
FAS 322 - Hands-on Fashion Problem-Solving Studio

Semester: Fall 2026

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Office hours: by appointment

Course Time

Mon Wed TBD

Course Description:

This required junior-level studio course develops advanced fashion construction, textile manipulation, and research-informed design skills through technical garment projects and sustainable fashion problem solving. During the first half of the semester, students complete two guided construction projects—a structured jacket and a bias-cut dress—to strengthen skills in tailoring-informed construction, garment structure, fit, drape, fabric behavior, finishing, and professional studio practice. During the second half of the semester, students apply these skills to research-informed sustainable design projects addressing textile waste, unsellable donated clothing, reuse, reconstruction, and material transformation.

Using a course-based undergraduate research approach, students conduct basic literature review and precedent analysis, experiment with reclaimed materials, develop samples and prototypes, and communicate their outcomes through visual documentation, critique, oral presentation, and ITAA-style abstracts. Students also complete a team-based design research project using AI as a virtual mentor to support ideation, concept refinement, critique, and research communication. The course emphasizes craftsmanship, sustainability, evidence-based design decisions, ethical technology use, collaboration, and professional communication.

Prerequisites: FAS 223 & FAS 232

Audiences: FAS Majors

Course Structure:

This required junior-level studio course provides an immersive exploration of research-driven sustainable fashion problem solving, hands-on craftsmanship, and contemporary design development. Reframing the technical rigor of a traditional tailoring course into a more current and engaging format, students will complete two major integrated projects that progressively build independence, technical execution, design judgment, and research capacity: (1) an individual research-informed design piece with an ITAA-style abstract, and (2) a team-based design research project culminating in a collaborative abstract supported by material/design exploration and process evidence.

Studio learning will combine short lectures, demonstrations, guided research activities (including field-based observation such as thrift-store back-end visits when available), iterative sampling and prototyping, reconstruction and material experimentation, surface design exploration, AI-supported ideation/refinement, and critique-based feedback. Students will be expected to document their process weekly through concise visual studio logs that emphasize evidence, iteration, technical decisions, and problem-solving rather than long-form academic writing.

The course is fast-paced and requires sustained independent work outside of class to support literature review, material sourcing/sorting, sample development, construction, team collaboration, and professional presentation. By the end of the semester, students will demonstrate stronger craftsmanship, improved research and critical thinking skills, more effective collaboration, and clearer communication of research-informed design outcomes through visual documentation, oral presentation, and individual/team abstracts—skills essential for advanced studio courses and contemporary professional design practice.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate advanced fashion craftsmanship through accurate construction, finishing, material handling, and appropriate structural/form decisions.
2. Evaluate and apply suitable design and construction methods for reclaimed or unconventional materials in sustainable fashion product development.
3. Investigate a fashion sustainability problem by conducting a basic literature review using scholarly and credible industry sources.
4. Document and analyze iterative design exploration through material experiments, sampling, prototyping, and evidence-based decision making.
5. Translate research and concepts into feasible outcomes using structured workflow, technical communication, and hands-on making skills.
6. Use AI tools critically and ethically (as virtual mentors) and collaborate effectively in teams to develop realistic sustainable product/system proposals.
7. Communicate and reflect on research-informed design outcomes through visual documentation, oral presentation, an ITAA-style abstract, and critical reflection on process, impact, and growth.

Textbooks

Suggested Reference Books:

- Joseph-Armstrong, H. (2010). *Patternmaking for fashion design* (5th ed.). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Education/Prentice Hall. ISBN: 0136069347 (various formats)
- Kiisel, K. (2020). *Draping: The complete course* (2nd ed.). Laurence King Publishing. ISBN-13: 978-1786272317 (various formats)
- Joseph-Armstrong, H., Ashdown, S. (2022). *Draping for apparel design*. (4th ed.). New York: Fairchild.
- Lo, D. C. (2021). *Pattern Cutting* (2nd ed.). London: Laurence King Publishing.
- Shaeffer, C. B. (2001). *Sewing for the apparel industry*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. (or a similar sewing textbook)

Required Course Materials

All general supplies used in the studio class, including both paper and fabric scissors.

