

FASHION DESIGN AND MERCHANDISING

The Department of Fashion Design and Merchandising (FDM) provides a rigorous, interdisciplinary foundation that merges creative vision with advanced technology and global business strategy. Our curriculum is designed to prepare students for the complexities of the modern fashion industry by emphasizing sustainable practices, social responsibility, and data-driven decision-making.

Students in the department engage in a blend of theoretical analysis and hands-on application, developing the technical expertise and critical thinking skills necessary for careers in design, buying, trend forecasting, sourcing, and retail analytics. Our location in Minneapolis-St. Paul allows for deep integration with industry leaders, providing a bridge between classroom learning and professional practice through guest lectures, collaborative projects, and required internships.

A Future-Focused Curriculum

The department prioritizes innovation by integrating industry-standard technology. Students learn software platforms such as Browzwear, Microsoft Office, and Adobe Creative Suite. Recognizing the rapid evolution of the field, the curriculum also explores how to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) responsibly in trend forecasting, supply chain optimization, and sustainable production.

Beyond the studio, our students develop a global perspective through 10- to 21-day study abroad courses in Europe and Asia. These programs facilitate first-hand dialogue with international designers, wholesalers, and manufacturers, enabling students to examine global sustainability and market trends within diverse cultural contexts.

Fun Facts

- Students produce our popular annual Katwalk Fashion Show, an inclusive show that highlights student work.
- The department houses a historic dress collection of over 2,000 pieces, used as learning artifacts throughout the curriculum.

Majors

- Creative & Technical Fashion Design - BS (<https://catalog.stkate.edu/undergraduate/labl/fashion/fashion-design-ba-bs/>)
- Merchandising and Retail Analytics - BS (<https://catalog.stkate.edu/undergraduate/labl/fashion/fashion-merchandising-ba-bs/>)

Minor

- Sustainability Studies - Minor (<https://catalog.stkate.edu/undergraduate/labl/fashion/sustainability-minor/>)

APPD 2500 Fashion Illustration & Technical Design — 4 credits

A digital apparel design course focused on CAD drawing using industry-standard software, including Adobe Creative Suite and Procreate. Students develop technical flats with accurate proportion, scale, and construction callouts while creating fashion plates and focused apparel lines or collections for professional presentation and portfolio development. Offered in the College for Women.

Prerequisite: FASH 1000.

APPD 3050 Advanced Construction Methods — 4 credits

An advanced apparel construction course building on foundational sewing skills with emphasis on tailoring, precision fitting, formalwear techniques, and support structures such as boning and corsetry. Students refine technical decision-making while applying sustainable practices to complex garment construction. Offered in the College for Women.

Prerequisites: FASH 2100 or passing a sewing proficiency exam.

APPD 3150 Patternmaking — 4 credits

An introductory patternmaking course focused on flat pattern and drafting methods for apparel development. Students build skills in body measurement and fitting through garment analysis and pattern recreation. Team-based projects emphasize sustainable practices, culminating in the development of a mini-line apparel collection. Offered in the College for Women.

Prerequisites: FASH 2100.

APPD 3200 Computer Aided Design & Development — 4 credits

A digital technical design course focused on 2D (Adobe Suite) and 3D technologies used in the apparel industry. Students translate patternmaking and fit knowledge into digital formats while developing skills in digital pattern creation, 3D garment rendering, virtual evaluation, and informed decision-making for apparel development and production.

Prerequisites: APPD 2500 and APPD 3150.

APPD 3400 Draping and Creative Design — 4 credits

A creative design course focused on draping, fabric manipulation, and design-based fitting techniques. Students develop creative problem-solving skills while exploring form, silhouette, and fit through hands-on garment development. Introductory digital patternmaking is introduced alongside flat pattern methods, with projects emphasizing innovation, construction accuracy, and zero-waste sustainable design concepts. Offered in the College for Women.

Prerequisites: FASH 2100 or sewing proficiency exam.

APPD 3994 Topics — 4 credits

The subject matter of the course is announced in the annual schedule of classes. Content varies from year to year but does not duplicate existing courses.

APPD 4400 Collection Development — 4 credits

An advanced collection development course focused on complex and non-traditional patternmaking across apparel categories. Students apply sustainable design thinking through a zero-waste garment project while beginning capstone collection development. Each student is paired with an industry mentor and conducts target market, trend forecasting, and comparative market research.

Prerequisites: APPD 3050 and APPD 3150.

