


AUF
*The American
University of Florence*
SYLLABUS

 Academic
Affairs

FAST – FASHION AND ACCESSORY STUDIES AND TECHNOLOGY

SCHOOL OF FASHION AND ACCESSORY STUDIES AND TECHNOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF FASHION MERCHANDISING
**COURSE TITLE: FASHION BUYING STRATEGIES: FROM PERSONAL SHOPPER TO RETAIL
MERCHANDISING**
COURSE CODE: FTFMFB330
3 Semester Credits
1. DESCRIPTION

This course addresses the new professional shopper profile by examining both the customer-oriented features of the industry as well as the general business principles of the fashion industry. Topics analyze the profession of the personal shopper, understanding the nature of services provided, as well as the strategies advised to clients from wardrobe analysis and purchasing. During the course, students will discuss fashion both in relationship to fashion history and international trends as well as communication and protocol for special occasions such as events. The final part of the class will include career guidance and marketing and promotion principles to build a customer base.

2. OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- understand the profession of a fashion buyer
- learn the strategies and the practices of how to become an effective fashion buyer in relation to a wide range of clients
- learn how to merge the competences of a fashion buyer with the profession of personal shopper
- analyze the profession of the personal shopper
- understand the basic principles and practical techniques of a personal shopper
- understand the strategies advised to clients from wardrobe analysis and purchasing
- develop an awareness of fashion in relation to fashion history and the international trends in fashion
- learn dress-code and etiquette guidelines to personal shop in view of different situations and events.
- elaborate a range of successful offers and ideas tailored for future clients
- know how to self-brand for promoting the profession successfully with clients and intermediaries

3. REQUIREMENTS

There are no prerequisites for this course.

4. METHOD

This course consists of lectures, class discussions, projects, and site visits within the local community. Mediums for instruction used will include, but are not limited to, interactive and hands-on activities which challenge thought processes, academic texts and studies, videos, slides, guided problem solving, and experiential and/or field learning activities where applicable.

An asset of the program is the opportunity to showcase student work at FLY, the non-profit retail store

of FAST, alongside professional emerging designers based in Italy. All works produced by students will be featured with garment specifications, photographed, and published for promotion on school websites. Garments will undergo a selection process for in-store and classroom placement. Furthermore, FAST experiential learning and internship students will then utilize these items to create window displays and other special installations throughout the season. For this reason, it is not possible for students to take projects, garments, accessories, and the like home upon course completion. In the event that a garment is sold, all profits will go toward scholarship funds for future FAST students.

5. TEXTBOOK – FURTHER READINGS – RESOURCES

TEXTBOOK (Copy available at the university library):

David Shaw, Dimitri Koumbis, *Fashion Buying: From Trend Forecasting to Shop Floor* Bloomsbury, London & New York, 2013.

The textbook is mandatory for successful completion of the course.

Where applicable, additional materials, handouts and/or notes will be provided by the instructor.

FURTHER READINGS

Laura Harrison McBride, Peter J. Gallanis, Tag Goulet, FabJob, *Guide to Become a Personal Shopper (FabJob Guides)* FabJob Inc, Calgary and Seattle, 2005

Gillian Armour, *The Elite Personal Shopper* Paperback, CreateSpace, 2010.

Vogue Fashion: Over 100 Years of Style by Decade and Designer by L. Watson, Firefly Books in association with Vogue, New York 2008

The Fashion Dictionary 2010 by G. Vergani, Dalai Editore, Milan, 2011

The One Hundred: A Guide to the Pieces Every Stylish Woman Must Own by N. Garcia, Harpers Collins, New York, 2006

LIBRARIES IN FLORENCE

Please consult the posted schedules for official opening times of the university library. Also note that the library is for consultation only and it is not possible to borrow materials. The library is equipped with a scanner and internet access so that you may save or email a digital copy of the pages needed. Students may also utilize additional libraries and research centers within the local community:

BIBLIOTECA PALAGIO DI PARTE GUELFA

Located in Piazzetta di Parte Guelfa between Piazza della Repubblica and Ponte Vecchio. Please consult the library website for hours of operation:

http://www.biblioteche.comune.fi.it/biblioteca_palagio_di_parte_guelfa/

BIBLIOTECA DELLE OBLATE

Located in via dell'Oriuolo 26. Please consult the library website for hours of operation:

www.bibliotecadelleoblade.it

THE HAROLD ACTON LIBRARY AT THE BRITISH INSTITUTE OF FLORENCE

Located in Lungarno Guicciardini 9. Please consult the library website for hours of operation. This library requires a fee-based student membership. For information: www.britishinstitute.it/en

6. FIELD LEARNING

Please consult your Official Registration for any mandatory field learning dates. Field Learning Activities cited in Official Registrations are an integral part of the course and also include an assignment that counts towards your final grade, details will be provided on the first day of class.

7. COURSE MATERIALS

No additional course materials are necessary.

8. COURSE FEES

Course fees cover course-related field learning activities, visits, and support the instructor's teaching methodologies. Book costs are not included in the course fee. The exact amount will be communicated

by the instructor on the first day of class.

