

# MLAS PROJECT RUNAWAY 2017

“Fashion is a language that creates itself essentially with clothes to interpret reality. It is more an association of elements than a deliberate choice.”

Karl Lagerfeld on the style of Chanel

“Creativity: an open mindedness to seeing new and different possibilities”  
Unknown

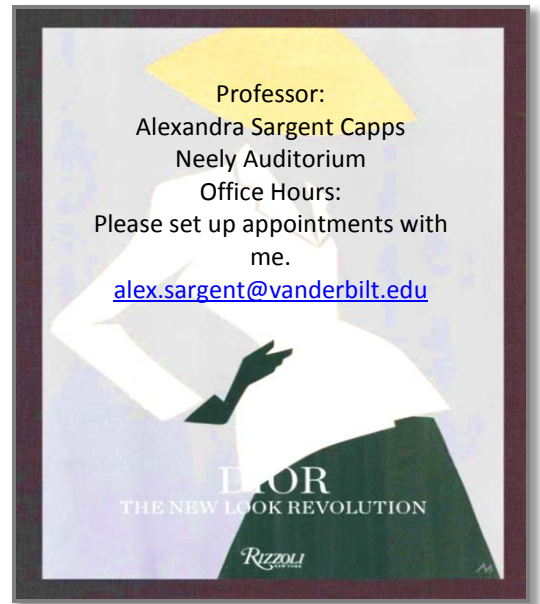
“Serendipity: luck that takes the form of finding valuable or pleasant things that are not looked for.”  
Merriam-Webster Dictionary

“Fashion is a form of ugliness so intolerable that we have to alter it every six months.”  
Oscar Wilde

“Fashion at the highest level delves deeper. It is not just surface level, but an artistic representation of an idea or concept that sometimes isn’t meant to be worn every day, but rather displayed to inspire.”  
Christina Senia, London Fashion Maymester, 2015

“Make it work!” & “Just do it”  
Tim Gunn, “Project Runway”

“One will be the winner; one will be out” & “One day you’re in; the next day you’re out”  
Heidi Klum, “Project Runway”



## Main Learning Objective

To learn and practice design thinking skills in order to empower you to: identify as a designer; strengthen your creative confidence through recognizing and working through design challenges; be a problem solver and a doer with tools to enact positive change.

Through the study of fashion history and our in and out of class collaborative and individual project work, you will strengthen your ability to think of yourself as a designer through an exploration of your artistry, creativity, and problem-solving ability. Skills gained will ideally include: enhanced ability to deal with ambiguous design problems and challenges; confidence that your solutions will satisfy the constraints/needs of the challenge at hand.

**Enduring Understanding #1**  
To identify and to develop your own creative voice and aesthetic style

**Enduring Understanding #2**  
Identify, understand, and practice human centered design vocabulary and techniques

**Enduring Understanding #3**  
That the study of fashion is interdisciplinary; it connects to all fields of study; and gives us insights into broad and specific events & ideas

## **MLAS Project Runway: Fashion History, Theory, Design, and Fabrication Summer, 2017**

MLAS Project Runway is a course based-in exploring the importance of visual design in our lives,  
especially as it connects to your creativity

This exploration will take place through a discussion of readings, and through the realization of your  
ideas which will shine forth in both written and hands-on projects

### **Class Description**

Our ultimate goal is to tap into, inspire, challenge, and enhance your creativity.

We will begin by looking at a broad survey of the history of western fashion. Emphasis will be on stylistic elements from each period, and the hows, whys, and whens of their reinvention through the ages and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This survey will introduce some engaging, inventive, and functional ideas from history, and how they influenced their own time period and connect to our lives and design aesthetic today.

Based on this fashion history overview and an examination of a 2012 Metropolitan Museum of Art fashion exhibit entitled *Schiaparelli and Prada: Impossible Conversations*, each student will be asked to engage in a dynamic, multi-faceted conversation with an artistically inspiring subject or person from history with which they feel a personal connection. Artists through the ages have used the past in order to gain classical training and to get inspiration for their work in the present. Studying great artists, art movements, and historic people who we find interesting and to whom we feel a connection is a productive way to enrich ourselves in the ongoing process of developing our contemporary, personal aesthetic.