APPD 4602 Internship — 2 credits

Structured out-of-class learning experience that takes place on or off campus and includes a substantial work component. An internship involves the student in a particular profession in an exploratory way to test career interests and potential. To initiate an internship experience, the student must meet with the internship coordinator in the Career Development Office.

Prerequisites: Faculty sponsorship and approval by department chair.

APPD 4604 Internship — 4 credits

Structured out-of-class learning experience that takes place on or off campus and includes a substantial work component. An internship involves you in a particular profession in an exploratory way to test career interests and potential. To initiate an internship experience, meet with the internship coordinator in the Career Development Office. A semester long classroom component is part of this course and focuses on furthering the professional development of students in the retail major program, particularly with respect to career development in retail merchandising in preparation for future work experiences and employment through resume & cover letter writing, development of interviewing and presentation skills, job search strategies, professional writing, discussion of current key topics within the industry and a variety of other professional experiences.

Prerequisites: Faculty sponsorship and approval by department chair.

APPD 4684 Directed Study — 4 credits**APPD 4800 Capstone Collection — 4 credits**

An advanced capstone design course focused on creating a cohesive, market-ready fashion collection. Students develop original designs informed by target market analysis, trend research, and brand positioning. The course emphasizes collection coherence, professional presentation, and portfolio development, culminating in portfolio review.

Prerequisites: APPD 3050, APPD 4400.

APPD 4954 Independent Study — 4 credits

Independent study offers students the opportunity for specialized research not covered in a course offering, by the action project or thesis. Students work with a faculty advisor to develop a learning contract, which specifies the content and objectives of the study as well as the requirements and procedures for evaluation. The amount of credit earned for the study also is included in the learning contract.

Prerequisites: Permission of the faculty and department chair or program director.

APPD 4994 Topics — 4 credits

The subject matter of the course is announced in the annual schedule of classes. Content varies from year to year but does not duplicate existing courses.

FASH 1000 Introduction to the Fashion Industry — 2 credits

Curious how creativity, commerce, culture, and branding come together in fashion? This foundational course introduces the fashion and retail industry through an integrated exploration of creative, technical, and business practices. Students examine elements and principles of design; trend forecasting; and visual research, with particular attention to how sensory, expressive, and symbolic design choices build brand identity across fashion products and promotional environments. Emphasis is placed on professional communication, branding strategy, and portfolio development, with career exploration supported through hands-on projects and industry site visits. Offered in the College for Women.

FASH 2050 Textiles with Lab — 4 credits

A foundational textile science course examining fibers, yarns, fabric construction, coloration, and finishes. Emphasizes quality, performance, sustainability, and end-use applications of textile products. Through hands-on lab work, students develop essential knowledge supporting careers across the apparel, fashion, and textile industries. Offered in the College for Women.

Prerequisites: Sophomore standing & completion of CHEM 1010.

FASH 2100 Apparel Construction and Analysis — 4 credits

A foundational course introducing apparel construction techniques, fabric selection, and decision-making for specific end uses. Students learn basic measuring, fitting, support structures, and industry style terminology while analyzing ready-to-wear garments to evaluate construction methods, quality, and sustainability. Offered in the College for Women.

FASH 2150W Sociocultural Aspects of Dress — 4 credits

A course examining the social, psychological, cultural, and aesthetic aspects of dress in a global and multicultural context. Students explore how clothing communicates identity, values, and social meaning while strengthening critical thinking and professional communication skills in a Writing Intensive format. Offered in the College for Women. Also offered as CRST 2151W.

FASH 2684 Directed Study — 4 credits**FASH 3000 History of Dress — 4 credits**

A study of dress from ancient times to the present, examining how political, economic, and social forces shape clothing across history. Students engage in hands-on, project-based learning using the university's Historic Dress Collection of over 2,000 garments, developing skills in visual analysis, research, and material culture. Offered in the College for Women.

FASH 3150 Consumer Behavior & Trend Forecasting — 4 credits

This course connects consumer behavior and trend forecasting within the fashion and retail industry. Students examine how social, cultural, and economic factors influence consumer preferences and purchasing decisions, and how these insights inform trend analysis, product adoption, brand strategy, and the creation and presentation of data-informed fashion forecasts. Industry forecasting tools such as WGSN are used to analyze consumer data and emerging trends. Offered in the College for Women.

Prerequisite: FASH 1000.

FASH 3994 Topics — 4 credits

The subject matter of the course is announced in the annual schedule of classes. Content varies from year to year but does not duplicate existing courses. Offered in the College for Women.

