What do clothing, jewelry, and accessories really tell us about the modern individual, her origins and ambitions, her past struggles and social networks, her place in a world populated by so many other shoppers, critics and style icons? How does our understanding of fashion, taste, beauty and style evolve over time and shape the way we look at gender, sexuality, creativity, commerce and aging? This course explores the fashion world and its impact on the way we view ourselves and the world around us. Our survey will include fashion writings and aesthetic musings from Roland Barthes, Umberto Eco and Dubravka Ugresic; fairy tales and fashion fables; symbolist poetry by Charles Baudelaire and Barbie poems by Denise Duhamel; body modification tales by Junichiro Tanizaki and Yukio Mishima; films like Desperately Seeking Susan and Coco Before Chanel; episodes of America's Next Top Model & Project Runway; and iconic fashion collections, editorials, and media clips by Madonna, Lady GaGa, & Beyoncé.