Seminar Paper

A 10 page paper (excluding illustrations, citations, etc.) worth 25% of your grade is due at 12 noon on December 7, 2018. The topic must be a detailed – and specific -- examination of an example chosen from one of the two main topics in the semester, **Wedding Dress across Cultures** or **Pious Fashion across Cultures;** the seminar paper might continue the focus of Project #1 or #2 or examine a completely different time and place – excluding forms worn at traditional American weddings during the past 75 years in the United States. The paper must contain information about the clothing (broadly defined) forms worn, why a particular garment / accessory or set of garments is used, and the social context (of time, place, and culture) that impacts the clothing. The specific choice is left to you, but must be approved by Professor Owen in advance.

A successful paper will include perhaps a page introducing the topic and another page or two about the times in which the form occurred. It will also include two or three pages explaining the clothing forms worn, and a page or two about the reasons for adopting the particular "language of dress." Because successful papers must include the social context and an examination of the reasons for the garment(s) being worn, why choices are made will be as important as what the elements of costume include. Carefully chosen and actively used illustrations are important.

The paper topic (name and dates of subject; 3 item preliminary bibliography, and image) must be approved by the instructor on or before October 23, 2018. The paper is to be based on research as opposed to personal observation, although "A" papers must contain original thought. All papers must be properly formatted following the MLA style guidelines and be written in the objective third person. The ideal audience for the paper will be reasonably bright fellow students with little background in the history of clothes. For most papers, photocopied illustrations will be a necessary part of the final product (and do not count as part of the text requirement). It is my understanding that fair use means that photocopied and properly cited illustrations for classroom use are allowed under current copyright laws.

The Internet is a popular resource, but much of the material available about costume history is on pages that are not very accurate in part because they are maintained as a hobby. Avoid using sites that are not attributed to a reputable source, commercial sites (trying to sell you items), and secondary (or tertiary) sources. If you use the World Wide Web at all, look for sites provided by research libraries and museums and those which credit an author. Sites labeled "com" are rarely acceptable; those labeled "edu" or "gov" or "org" are generally more reliable. Databases and resources obtained via electronic means instead of via print are acceptable with the method for viewing the material cited, per MLA guidelines, for example print or web. See http://style.mla.org/.