. GE Committee received **no responses** about this course.

Discussion

GE Committee received this referral on November 13, 2025. This course is being evaluated to ensure compliance with CPP's General Education Policy (GE-001-245), passed by the Senate in 2024.

This course is applying for two designations: **GE Area 3A: Arts** and **GE Area 3B: Humanities**. In addition to meeting the core subject matter requirements for this area, new courses must include the learning outcomes **Intercultural Engagement** and at least one of the other SLOs for both of these areas.

This course examines the history of fashion as a visual art form, analyzing how dress functions as aesthetic expression, social commentary, and a reflection of cultural, political, and economic change

across diverse historical periods. Students study major developments in global fashion, apply theoretical frameworks to interpret visual and material culture, and critically reflect on issues such as identity, globalization, protest, and sustainability in contemporary fashion. Assessment includes midterm and final exams with visual analysis and essay components, weekly written reflections or image analyses, and a final group research project with an oral presentation that connects fashion artifacts to historical and cultural contexts.

The course meets Area 3A by centering fashion as a visual art form and engaging students in aesthetic analysis, historical interpretation, and reflection on creativity, identity, and human experience. It emphasizes how disciplined artistic design produces both practical objects and cultural meaning, and it examines the values that inform artistic expression within broader social contexts. The primary limitation is that while students analyze and present creative work, direct participation in aesthetic or creative production is more interpretive than generative, so the “active participation” component should remain clearly demonstrated in practice.

In its current form, the course does not clearly meet Area 3B requirements. While it engages cultural and historical analysis, it is not structured as a literature, language, philosophy, or civilization course grounded in sustained examination of philosophical ideas or foundational civilizational theories. Its treatment of values and ethics is contextual rather than theoretical, which makes alignment with 3B limited without further reframing.

The course claims several GE learning outcomes. Intercultural Engagement is required and is assessed in the weekly assignment and final project. The course claims three other learning outcomes: Oral Communication, Written Communication, and Critical Thinking. Both areas only require one additional GE learning outcome, it is up to the department to decide whether to provide added learning outcomes beyond the minimum, but they will have to provide artifacts for those during university-wide assessment exercises. Additional refinement should specify in the ECO and syllabus how these assessments directly engage with the chosen learning outcomes.

The syllabus should also include the copy of the text of the GE Meaning and Purpose Statement.

Recommendation

The GE Committee has completed discussion of this proposal and identified substantive concerns regarding alignment with current GE policy in both the ECO and syllabus. The committee will vote open on March 9, 2026 and results will be available on March 11, 2026. This timeline is intended to allow sufficient time, if appropriate, for a first reading before the end of the academic year. The final recommendation will be transmitted to the Executive Committee upon conclusion of the vote.