Course Policies

Attendance

Attendance in classes is expected in all courses at Syracuse University. It is a federal requirement that faculty promptly notify the university of students who do not attend or cease to attend any class. Students are expected to arrive on campus in time to attend the first meeting of all classes for which they are registered. Students who do not attend classes starting with the first scheduled meeting may be academically withdrawn as not making progress toward their degree by failure to attend.

- Regular class attendance is expected and required.
- Class begins promptly at the designated time. Attendance will be taken at the start of class.
- Late arrivals of more than 10 minutes and early departures of more than 10 minutes will be considered an absence for the day; satisfactory reasons and advance email notification to the professor do not count.
- Individual meetings with the instructor are just as important as lectures, discussions, and demonstrations.
- Students are expected to have all assignments completed on time and participate in classroom critiques and discussions.
- A satisfactory explanation of an absence does not relieve the student from responsibility for the coursework assigned and/or due during his/her absences.
- A student who does not attend class during the first week of school or starts late is still held responsible for his/her absences.
- If you miss class, regardless of the reason, you **must** notify your instructor via email at least 2 hours before the class, otherwise it will be considered absent.
- **Three unexcused absences will result in one letter grade down from your earned final grade (i.e. an A becomes a B).**
- **Five unexcused absences will result F as the final grade.**

- **Studio attendance and staying for the entire class are mandatory.** It is a federal requirement that students who do not attend or cease to attend a class to be reported at the time of determination by the faculty.
- **Information for Students: Non-attendance or Stopped Attending**

Excused absences will be allowed ONLY for the following circumstances:

- 1) student's serious illness (doctor's note verified)
- 2) death of a member of the immediate family within the week,
- 3) trips for participation in intercollegiate athletic events or class trips, or job interviews (official letter required)
- 4) religious holidays (written notification is required prior to the event)
- 5) subpoena for court appearance (official document required)

Absence due to illness

Please send the professor an email if you are ill and must miss class. If your illness affects a project, assignment, or in-class exercise, you will need to provide a signed statement from your doctor or Student Health Services in order to receive the opportunity to make up your work. *Make-up work is at the discretion of the instructor* and, if allowed, may be given in a form and/or format different from the original work. If illness causes you to miss more than one class in a row, please inform your instructor.

Late Work Policy

When you work in the fashion industry, you are expected to meet your deadlines. As a sign of professionalism and respect, students must learn to complete and submit work on time. Late assignments will be treated as follows:

- 1-2 days late = 10% reduction
- 3 days late = 50% reduction
- After 3 days late = 70% reduction (Some points are better than no points!)

You must complete every assignment because each assignment builds upon another. After three assignments missed (or late), your final grade will be dropped a grade increment (A to A- or B- to C+) no matter what the rest of your points are. Don't fall in this trap! Get your assignments turned in on time!

The Blackboard Learning Management System

This class will use the Blackboard Learning Management to house the syllabus, course content, links to external course materials, assignments, quizzes, exams, feedback, and grades. Due dates and times in Blackboard are stored in Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) and displayed for each user based on the time zone setting of their computer and data from their internet browser. The system will always display the time zone being used. If an instructor sets a due date of 11pm Eastern time, a student in the Pacific time zone will see a due date of 8pm.

Information about Blackboard is available on Answers Blackboard; alternatively, you can contact Information Technology Services by sending an email to help@syr.edu, calling 315.443.2677, or in-person at the ITS Service Center, located at 1-227 CST in the Life Sciences

Complex. Business hours for the Service Center can be found on the ITS Website at http://its.syr.edu/its_service_center/

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Faith Tradition Observances

Syracuse University's Religious Observances Policy recognizes the diversity of faiths represented in the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holy days according to their traditions. Under the policy, students are given an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance, provided they notify their instructors no later than the academic drop deadline. For observances occurring before the drop deadline, notification is required at least two academic days in advance. Students may enter their observances in MySlice under Student Services/Enrollment/My Religious Observances/Add a Notification.

