THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
Department of Sociology

CCHU9012 Body, Beauty and Fashion
First Semester 2017-2018
Course Outline
http://sites.sociology.hku.hk/body-beauty-fashion/
password access bbf2017

Instructors
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Lecture Venue
Room: Rayson Huang Theatre
Time: Wed 12:30 - 2:20

COURSE AIMS
This course takes students on an exploration of the links between body, beauty and fashion from a variety of perspectives ranging from sociology, social policy, economics, psychology and medicine. These various perspectives together offer students a way of seeing how individual level issues (self-esteem, stigma and identity) shape and are shaped by community level issues (mass media), societal level issues (gender) and global level issues (globalization and westernization). This course examines these issues in a variety of formats using guest lectures, mass media analysis, video clips, problem solving activities and discussion.

This course focuses on cultural representations and understandings of the human body and ideals of beauty. Although the intended aim of this class focuses primarily on contemporary Hong Kong society, lectures will also include in-depth analyses of how beauty is culturally constructed and historically situated around the world. To this end, this course is gender inclusive and presents both the female and male perspectives on beauty, body image and fashion. In this context, how human bodies and standards
of beauty are increasingly influenced by a global media, which promotes a progressively narrow concept of beauty, will be critically discussed.

Aside from the media influence on an increasingly globalized interpretation of beauty standards, this class also explores how diet and fashion industries are gaining momentum in shaping beauty ideals. Class lectures also address other globally and socially constructed aspects of beauty and identity, such as race, class, culture, ethnicity, sexual identity, age, and ability/disability.

COURSE ASSESSMENT

100% coursework:

Reflective Journal 40%
Fieldwork Assignment 20%
Tutorial workshop (+ attendance) 20%
2 in-class quizzes 20% (10% each)

Reflective Journal: Students are required to submit a reflective journal (about 16 to 20 pages in length) at the end of the course (Due: Wednesday Dec 6th, 2017, hardcopy turned in to main office sociology department, soft copy via turnitin). Details of this journal assignment will be provided during the first lecture and tutorial, and are contained in the second half of this document. The purpose of the journal is to provide students with an opportunity to explore more deeply the various theories and concepts discussed in lectures, reading assignments and tutorials and apply these ideas to everyday experiences.

Fieldwork Assignment: In this assignment, students are required to submit a 2-3 page summary/critique assessing the various ways in which gendered and cultural standards of beauty can limit our understanding of the male and female experience. (Due: Wednesday, November 1st 2017, hardcopy in class, soft copy via turnitin). Through this fieldwork assignment, students are afforded the opportunity to develop and expand critical analytical skills and apply various theories and concepts covered in class.

Choose ONE of the following to do:

a) Conduct observational work on dress and cultural norms. Locate a suitable place where young people tend to go (café, shopping mall, HKU, etc.) Choose a site where you can sit and observe and record. Set a time limit (one hour or so), and document the types of clothing worn by males and females. In doing so, look for patterns. That is, do young people tend to follow a dominant or popular dress norm? What are the dress norms in particular settings? Did you see any instances when people differed from the norm? What was the reaction of others? Why do people follow a dress code?

b) Interview 2 to 4 friends or family members (males and females) and ask them to define beauty. Analyze your findings to determine how beauty is socially constructed. Is there a gender difference among the males and females you interviewed in terms of how beauty is defined?
c) Review two advertisements and reflect on your own experiences. Do these advertisements limit or expand your definition of beauty? What are some of the positive and negative messages conveyed in these ads? If given the opportunity, would you change any element of the ad? Why or why not?

d) Content analysis of the latest gossip on internet blogs (or forums, groups, communities). Visit popular internet sites about beauty or fashion and then record the hottest discussion among netizens or the latest recommendation by bloggers. What are the key concerns of these internet activities? What kind of beauty ideal is being encouraged? Do they affect your beauty product consumption?

NOTE: All written assignments must be submitted to turnitin (via moodle) AND a printed hard copy. If either the soft OR hard copy is missing, the submission will NOT be marked. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that both copies are submitted.