Projects through which you develop the focus of your individualized course of study will include: the development and shaping of outcomes of various brainstorming sessions, undertaken in pairs and larger groups; a research journal/notebook; a research paper; a collection of “fashion” designs created in the medium of your choosing; and fabricated items. You will be encouraged to bring in ideas from a range of topics which can include politics, economics, or other areas of study you find interesting and relevant. From the ideas and discoveries made through compiling your journal/research binder and writing your midterm paper, you will design a final project in which your conversation with the past is materialized into one or more fabric-based items. The final project will be one in which you meld creative ideas and stylistic elements of your chosen historic artist in a personal way, shaped by your own creative voice. A very broad sample topic suggested by an MLAS student is “Ethics and Economics of Fashion, Past and Present.”

A featured activity of the class will be instruction and practice in design room techniques. Students will gain the skill set necessary to design and create fabricated items. We will cover: basic fashion figure drawing; collage and additional methods used to design garments and fabric objects; the basics of flat patterning and draping; and sewing and garment construction techniques. **NO PRIOR EXPERIENCE IS NECESSARY NOR EXPECTED!**

Inspired by the popular reality television show, *Project Runway*, we will undertake design challenges, working both individually and in teams, with a little friendly competition--and time limits—in order for you to explore your creative ideas and to experience how fast--and messy!--and fun!-- the process of “Make it work!” & “Just do it” (Tim Gunn, “Project Runway”) can be!

### **Directions to the Vanderbilt University Costume Shop in Neely Auditorium**

Find Neely Auditorium, which is on Alumni Lawn, just down from Rand  
Go to the side of the building, towards the back, that faces Alumni Hall and Kirkland  
Enter the door, next to a loading dock, marked "Stage Entrance"  
Go up the two flights of stairs in front of you  
The costume shop is the first door on your left  
We might be in one of the two dressing rooms down the hall on your right

### **Purpose of the Course**

Explore and exercise your own creative vision, through a multi-dimensional study of fashion and its connection to fine and applied arts

### **Learning Outcomes**

- Enhance your creative confidence
- Use brainstorming in order to problem solve
- An overview of western fashion history, including political, social, and religious influences which have caused fashion to evolve and change
- Explore the distinction between fast fashion and slow fashion
- Appreciate how contemporary fashion designers recycle old ideas in all forms, varieties, and complexities
- That visual design is a language across disciplines, and within each period is reflected in most (if not all) visual constructions
- Understand and apply the basic principles and techniques used in fashion design
- Define "good" and "bad" design through words like: graceful; harmonious; discordant; clashing; symmetrical; asymmetrical

### **Course Goals for Hands-on Skill Building. Student Input is Welcome!**

- Basic sewing techniques, hand-sewing and machine
- Some flat pattern drafting and draping on the dress form
- Draw the figure—the classic 8 head figure versus drawing a fashion figure
- Collage fashion designs, through the ornamentation of a fashion silhouette and also through your own creation of a fashion silhouette
- Build a variety of quick, down-and-dirty prototypes intended to serve as the material construction for a range of your awesome ideas

### **Class Assignments**

- Readings
- Design history/autobiography
- Textile ID project
- Themed fashion collages/designs
- Designer's journal, including human centered design process and products!
- Paper –study of a chosen designer and/or art style and your connection to it (6-8 pages)
- Project designs, created in a format chosen by each individual student
- Completed fabricated project(s), runway-ready