FASH 4571 Career Preparation for the Fashion Industry — 1 credit

This course equips fashion design and merchandising students with the professional skills needed to succeed in internships and entry-level positions across the fashion and retail industry. The course focuses on career readiness through the development of industry-standard résumés, cover letters, portfolios, and professional communication. Students strengthen interviewing, presentation, networking, and job search skills while exploring current trends, career pathways, and workplace expectations within fashion design, merchandising, buying, planning, visual merchandising, and related roles. Emphasis is placed on professional branding, industry etiquette, and experiential learning to support long-term career success. Offered in the College for Women.

Prerequisite: Junior or senior standing in a fashion major.

FASH 4601 Internship – 1 credit**FASH 4602 Fashion Internship and Leadership – 2 credits**

Fashion merchandising and apparel design students registered for a 2 credit internship complete a structured out-of-class learning experience that takes place on- or off-campus and includes a substantial work component. An internship involves students in a particular profession in an exploratory way to test career and potential. To initiate an internship experience, meet with the internship coordinator in the Career Development Office.

Prerequisites: Faculty sponsorship and approval by department chair.

FASH 4603 Fashion Internship and Leadership – 3 credits

Structured out-of-class learning experience that takes place on- or off-campus and includes a substantial work component. An internship involves students in a particular profession in an exploratory way to test careers and potential. To initiate an internship experience, meet with the internship coordinator in the Career Development Office. In addition, fashion merchandising students must register for a 1-credit semester long classroom component as part of this course that focuses on furthering the professional development of students in the retail major program, particularly with respect to career development in retail merchandising in preparation for future work experiences and employment through resume and cover letter writing, development of interviewing and presentation skills, job search strategies, professional writing, discussion of current key topics within the industry and a variety of other professional experiences. The 1-credit internship practicum is offered spring semester. The 3-credit internship is offered fall, spring and summer. Offered in the College for Women.

FASH 4604 Fashion Internship and Leadership – 4 credits

Fashion merchandising and apparel design students registered for a 4 credit internship complete a structured out-of-class learning experience that takes place on- or off-campus and includes a substantial work component. An internship involves students in a particular profession in an exploratory way to test careers and potential. To initiate an internship experience, meet with the internship coordinator in the Career Development Office. A semester long classroom component is part of this course and focuses on furthering the professional development of students in the retail major program, particularly with respect to career development in retail merchandising in preparation for future work experiences and employment through resume and cover letter writing, development of interviewing and presentation skills, job search strategies, professional writing, discussion of current key topics within the industry and a variety of other professional experiences.

Prerequisites: Faculty sponsorship and approval by department chair.

FASH 4682 Directed Study – 2 credits**FASH 4683 Directed Study – 3 credits**

Directed study is provided for students whose unusual circumstances prohibit taking a regularly scheduled course but who need the material of that course to satisfy a requirement. Availability of this faculty-directed learning experience depends on faculty time and may be limited in any given term and restricted to certain courses.

Prerequisites: Faculty, department chair and dean approval.

FASH 4684 Directed Study – 4 credits

Directed study is provided for students whose unusual circumstances prohibit taking a regularly scheduled course but who need the material of that course to satisfy a requirement. Availability of this faculty-directed learning experience depends on faculty time and may be limited in any given term and restricted to certain courses.

Prerequisites: Faculty, department chair and dean approval.

FASH 4800 Fashion Portfolio – 0 credits

Fashion Portfolio is a capstone experience in which fashion design and fashion merchandising students create a refined professional portfolio that highlights their creative vision, technical skills, and industry readiness. Students curate and present work from across the fashion curriculum, integrating design projects, merchandising concepts, and experiential learning to support career goals in the global fashion industry.

Prerequisite: Senior standing in a fashion major.

FASH 4952 Independent Study 2 – 2 credits

Independent study offers students the opportunity for specialized research not covered in a course offering, by the action project or thesis. Students work with a faculty advisor to develop a learning contract, which specifies the content and objectives of the study as well as the requirements and procedures for evaluation. The amount of credit earned for the study also is included in the learning contract.

Prerequisites: Permission of the faculty and department chair or program director.

FASH 4954 Independent Study 2 – 4 credits

Independent study offers students the opportunity for specialized research not covered in a course offering, by the action project or thesis. Students work with a faculty advisor to develop a learning contract, which specifies the content and objectives of the study as well as the requirements and procedures for evaluation. The amount of credit earned for the study also is included in the learning contract.

Prerequisites: Permission of the faculty and department chair or program director.