Health & Wellness

Well-being and mental health are significant predictors of academic success. It is critical to take care of yourself physically and emotionally and to effectively navigate stress, anxiety, and depression. Please familiarize yourself with the range of resources the Barnes Center provides (<https://ese.syr.edu/bewell/>) and seek out support for mental health concerns as needed. Counseling services are available 24/7, 365 days, at 315-443-8000.

Harassment and Discrimination

Federal and state law, and University policy prohibit discrimination and harassment based on sex or gender (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation). If a student has been impacted by any prohibited behavior based on sex or gender, they can obtain confidential counseling support, 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, from the Sexual and Relationship Violence Response Team at the Counseling Center (315-443-8000, Barnes Center at The Arch, 150 Sims Drive, Syracuse, New York 13244). Incidents of sexual or relationship violence or harassment can be reported to the University's Title IX Coordinators (Sheila Johnson Willis, Chief Equal Opportunity Officer and Title IX Officer for Faculty and Staff, 315-443-4018, equalopp@syr.edu or Pamela Peter, Director/Coordinator of Student Title IX Case Management, 315-443-0211, titleix@syr.edu). Reports to law enforcement can be made to the University's Department of Public Safety (315-443-2224, 005 Sims Hall), the Syracuse Police Department (511 South State Street, Syracuse, New York, 911 in case of emergency or 315-435-3016 to speak with the Abused Persons Unit), or the State Police (Campus Sexual Assault Victims Unit, 844-845-7269). I will seek to keep information you share with me private to the greatest extent possible, but as a professor I have mandatory reporting responsibilities to share information regarding sexual misconduct, relationship violence, stalking, harassment, and crimes I learn about with the University's Title IX Officer to help make our campus a safer place for all and to ensure you have access to available resources.

Special Needs and Accommodations

Syracuse University values access and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. There may be aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion and full participation in this course. I invite any student to contact me to discuss strategies and/or accommodations (academic adjustments) that may be necessary to ensure equitable access, and to collaborate with the Center for Disability Resources (CDR) in this process.

If you would like to discuss disability-related accommodations or register with CDR, please visit Center for Disability Resources. Please call 315.443.4498 or email CDRspecialist@syr.edu for more detailed information.

CDR is responsible for coordinating disability-related academic accommodations and will work with the student to develop an access plan. Since academic accommodations are generally not provided retroactively, please contact CDR as soon as possible to initiate this process.

Studio Courtesy

- Students are expected to have the necessary materials and supplies for each meeting.
- Students are also encouraged to take an active role in your education, take initiative, and ask questions for assistance.
- Projects must be worked on in class, but some work will also need to be completed outside of class.
- Projects not worked on in class will not be accepted.
- Students are encouraged to watch progress on projects of other class members and to share their learning experiences with others. Along with your own efforts, students are encouraged to learn by observing the problems encountered by your classmates and their solutions.
- Professional behavior is encouraged of all students in this course.
- Disruptive behavior, such as the use of cell phones, reading the newspaper, inappropriate language, or disregard to lab policies/equipment, will not be permitted. If at any time, a student's behavior is offensive to the instructor or your fellow students, he/she may be asked to leave the lab.
- No food during class time.
- No smoking or other tobacco products may be used.
- Consumption of food and beverages are strongly discouraged in the studio. If necessary, drinks should be in covered containers, and placed on side tables, not on the working area.
- Students are asked to clean their workspaces at the end of each class, including the disposal of paper and material scraps, eraser slabs and broken pencil lead. Rooms should be reset at the end of class for the next group of students. It is the responsibility of the last person leaving the workroom to be sure the irons, lights, and all machines are turned off.
- The instructor must approve all usage of laptops or other similar electronic devices. All cell phones should be turned off and put away.