**Tutorial group presentation workshop (+attendance):** Students are required to give one group presentation (3-4 students) for 15 minutes on the last day of tutorial. Topics for these presentations will be developed during tutorials and students are encouraged to be as creative as possible in developing their presentations. *(Due: Last day of tutorials).*

It should also be noted that tutorial attendance is mandatory. Simply attending tutorials without participating in the group discussion is insufficient. Success in tutorial depends on students’ familiarity with information prior to each tutorial.

**2 in-class quizzes:** There are two in-class quizzes during the course to assess students learning regarding various theories and concepts covered in lecture. *(Oct 25th and Nov 29th, 2017).*

**Academic Conduct**

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and at HKU, it is a disciplinary offence. Any student who commits the offence will be subjected to disciplinary action. Academic dishonesty includes: (1) cheating, (2) fabricating information, (3) knowingly assisting other students to violate any provision of the Code of Academic Integrity and (4) plagiarism. Please refer to the University handbook outlining what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sep 6</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Course overview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sep 13</td>
<td>The Problem with Sex and Gender</td>
<td>Explore role of gender in relation to body, beauty and fashion ideals</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sep 20</td>
<td>Sacred Goddess: Ideas about Femininity</td>
<td>Analyze what it means to achieve the feminine ideal</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Sep 27</td>
<td>Material Girl: Consequences of Femininity</td>
<td>Explore consequences of pursuing the female beauty ideal</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Oct 4</td>
<td>The Masculine Mystique: Ideas about Masculinity</td>
<td>Analyze what it means to achieve the masculine ideal</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Oct 11</td>
<td>Beauty and the Buff: Consequences of Masculinity</td>
<td>Explore consequences of pursuing male beauty ideals</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Oct 18</td>
<td>Reading Week (no class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Oct 25</td>
<td>1st In-class Quiz</td>
<td>In-class Quiz (1 hr)</td>
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<td>Playing with Beauty: Up Close with Barbie and Ken</td>
<td>Explore how messages of body beauty and fashion are conveyed through play</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Nov 1</td>
<td>The Beauty Myth and the Beauty Industry</td>
<td>Explore global extent of the beauty industry in the local context Fieldwork due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nov 8</td>
<td>Dress, Culture and Society</td>
<td>Analyze the classification system of dress &amp; significance of cultural norms of dress</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Nov 15</td>
<td>Love Your Body and Take a Selfie: I Can Be fat, Cool or Sexy as I Want</td>
<td>Examine how today's teens navigate, negotiate and customize the ways in expressing their digital body</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nov 22</td>
<td>The Price of Body, Beauty and Fashion</td>
<td>Explore costs associated with beauty, fashion and social responsibility.</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Nov 29</td>
<td>In Class Quiz</td>
<td>In class quiz (1 hr)</td>
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<td>Conclusion</td>
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JOURNAL QUESTIONS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

**NOTE TO ALL STUDENTS:** A PDF copies of the assigned readings are available online. Please go to the course website heading, Reading Materials, to download. The compulsory readings are listed under the heading: Reading. We have also posted some further readings for interest, these ones are not required readings, but are provided for supplemental reference. Students must answer the questions for Week 1 and the Final Question (listed at the end of this course outline). They may then choose to answer three questions from Week 2-6 and three questions from Weeks 7-10. The total number of entries for your journal then will be eight. Please note that your answers should reflect the integration of class discussions/lectures, readings and your own experience/opinion.

Week 1: Sep 6
Introduction

Video:
The Halo Effect – The Science of Attraction
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZuometYfMTk

Journal Question (mandatory):
Tell us about yourself (sex, age, childhood, family, schooling, interests, hobbies, and relationships). Based on Goffman’s reading and the video clip, how is your presentation affected by body, beauty and fashion. Give an example from your personal experience or observation of others of the presentation of self and the halo effect.

