

**The Fashion Industry:
Sociological, Psychological and Economic Systems**

**Offered at
The Neapolitan Collection
715 Elm Street
Winnetka, Illinois
Time: 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., Tuesday evenings
Six weeks
June 28 – August 2, 2011**

Instructor:

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Purpose This class is created for working professionals to provide insight to the sociological, psychological and economic systems that allow fashion to occur. It will provide students with a framework to understand how and why fashion works the way it does, and provide the student a better grasp for how fashion affects her or his life. It is based on a class developed for and taught at Northwestern University since 2005.

Structure Class will meet once a week for two hours at The Neapolitan Collection in Winnetka. Students will be expected to read approximately 100 pages of text per week and act as subject expert through reading of *Women's Wear Daily*. Each session will feature a guided discussion of the readings and industry updates from subject experts. Further, the class will take on a special project to further investigate a particular area of the fashion industry.

Topics The following material will be covered in the class.

Week 1: Capturing an image: Role of Photography; Images that are projected on public

Images that are projected upon the public have a tremendous impact both on selling of fashion and beauty products and also self-image. Through the readings and discussion, students should be able to state

how this is played out, and should reflect on how it affects their own lives and self-image.

Week 2: Hollywood, Celebrity, Bloggers and the Fashion Media

Fashion, celebrity and Hollywood are inextricably related. Lately celebrities have begun to challenge the influence of fashion editors, and bloggers are also influencing our choices. Through this week's readings/discussion students should develop a critical eye toward an understanding of the nature of this relationship and evolution.

Week 3: Theoretical Contexts

Starting in the mid-1800s economists and sociologists began investigating how and why fashion choices change the way they do. The readings and discussions for this week will cover those theories and investigate how applicable they are to today's market conditions. Further, contemporary views of fashion dissemination will be explored.

Week 4: Designers and their role in the development of fashion

The genesis of all clothing starts with a design. Who are the people responsible for these designs and how do they interpret their role in the fashion process? We start with classic designers to understand the role of designers in the development of fashion.

Week 5: Contemporary designers & the pace of fashion today

Fashion turns today are occurring at a blinding pace, placing strain on designers. Further complicating matters is the spate of mergers and acquisitions by major financial houses. Contemporary designers will be reviewed and the challenges they face in managing their careers amidst these changes will be addressed. Finally, management of the creative process will be explored.

Week 6: Retailing, Branding and Pricing

The retailing of fashion can be considered the "final step" in the fashion production process. Much of this surrounds the customer experience and how they will purchase their clothing. Some in the industry refer to this as "merchainment". Students will understand: How does a retailer influence what is designed and produced? What are the general economics of retailing? Further, American and other developed economies are witnessing a bifurcation in income levels. What does this bifurcation indicate for the future of fashion? The challenge for fashion managers is to price product accordingly – or to create a new, lower-end label. Pros and cons surrounding that will be explored.

Cost and Registration The total cost for the course is \$750, and includes the following:

- Instruction at The Neapolitan Collection in Winnetka
- Binder of all readings
- *Fashion Brands*, by Mark Tungate, 2008.
- A subscription to *Women's Wear Daily*

A deposit of \$150 will hold a spot in the class, and the total of \$750 will be due by the first class session. If a student cancels anytime up to the first class session, 100% of all moneys paid will be returned. A student may cancel after the first to third class sessions and receive a prorated refund. After the third session, no refund will be provided. If the class is cancelled, 100% of all moneys will be refunded to the student within one week of the first class date.

About the instructor

Steven Fischer sees a world where the application of Image, Style & Design is a way for organizations to connect with individuals in an emotional and deeper, more meaningful way, creating unrealized value for the organization. He is an authentic and creative visionary who builds purposeful relationships across national and organizational boundaries through proprietary systems and models. He does this by acting as a catalyst for action in organizations offering products and services, cultivating communities that leverage the value of Image, Style & Design.



Image reflects both one's self-image, as well as the image of organizations with which people interact. Style can be considered the manner in which an individual or organization reflects & portrays that image. Design examines the way objects and systems can be created to achieve desired aims. Steven sees the opportunity is to bring these together.

Cross-cultural and –organizational Integrator and Catalyst

Steven ignites collaborative thinking and action to unleash the value of Image, Style & Design. He believes that the most effective solutions to today's and tomorrow's problems lie in fostering cross-functional organizations and teams that transcend traditional boundaries. Throughout his 20-year career, Steven has created cross-functional opportunities. He has created opportunities through fostering bi-lateral understanding and relations between Asia and the United States; building relations for American organizations in Europe and Latin America; and working for the Japanese government. He

identifies opportunities for normally disparate groups to work together and forges programs that allow cross-organizational opportunities to flourish. Steven has done this in the worlds of fashion + products & services; design + operations; business + engineering.

Individual Style & Expression

As a lecturer at Northwestern University, Steven teaches organizations and their future leaders to enable and engage an individual's self-image, which is expressed through style. Style acts as an important and powerful filter for how individuals interact with others and engage with products & services. Designed products and services possess a certain style – a style which must resonate with the individual in order to be adopted. This association operates at the emotional level of the brain, transcending the logical. Steven has created a process and methodology that allows for this interaction in diverse fields such as hospitality, fashion, medicine, electronic devices and automotive. Organizations (companies, schools, governments) that connect with their community through individual style enjoy deeper relationships with the end user, and an increased return on their investments.

Global citizens, individual distinction

Steven sees that today we have become global citizens, but in the process have become homogenized. Amidst this force, individuals still desire to express their individual style. Organizations have a role and responsibility to enable that expression of individual style. He also observes that information and communication technologies have dramatically transformed the way goods and services are produced and consumed, to the point where individuals can produce and sell directly to each other, and one where their sense of style is immediately shared with others. The importance of peer opinion has become greater than the role of traditional media. The opportunity is to unleash and celebrate the individual's sense of style.