9. EVALUATION – GRADING SYSTEM

10% Attendance
10% Participation
10% Assignments
20% Midterm Exam
30% Final Exam
20% Paper/Project

A = 93-100 %, A- = 90-92%, B+ = 87-89%, B = 83-86%, B- = 80-82%, C+ = 77-79%, C = 73-76%, C- = 70-72%, D = 60-69%, F = 0-59%, W = Official Withdrawal, W/F = Failure to withdraw by the designated date.

10. ATTENDANCE – PARTICIPATION

Academic integrity and mutual respect between instructor and student are central to the academic policy and reflected in the attendance regulations. Student presence is mandatory and counts toward the final grade.

Absences are based on academic hours: 1 absence equals 3 lecture hours.

Two absences: 6 lecture hours, attendance and participation grade will be impacted.

Three absences: 9 lecture hours, the final grade may be lowered by one letter grade.

Four absences: 12 lecture hours, constitutes automatic failure of the course regardless of when absences are incurred.

Please note:

- The above hours refer to lecture hours. Please note that the contact / credit hour policy in the academic catalog includes additional distribution ratios according to delivery category. Ex: 1 absence equals 6 FL/SL/Lab hours or 9 EL hours.
- Hours may be distributed in different formats according to the academic course schedules.

LATE ARRIVAL AND EARLY DEPARTURE

Arriving late or departing early from class is not acceptable. Two late arrivals or early departures or a combination will result in an unexcused absence. Travel is not an exceptional circumstance.

TRAVEL (OR DELAYS DUE TO TRAVEL) IS NEVER AN EXCUSE FOR ABSENCE FROM CLASS.

It is the student's responsibility to know how many absences are incurred. If in doubt, speak with your instructor!

Participation: Satisfactory participation will be the result of contributing to class discussions by putting forth insightful and constructive questions, comments and observations. Overall effort, cooperation during group work, proper care of work space and tools, responsible behavior, and completion of assignments will be assessed. All of the above criteria also apply to Field Learning and site visits.

11. EXAMS – PAPERS – PROJECTS

The **Midterm** exam accounts for 20% of the final course grade. For exam time and date consult the course website. **The time and date of the exam cannot be changed for any reason.**

Format: the exam is divided into three sections:

- Part I: 10 Multiple choice questions. Each correct answer is worth 2 points, for a total of 20 points.
- Part II: 10 short-answer questions. Each correct and complete answer (concise explanations, main ideas, key words, names, etc.) is worth 5 points, for a total 50 points.
- Part III: two essay questions; each correct and complete answer is worth 15 points (based on content, vocabulary, detail, etc.) for a total of 30 points.

The final **Paper/Project** accounts for 20% of the course grade.

- Format: topic, length, guidelines, and due date will be provided on course website.
- Material for research will be available in the FUA Library in Corso Tintori 21.

The **Final** exam accounts for 30% of the final course grade. For exam time and date consult the course website. **The time and date of the exam cannot be changed for any reason.** Format: the exam is divided into three sections:

- Part I: 10 Multiple choice questions. Each correct answer is worth 2 points, for a total of 20 points.
- Part II: 10 short-answer questions. Each correct and complete answer (concise explanations, main ideas, key words, names, etc.) is worth 5 points, for a total 50 points.
- Part III: two essay questions; each correct and complete answer is worth 15 points (based on content, vocabulary, detail, etc.) for a total of 30 points.
- The Final Exam is cumulative

12. LESSONS

Lesson 1	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Syllabus presentation, course introduction. The role of the buyer, buying and merchandise planning, and responsibilities of the buying line.
Objectives	Understand the skills entailed in the profession of the buyer and planning steps prior to the actual buying sessions.
Reading	Chapter 1, David Shaw, Dimitri Koumbis, <i>Fashion Buying</i> .
CEMI operation	Visit FLY (Fashion Loves You) and be introduced to the merchandise available in the store.

Lesson 2	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Merchandise plan component, sales goals, mark-up and mark-down plans, and margins of profit. Monitor of stock levels. Market trend analysis.
Objectives	Acquire basic understanding of strategies and tactics in order to buy effectually and eventually to fulfill set retail goals and profit.
Reading	Chapter 1 (pp. 10-25), David Shaw, Dimitri Koumbis, <i>Fashion Buying</i> .
CEMI operation	Analyze and understand FLY merchandise strategy, set goals and retail tools for consignment, emerging designer, and vintage.

Lesson 3	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Target consumers, micro- vs. macro-merchandising, buying and selling cycle. Assortment buying: narrow and deep buying, short cycle buying. Line buying vs. trend buying.
Objectives	Grasp various techniques in order to lead lucid and effective buying sessions.
Reading	Chapter 1 (pp. 26-35), David Shaw, Dimitri Koumbis, <i>Fashion Buying</i> .
CEMI operation	Experience (or simulate) a buying session, setting goals and applying them in the merchandising of the collection.

Lesson 4	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Managing fashion forecasting tool and objectives: where buyers' and personal shoppers' worlds meet. Bridging competences, skills and strategies.
Objectives	Understand the gist of how the skills required in merchandise stores and wardrobes interrelate.