Week 2: Sep 13
Topic: The Problem with Sex and Gender
Readings:


Website:
Go to the website Sexual Culture in Hong Kong. The site has several blogs on Kong girls and Kong guys. Please read these. Start with this blog: http://sexualcultureinhk.wordpress.com/2013/12/11/formation-of-kong-boys-and-kong-girls-where-do-these-words-come-from/

Suggested further reading:

**Journal Question:**
- How has being either a male or a female affected your
  - family life
  - school life
  - peer relations
  - aspirations for the future
  - interest in physical activities
  - interest in social activities

Do you think this is related to your sex or gender or both? Reflect on your own experience (whether that is local or in another country) in light of your review of the website on Kong Girls and Kong Guys, and Chu (2014) and Chan (2011)’s discussions on gender in Hong Kong.

**Week 3: Sep 20**

**Topic:** Sacred Goddess: Ideas about Femininity

**Readings:**


**Suggested further reading:**


**Journal Question:**
Based on the lecture and readings, what are some of the factors influencing/shaping women’s ideals about beauty and the body in the Chinese/East Asian context? Is there a range of notions of beauty and body ideas (or is there a more singular ideal?) Are these factors distinct to Chinese and/or East Asian culture? Or is this local culture a manifestation of a growing global culture?

**Week 4: Sep 27**

**Topic:** Material Girl: Consequences of Femininity

**Readings:**
Suggested further reading:


Journal Question:
Based on the lecture and readings, what social, economic and cultural factors influence the pursuit of femininity in the Hong Kong or Chinese context? What are some of the difficulties women face in this pursuit of femininity? Identify one way in which women pursue femininity in the Hong Kong or Chinese context, to such an extent that it may result in negative consequences?

Week 5: Oct 4
Topic: The Masculine Mystique: Ideas about Masculinity
Readings:


Suggested further reading:

Journal Question:
Based on the lecture and readings, does Wen and Wu (as described by Louie and Edwards) have relevance to today’s contemporary Hong Kong man (as described by Louie’s more recent piece on popular culture and masculinity ideals)? What are the varieties of masculinity today in the China and East Asia context today? Given the variety of masculinities today, would you say that it is comparatively easier today to achieve the masculine ideal in China and East Asia than previously?

Week 6: Oct 11
Topic: Beauty and the Buff: Consequences of Masculinity
Readings:

Suggested further reading:

**Journal Question:**
Based on the readings and class discussion, what social, economic and cultural factors influence the pursuit of masculinity in the Hong Kong or Chinese context? What are some of the difficulties men face in the pursuit of masculinity? Identify one way in which men pursue masculinity, in the Hong Kong or Chinese context, to such an extent that it may result in negative consequences.

**Oct 18 Reading Week (no class)**

**Week 7: Oct 25**
1st In class quiz (1 hr)

**Topic: Playing with Beauty: Up Close with Barbie and Ken**

**Readings:**


Suggested further reading:

**Journal Question:**
Given what you have heard and read in class and your own observations/experience, what is your position on Barbie as a fashion icon? What do you attribute her long term “success” as a fashion icon? How do you think children's toys influence their ideas about gender identity and notions of what is beautiful?

**Week 8: Nov 1**

**Topic: The Beauty Myth and the Beauty Industry**

**Readings:**


**Suggested further reading:**


**Journal Question:**
During the past month, how many times did you purchase cosmetics or beauty aids or beauty services (including acne treatment, tattoos, ear piercing, hair coloring, tinting for men and women)? If you did not spend any money the past month, then reflect on the month before. How much did you spend for each product or service? How did you learn about these products or services? Why did you purchase these particular products? What image of yourself do you hope to give to others by doing this? If you never spend any money on these sorts of products or services, discuss why. Based on the readings, why do you think beauty aids/services have become so popular in Hong Kong/China, and what are two problems with the industry?

**Week 9: Nov 8**
**Topic: Dress Codes, Norms, Violations**
**Readings:**


**Video:**
View the annual 2014 No pants subway ride: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLcaNjcaNSc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLcaNjcaNSc)
And the Hong Kong ride: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AD3xKtf547o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AD3xKtf547o)

**Journal Question:**
Where do dress codes and norms stem from as described in class? Are they related to our ideas about gender and culture? To what extent do you follow a “dress code?” Why do you follow this code? What happens when you step beyond the code? What are the reactions of others? How does your experience compare with that reported in the two readings and the No Pants Ride Videos?

