

## Film, Fashion and Form: A Combined Means to Teach Costume History and Fashion Illustration

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Educator's in textiles and clothing are constantly seeking innovative ways to enhance the learning experiences for students. For students in the design area of the discipline there is a constant need to find appropriate inspiration for the creation of apparel for a variety of target markets. One such source of inspiration for designers is historic costumes. During conversations with Los Angeles couturier, Ali Rahimi during a visit to the department, it was revealed that many of the students have not watched classic films, which are a vast source of inspiration for designers. Therefore, this professor developed a group study entitled, "Film, Fashion, and Form" in which students watched and sketched garments worn in classic films followed by a critique of their sketches, discussion of period dress in the film and the impact of dress on the socio-cultural issues during the time periods the films were set.

The students viewed thirteen movies during the semester produced between the 1930s to the 1960s. The course objectives required the students to: (a) identify aesthetic trends and construction details in classic films, (b) demonstrate accuracy and efficiency in fast sketching, and (c) communicate the impact of key film costumers and designers on the fashion industry. The study plan for the group study held the following expectations for students: (a) attend weekly class sessions to view films and sketch the garments on the actors, (b) participate in the discussion of the aesthetic trends in the films, (c) develop sketches for the weekly assignments given by the professor based on the movie viewed, (d) complete the costumer/designer project to design (illustrations only) a line of clothing based on a movie a costumer/designer developed the wardrobe, and (e) create an animated portfolio of all work in the class.



Figure 1. Illustration by student Melanie Cho of a costume inspired by costumer Jean Louis

In the future, the professor hopes to offer the group study again as either a future undergraduate seminar or an honor's section of a course. The author will share in the presentation: 1) a list of movies viewed, 2) the assignment sheets for the class projects, 3) examples of student projects, 4) course evaluations, and 5) the author's reflections on the development and evolution of the course during the semester.

In the professor's department, students focusing on apparel or fashion design are required to enroll in both costume history and fashion illustration courses; however, she found it exciting and beneficial to combine the two subject matters in an experimental course. As a result, not only did students gain additional knowledge concerning the each subject, but the class critiques and discussions lead to topics of gender and racial dynamics evident in the time periods the films were set or produced.