GDST 302-4: Fashioning Gender

Mary Lynn Stewart
mstewart@sfu.ca
Lecture: Tuesdays, 1:30-3:20
Tutorial: Tuesdays, 3:30-5:20
Office hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:30-noon

Course Description:
How do clothes, fabrics, accessories, and adornments signify gender? How do specific items of clothing—suits, dresses, pants, etc., or fabrics—silk, woolen, cotton, etc., or accessories—high heeled shoes, purses, hats—or adornments—lace, braid, etc—indicate that the wearers are men or women—and usually simultaneously, their social status and less often their ethnicity? How does the line or silhouette of an outfit communicate gender, class and ethnic origin? And how stable are the relationship between this aspect of material culture and gender, class, and ethnicity over cultures or time periods? For instance, why is it acceptably masculine for western churchmen to wear robes? Or, were garments that emphasized curves always and everywhere feminine? Or, why and when did lace become a feminine trimming? Or how did colourful Indian cottons become indicators of respectable middle class masculinity?

This course focuses on these types of questions in western (European and North American) fashion and gender systems, with some attention to Eastern attire and the globalization of fashion.

Course Texts:


And several on-line texts

Course Evaluation and Assignments:
Attendance and participation in tutorials 20%
Oral and visual presentation, weeks three to six, eight to twelve 20%
Short essay, due week seven 25%
Term paper 35%


The Department of Women’s Studies encourages clarity of thought and expression and good writing. Students will be evaluated on these skills in all courses given by the Department.