**Week 10: Nov 15**
**Topic: Love Your Body and Take a Selfie: I Can Be fat, Cool or Sexy as I Want**

**Readings:**

Video:
Watch these two short clips about body evolutions with the use of technology.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYhCn0jf46U
https://youtu.be/17j5QzF3kqE

Suggested further reading:

**Journal Question:**
How do you customize and present yourself online? In your opinion, does technology allow liberation from the tyranny of beauty ideals and empower you to be just the way you are?

**Week 11: Nov 22**
**Topic:** The Price of Body, Beauty and Fashion
**Readings:**

**Video:**
Watch the 25 minute clip called Made in Bangladesh.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dQGl_lswYY

**Journal Question:**
Briefly summarize the problems around the garment industry in China and Bangladesh. As global citizens, do we (as consumers of fashion) have a responsibility to those who work in the garment industry? If so, in what way?

**Week 12: Nov 29**
**In Class Quiz #2 (1 hr)**
**Topic:** Conclusion.

**Final Journal Question (mandatory):**
Review what you have learned in this course (e.g., the readings, the content of your journal, and lectures/discussions). How has your perception of body, beauty and fashion changed? Compare your understanding of the connection between body, beauty and fashion in your own life at the beginning (entry #1) and now.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Descriptors</th>
<th>(+) A</th>
<th>(-) 3.7</th>
<th>(+) B</th>
<th>(-) 2.7</th>
<th>(+) C</th>
<th>(-) 1.7</th>
<th>(+) D</th>
<th>1.0</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>39 and below</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mark</strong></td>
<td>70+</td>
<td>60 - 69</td>
<td>50 - 59</td>
<td>40 - 49</td>
<td>39 and below</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>• Excellent, outstanding performance with full coverage of the topic</td>
<td>• Good to very good performance with good coverage of the topic</td>
<td>• Satisfactory to reasonably good performance with reasonable coverage of the topic</td>
<td>• Pass: Barely satisfactory performance, with limited coverage</td>
<td>• Fail: Unsatisfactory performance</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Logic &amp; Coherence</strong></td>
<td>• Concepts very clearly understood</td>
<td>• Concepts clearly understood</td>
<td>• Concepts understood</td>
<td>• Basic understanding of concepts</td>
<td>• Many concepts not understood</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Reading &amp; Research</strong></td>
<td>• Wide, supportive reading of relevant literature</td>
<td>• Well aware of relevant literature</td>
<td>• Sound awareness of relevant literature</td>
<td>• Some awareness of relevant literature</td>
<td>• Little or no evidence of reading</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
<td>• Expresses meaning very clearly</td>
<td>• Expresses meaning clearly</td>
<td>• Expresses meaning satisfactorily</td>
<td>• Expression of meaning is acceptable, although:</td>
<td>• Meaning often unclear</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Presentation</strong></td>
<td>• Very high standard of presentation</td>
<td>• Good standard of presentation</td>
<td>• Generally good standard of presentation</td>
<td>• Acceptable despite some weaknesses in presentation</td>
<td>• Poor presentation</td>
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- Grade Descriptors

- (+) A: Excellent, outstanding performance with full coverage of the topic
- (-) 3.7: Good to very good performance with good coverage of the topic
- (+) B: Satisfactory to reasonably good performance with reasonable coverage of the topic
- (-) 2.7: Pass: Barely satisfactory performance, with limited coverage
- (+) C: Selectively satisfactory performance, with limited coverage
- (-) 1.7: Fail: Unsatisfactory performance
- (+) D: Excellent, outstanding performance with full coverage of the topic
- (-) 1.0: Good to very good performance with good coverage of the topic
- (-) 0: Satisfactory to reasonably good performance with reasonable coverage of the topic
- (-) 39 and below: Pass: Barely satisfactory performance, with limited coverage

- Mark

- 70+: Grade A
- 60 - 69: Grade B
- 50 - 59: Grade C
- 40 - 49: Grade D
- 39 and below: Grade E

- Content

- Logic & Coherence

- Reading & Research

- Language

- Presentation