**MLAS PROJECT RUNWAY COURSE OUTLINE  
SUMMER 2017**

| DATE      | TOPIC   | READINGS DUE & ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES  |
|-----------|---|--|
| WEEK<br>1 | Introductions and class overview<br>Principles of design; overview of the history of fashion; the recycling of the past<br>Schiaparelli and Prada, <i>Impossible Conversations</i><br>Discuss creative confidence<br>Initial brainstorming exercise<br>Draping demonstration: straight grain and bias<br>Choose a pattern for a simple garment (pajama bottoms) | <b>Assign:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autobiography</li> <li>• Readings</li> <li>• Designer’s journal/initial assignment</li> <li>• Paper on your chosen designer or artist</li> <li>• Finding images</li> <li>• <i>The True Cost</i></li> </ul>   |
| WEEK<br>2 | History of Fashion continued: design in the 20 <sup>th</sup> century<br>Discussion: Reading and <i>The True Cost</i><br>Developing questions related to fashion and design<br>Textile overview and identification<br>In-class collage: taking your images and making a self-portrait  | <b>Assign:</b> Textile ID project<br><b>Due:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autobiography</li> <li>• Watch <i>The True Cost</i></li> <li>• Reading: TBA</li> <li>• Minimum of ten fashion images (that say something about you). Five images each that you find beautiful and five images you find (interestingly) ugly</li> </ul> |
| WEEK<br>3 | Individual student meetings with Alex this week about research paper and final project-schedule them<br>Drawing analog<br>Figure drawing and collaging the figure: methods for making your design ideas into readable images<br>Review and practice of basic sewing techniques<br>Begin pajama bottoms  | <b>Due:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading TBA</li> <li>• Ideas for research/paper topic</li> <li>• Fabric (pre-washed) and pattern for pajama bottoms</li> </ul>  |
| WEEK<br>4 | Draping on the form and basic flat pattern drafting<br>Making a simple garment: cutting, sewing, finishing  | <b>Due:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading TBA</li> <li>• Textile identification project</li> <li>• Initial design journal assignment</li> </ul>   |
| WEEK<br>5 | Completion of pajama bottoms<br>In-class Project Runway style “Design Challenges.” Brainstorming and fabrication of quick sample projects. Individual and team challenges<br>Discussion of initial design ideas for final class projects and how to proceed   | <b>Due:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading TBA</li> <li>• Completed figure drawings and themed collages</li> <li>• Initial design ideas for final class projects</li> </ul>  |
| WEEK<br>6 | Completion of activities from previous weeks  | <b>Due:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research paper</li> </ul>   |

|         |  |   |
|---------|--|---|
|         | Planning for, organizing, and beginning next student projects  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial designs for your fabricated projects</li> </ul>  |
| WEEK 7  | Designing your projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Materials and methods will be discussed and finalized for creating your designs</li> <li>Development of prototype(s)</li> </ul> In-class Project Runway style “Design Challenges” | <b>Due:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final designs for your fabricated projects</li> <li>All materials and supplies for your fabricated projects</li> </ul> |
| WEEK 8  | Fabrication/cloth creativity<br>In-class work on individual projects with an emphasis on free-form thinking, creative problem-solving, and the realization and fabrication of your ideas.  |   |
| WEEK 9  | Creating your design: in-class work on individual projects   | <b>Due:</b> Designer’s journal  |
| WEEK 10 | Finishing up and (runway?!) presentation of class projects   | <b>Due:</b> Completed final projects  |

## EVALUATED CLASS ACTIVITIES

“Throw ideas away; re-think and refine; re-work until the final product fulfills the pre-determined goal”

“ All great artists and thinkers are great workers, indefatigable not only in inventing, but also in rejecting, sifting, transforming, ordering.” Lehrer, *Imagine*, pg. 75

- **Autobiography, describing yourself as a designer**

Describe how design, and your own creative imagination, has impacted your life, and potentially the lives of others

- **Textile Identification**

The fundamental principles of a wide variety of textiles

- **Themed Fashion Collages**

Incorporate historic stylistic details into themed collages you will make in order to look carefully at fashions from the past and to consider how they have been reinvented in later times, including today!

- **Designer’s Journal**

A class journal in your own chosen format that will include images, responses, and reflections on human centered design ideas and exercises, class projects, and related experiences. Ultimately, I would like this journal to serve as an ongoing reflection of your personal connection to our class main learning objective for the semester, “To learn and practice design thinking skills in order to empower you to: identify as a designer; strengthen your creative confidence through recognizing and working through design challenges; be a problem solver and a doer with tools to enact positive change.” Your journal should serve as documentation of your learning and thinking process throughout the semester.

- **Research paper on a chosen fashion/art topic**

A research paper on a topic of your choosing about an issue related to art and/or fashion

- **Final class project**

A project that includes visual elements, on a topic of your choosing (ideally connected to the topic of the paper above), related to art and/or fashion

### Required Textbooks

Kelley, Tom and David. *Creative Confidence, Unleashing the Creative Potential Within us All*. New York: Crown Business, 2013.

Burnett, Bill & Dave Evans. *Designing your Life: How to Build a Well-Lived, Joyful Life*, New York: Knopf, 2016.

*Schiaparelli & Prada: Impossible Conversations*, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2012.

### Grading:

|  |      |
|--|------|
| ❖ Design history   | 7%   |
| ❖ Textile Identification project   | 8%   |
| ❖ Themed collages  | 10%  |
| ❖ Brainstorming ideas and reflective written pieces exploring the outcomes | 15%  |
| ❖ Journal Project  | 20%  |
| ❖ Paper on chosen fashion/art topic  | 15%  |
| ❖ Final class project  | 15 % |
| ❖ Class participation  | 10 % |