Academic Integrity Policy

As a pre-eminent and inclusive student-focused research institution, Syracuse University considers academic integrity at the forefront of learning, serving as a core value and guiding pillar of education. Syracuse University's Academic Integrity Policy provides students with the necessary guidelines to complete academic work with integrity throughout their studies. Students are required to uphold both course-specific and university-wide academic integrity expectations such as crediting your sources, doing your own work, communicating honestly, and supporting academic integrity. The full Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy can be found by visiting teachingexcellence.syr.edu/academic-integrity and selecting, "Expectations and Policy."

Upholding Academic Integrity includes the protection of faculty's intellectual property. Students should not upload, distribute, or share instructors' course materials, including presentations, assignments, exams, or other evaluative materials without permission. Using websites that charge fees or require uploading of course material (e.g., Chegg, Course Hero) to obtain exam solutions or assignments completed by others, which are then presented as your own violates academic integrity expectations in this course and may be classified as a Level 3 violation. All academic integrity expectations that apply to in-person assignments, quizzes, and exams also apply online.

Students found in violation of the policy are subject to grade sanctions determined by the course instructor and non-grade sanctions determined by the School or College where the course is offered. Students may not drop or withdraw from courses in which they face a suspected violation. Any established violation in this course may result in course failure regardless of violation level.

Artificial Intelligence Use

Based on the assignments in this course and our specified learning outcomes, the full use of artificial intelligence as a tool, with disclosure and citation, is permitted in this course. Students do not need to ask permission to use these tools before starting an assignment or exam, but they must explicitly and fully indicate which tools were used and describe how they were used.

Disclaimer

The instructor reserves the right to change any part of this syllabus at any time during the semester in order to adapt to changing course needs. You will be notified prior to any changes that may take place.

Course Project and Evaluation

Here are the grade components. Each component has checkpoints and grade components within it—explained below.

Project Names	Points%
• Technical Project 1: Structured Jacket	20%
• Technical Project 2: Bias-Cut Dress	20%
• Project 3: Individual Research-Informed Sustainable Design Piece	25%
• Project 4: Team AI-Supported Sustainable Design	20%
• Weekly Studio Logs	10%
• Participation, preparedness for classes	5%
Total	100%

Grading Scale

Your final grade will be based on the following grade scale. Grades will not be curved.

93 and above = A	80 – 82.99 = B-	67 – 69.99 = D+
90 – 92.99 = A-	77 – 79.99 = C+	63 – 66.99 = D
87 – 89.99 = B+	73 – 76.99 = C	60 – 62.99 = D-
83 – 86.99 = B	70 – 72.99 = C-	59.99 or lower = F

Course Schedule

Weeks	Project	Focus
1–4	Technical Project 1: Structured Jacket	Advanced structure, tailoring, fit, finishing
5–8	Technical Project 2: Bias-Cut Dress	Drape, bias handling, fabric behavior, textile manipulation
9–13	Project 3 (Individual): Research-Informed Sustainable Design Piece with Textile-manipulation Techniques	Apply technical skills to sustainability problem
14–16	Project 4 (Team): AI-Supported Sustainable Design	Research, collaboration, AI mentor use, proposal/prototype
17	Final presentations	Presentation + Abstract for conference

Policy on Advancing in the Fashion Design Major

All Fashion Design majors must maintain a 2.0 GPA or above to remain current and enrolled in the fashion program at Syracuse University. If a student receives a grade below a C in any of the FAS classes, he/she will be placed on FAS probation for the following semester. Any student placed on FAS probation for a total of two semesters, consecutive or non-consecutive, will be dropped from the FAS program.

An appeal to be reinstated to the major can only be made by submitting a current portfolio, a current transcript, and a letter of recommendation from a faculty member outside the FAS program. This package would be sent to the Program Coordinator of Fashion Design by Oct. 1 in the fall semester for spring reentry and March 1 for fall reentry. A committee made up of full-time faculty and one student representative from the senior class will review the appeal for reinstatement case. There must be a unanimous positive vote of the committee members to reinstate the student.