Reading	Chapter 1 (pp. 36-42), David Shaw, Dimitri Koumbis, Fashion Buying.
CEMI operations	Research through books and the internet the most suitable future fashion trends to bring in our point of sale Fly, exercising fashion forecasting skills, and keeping well in mind our standard clientele needs.

Lesson 5	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Fashion basics. Ability to spot trends on local and international grounds.
Objectives	Acquire the basic yet fundamental fashion and style sensitivity in order to suggest the best image and styling to clients.
Reading	Chapter 2 (44-65), David Shaw, Dimitri Koumbis, Fashion Buying.
CEMI operations	Exercise styling skills with the merchandise available in store on mannequin, to respond to specific styling requests of your supervisor.

Lesson 6	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Who is a personal shopper? Who does the Personal Shopper work for? Investigate the potential social, cultural and personal value of style and image. Areas of specialization and organizational skills. Behavior rules.
Objectives	Understand how to become a personal shopper: observing other personal shoppers and figure out the necessary skills, resource and education.
Reading	Chapter 3 (pp. 74-87), David Shaw, Dimitri Koumbis, Fashion Buying.
CEMI operations	Learn how to decode and seize each unique and personal image and style of clients in a fashion retail store environment, so as to personalize their buying experience, while applying the behavior rules learnt in class.

Lesson 7	
Meet	In class
Lecture	MIDTERM EXAM

Lesson 8	
Break	

Lesson 9	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Client review. Choose your target market. Personal shopping services for a range of different clients: tourist, local client, travel agencies and tour operators, lifestyle agencies. Budgeting in personal shopping. Choosing and dealing with vendors.
Objectives	Understand your client, how to fulfill its needs and requirements, and how to handle the budget available. Learning strategies to interact with vendors in view of personal shopping sessions.
Reading	Chapter 3 (pp. 88-97), David Shaw, Dimitri Koumbis, Fashion Buying.
CEMI operations	Apply techniques learnt in class to serve (or simulate) interactions with clients in the FLY store, using personal selling techniques and image consultancy aimed at different types of client.

Lesson 10	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Shopping timings: sales, discounts, private collections, seasonal collections, special orders. Color analysis: how to determine the natural color for each client. Must haves.
Objectives	Underline the various core assets of the personal shopper offer, and learn to utilize them with effective knowledge to enrich experience of the client.

Reading	Chapter 4 (pp. 106-115), David Shaw, Dimitri Koumbis, Fashion Buying.
CEMI operations	Practice styling on mannequin at FLY focusing on the use of color matching, using the merchandising available in store.

Lesson 11	
Meet	In class
Lecture	How to communicate a brand and the shopping experience. The brand identity. Learn how to match brands and clients. A good shopping tour sample, including efficient times.
Objectives	Learn how to decode the cultural and economic identity of a brand, through its semiotic and social role. Understand how to suggest the most appropriate brand and items for each client. Learn how to define and arrange a good shopping tour which includes good timings, effective visits to stores and strategic stops, in order to enhance the experience for a client.
Reading	Chapter 4 (pp. 116-123), David Shaw, Dimitri Koumbis, Fashion Buying.
CEMI operations	Exercise your merchandising sensitivity, analyzing the Vintage brands available at FLY and detecting matching potential clients.

Lesson 12	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Mapping the city in primary and secondary areas. Tailor made, flagship stores, kids wear, outlets, stockists, multibrand, housewear, beauty, craftsmanship, interior design, etc...
Objectives	When planning a shopping tour, timings are as important as the locations visited. Learn how to map a city to create effective shopping tours, in order to respond to the client's needs.
Reading	Chapter 4 (124–127), David Shaw, Dimitri Koumbis, Fashion Buying. Further reading material will be provided by the instructor.
CEMI operations	Map the city center of Florence and divide it in 5 macro-areas to create effective shopping tours. Then discuss how you would position Fly and its related shopping experience.

Lesson 13	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Dress codes, behavior rules, and basics of etiquette.
Objectives	Learn how to give image consultancy for special occasions, starting from the suitable behavior, matching dress code and etiquette suggestions.
Reading	Reading material will be provided by the instructor.
CEMI operations	Practice styling on mannequin focusing on specific dress codes aimed to special occasions, using the items available at FLY.

Lesson 14	
Meet	In class
Lecture	Self-branding: communication, press, logo and web. How to source clients and intermediaries. Review for the final exam.
Objectives	Understand the assets in your posess as personal shopper, and learn how to market them properly, using the most common promotional tools. Learn how to partner with vendors and intermediaries, how to source them and collaborate with them effectively. Review in order to deliver a successful exam. Cultivate oral presentation skills and confidence.
Reading	Chapter 5 (pp. 140-157), David Shaw, Dimitri Koumbis, Fashion Buying.
CEMI operations	Outline your self-branding strategy as personal shopper: target customers, merchandising, possible logo, and devise an itinerary in Florence for the clientele you are targeting.

Lesson 15	
Meet	In class
Lecture	FINAL EXAM

