

Jean-Michel Rabaté. Spring 2023. ENGL 1070 Fashion and Modernity

(cross-listed with COML, GRMN and Romance Languages, and History of Art.)

In this class we will study the emergence of the concept of the "new" as a term understood as "new fashion." What is the "fashion of the new," and how is the concept linked with the material production of fashion? After having surveyed the political functions of fashion as an tool of control from the Renaissance to the end of the eighteenth century, we will focus on Queen Marie-Antoinette as an agent of transformation. After this revolutionary moment, the idea of the modern emerged in the 19th century, an idea brought forward by discourses on fashion elaborated by poets like Baudelaire and Mallarmé or sociologists and philosophers like Georg Simmel and Walter Benjamin. We will move back and forth in time so as to analyze today's changing scene with a view to identify contemporary accounts of the "new" in the context of the fashion industry. Our cultural mapping of fashion will lead us to discuss Baudelaire and Mallarmé, read Aragon's Surrealist novel *Paris Peasant*. We will analyze more than ten films documenting the genealogy of fashion and discuss creators like Yves Saint-Laurent, Rei Kawabuto, Martin Margiela and Alexander MacQueen's. The *Fashion Theory: A Reader* will serve as a theoretical guide.

Books needed :

1. *Mallarmé on Fashion. A Translation of the Fashion Magazine La Dernière Mode with Commentary*, Cain and Furbank, New York, Bloomsbury, 2004.
2. Louis Aragon, *Paris Peasant*, Exact Change, 1994.
3. *Fashion Theory: A Reader*, ed. Malcolm Barnard, Routledge, 2007.

Requirements: one oral presentation of 15 minutes (20%), three film journals of 3 pages (10% each), a final portfolio on fashion accompanied by a thematic analysis of 15 pages (50%).

Syllabus.

01/12 Fashion and modernity between Simmel and Walter Benjamin. How to work with the *Fashion Theory Reader*. Watch *Marie Antoinette* (2006).

01/17 History of fashion: *Marie Antoinette* (2006) dir. Sofia Coppola.

01/19 History of fashion: *Coco Chanel and Igor Stravinsky* (2002), dir. Jan Kounen.

01/24 History of fashion: The novel *Coco and Igor*.

Film journal 1: *Bill Cunningham New York* (2010).

01/26 History of fashion: **Discussion of film journal (1) *Bill Cunningham New York* (2010).**

01/31 Modernist roots: Baudelaire's *The Painter of Modern Life* (1)

02/2 Baudelaire *The Painter of Modern Life* (2)

02/7 Walter Benjamin on Baudelaire (1)

02/9 Walter Benjamin on Baudelaire (2)

02/14 Mallarmé's recreation of fashion: *La Dernière Mode*

02/16 Mallarmé's modernity and Zola on fashion (*Au Bonheur des Dames*).

02/21 André Breton on fashion and Aragon's *Anicet*.

02/23 Aragon *Paris Peasant* (1)

02/28 Aragon *Paris Peasant* (2)

Film journal 2: Cocteau's *Blood of a Poet*.

03/2 *Blood of a poet* (1930) and Buñuel/Dalí, *L'Age d'or* (1930). Discussion of film journal (2) *Blood of a Poet*.

Spring break

03/14 Benjamin *Arcades Project* (1)

03/16 Benjamin *Arcades Project* (2)

Film journal 3: *The Phantom Thread*.

03/21 *The Phantom Thread* (2017), dir. Paul Thomas Anderson. **Discussion of Film journal 3.**

03/23 Benjamin *Arcades Project* (3)

03/28 Ulrich Lehmann on Benjamin in the *Fashion Theory Reader* and Philipp Ekardt's *Benjamin on Fashion* (2020).

03/30 *Fashion Theory: A Reader* (1)

04/4 *Fashion Theory: A Reader* (2)

04/6 From *Fashion Theory: A Reader* (3)

04/11 *Yves Saint Laurent* (2016), dir. Jadil Lespert, and *L'Amour fou* (2010), dir. Pierre Thoreton.

04/13 *Dior and I* (2014), dir. Frederic Tchenguiz.

04/18 *Vogue: The September Issue* (2009), *In Vogue* (2015), *Mademoiselle C.* (2013).

04/20 Rei Kawabuto's "Comme des Garçons" and Martin Margiela (*Martin Margiela in his own words*) (2020).

04/25 Alexander MacQueen's "Savage Beauty" and *Franca: Chaos and Creation*, (2016), dir. Francesco Carrozzini.

Portfolio on fashion due.