MRCH 3100 Global Sourcing and Supply Chain Management – 4 credits

A course focused on global sourcing and supply chain management in today's agile industry. Students examine global trade factors, tariffs, and duties while analyzing sourcing, planning, buying, logistics, data-driven decision making, and profitability. Case studies and simulations explore sustainability, corporate responsibility, and how global supply chains operate. Offered in the College for Women.

Prerequisites: Sophomore or Junior standing.

MRCH 3200 Apparel Specifications for Product Development and Manufacturing – 4 credits

A product development course focused on apparel manufacturing, quality assurance, and industry standards. Students create technical packages, develop garment specifications, and analyze manufacturing processes and efficiency. Emphasizes sustainability through team-based projects centered on responsible sourcing, production, and the development of sustainable apparel collections. Offered in the College for Women.

Prerequisites: FASH 2100, FASH 2500, & FASH 3100.

MRCH 3300 Omnichannel Retail – 4 credits

A course examining omnichannel retail in the digital age, with emphasis on e-commerce and customer-centered retail strategy. Students analyze how digital platforms, mobile technology, social media, and physical stores integrate to shape the customer journey. Focuses on evaluating and applying omnichannel retail strategies across today's evolving retail environment. Offered in the College for Women.

Prerequisites: MKTG 2302 or BUSI 2012, and Junior or Senior standing.

MRCH 3450 Visual Merchandising — 4 credits

This course explores the strategic application of design principles to the presentation of merchandise across physical retail, digital, and omnichannel environments. Students examine how visual merchandising influences consumer behavior, brand identity, and purchasing decisions through the use of window displays, in-store presentations, and virtual retail experiences. The course emphasizes retail space planning, planograms, store layout, and traffic flow, along with best practices for visual storytelling and product presentation. Students develop merchandising plans and execute displays using current industry techniques, retail standards, and sustainable visual merchandising strategies applicable to careers in visual merchandising, retail styling, store planning, and brand presentation.

Prerequisite: FASH 1000, FASH 2150W, FASH 3150, and junior standing.

MRCH 3994 Topics — 4 credits

The subject matter of the course is announced in the annual schedule of classes. Content varies from year to year but does not duplicate existing courses.

MRCH 4400 Sustainable Product Development — 4 credits

Sustainable Product Development is an application of design and merchandising perspectives to product development cycle from concept to production handoff for diverse target markets keeping sustainability at the forefront of design thinking. The course is designed to simulate real-life scenarios with a cross-functional team environment and industry partnership and guidance.

Prerequisite: INDI 2222 or Junior or Senior standing in a fashion major.

MRCH 4684 Directed Study — 4 credits

Directed study is provided for students whose unusual circumstances prohibit taking a regularly scheduled course but who need the material of that course to satisfy a requirement. Availability of this faculty-directed learning experience depends on faculty time and may be limited in any given term and restricted to certain courses.

Prerequisites: Faculty, department chair and dean approval.

MRCH 4850 Retail Planning & Allocation — 4 credits

This course introduces students to the core principles of retail buying, merchandise planning, and inventory management within the fashion and retail industry. Students develop analytical and decision-making skills related to assortment planning, demand forecasting, sales analysis, pricing strategy, and inventory allocation. Using retail-focused analytics and spreadsheet-based tools, students apply merchandising math to real-world scenarios involving budgeting, sales performance, stock optimization, and profitability. Emphasis is placed on data-driven retail strategies that support careers in fashion merchandising, retail buying, planning, and allocation. Offered in the College for Women.

Prerequisite: BUSI 2012 and sophomore standing.

MRCH 4953 Independent Study — 3 credits

Independent study offers students the opportunity for specialized research not covered in a course offering, by the action project or thesis. Students work with a faculty advisor to develop a learning contract, which specifies the content and objectives of the study as well as the requirements and procedures for evaluation. The amount of credit earned for the study also is included in the learning contract.

Prerequisites: Permission of the faculty and department chair or program director.

MRCH 4954 Independent Study — 4 credits

Independent study offers students the opportunity for specialized research not covered in a course offering, by the action project or thesis. Students work with a faculty advisor to develop a learning contract, which specifies the content and objectives of the study as well as the requirements and procedures for evaluation. The amount of credit earned for the study also is included in the learning contract.

Prerequisites: Permission of the faculty and department chair or program director.

MRCH 4994 Topics — 4 credits

The subject matter of the course is announced in the annual schedule of classes. Content varies from year to year but does not duplicate existing courses.