Steppin' Out With My Baby:
All About Shoes, Fabulous Shoes!

Course Syllabus
Lifelong Learning Collaborative
Fall 2026

Coordinators
Kip Brott
Celene Healy
Laura Tucker

Steppin' Out With My Baby: All About Shoes, Fabulous Shoes!

Time: Tuesdays, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Dates: September 15 – November 3
8 Weeks

Course Description

From the ornate silk slippers of royal courts to the daring stilettos of the red carpet, shoes have always been more than mere protection for our feet. They reveal social status, express identity, signal rebellion, and inspire desire. This image-rich course traces the cultural history of stylish footwear across the centuries, exploring shoes as icons of fashion and self-expression in art, music, film, and even breathtaking museum exhibitions. Along the way, we'll ask a deceptively simple question: Why have shoes held such fascination and influence throughout history? We'll see that across every era and culture, shoes have danced, dazzled, and occasionally stolen the show!

We'll next look at legendary designers who transformed shoes into objects of irresistible beauty in the world of fashion, including Salvatore Ferragamo, Stuart Weitzman, Manolo Blahnik, and Christian Louboutin. We'll also examine famous shoe collections, the stylish -- & surprising -- history of men's shoes, and Western veneration of the petite female foot vs. the tradition of foot binding and the popularity of the lotus shoe in China for nearly a thousand years.. The course will conclude with a fashion-forward look at the future of footwear.

Join us for this unforgettable shoe extravaganza! As show biz legend Bette Midler once said, ***"Give a girl the right shoes and she can conquer the world."***

Format

Class members will give a presentation on a topic selected from a prepared list. The course will also include a screening of the rousing documentary film *God Save My Shoes.*

Resources/Expenses

Online readings and videos will be assigned. No additional expenses.

Coordinators

Kip Brott earned his BA and MA degrees in art history from UCLA, and he's taught a number of popular fashion courses at LLC previously. Kip has also led several fashion-themed reading groups at the Athenaeum Library here in Providence and he's been a regular guest lecturer at Hamilton House.

Celene Healy is a retired English teacher who has been a member of LLC for over 14 years. She's coordinated many LLC courses, including short stories, museums of the world, and places to see and visit in Rhode Island.

Laura Tucker is a retired high tech corporate librarian and business continuity manager. She's been an LLC member for 12 years, taking mostly theatre and film courses. She's the Performing Arts liaison on the LLC Curriculum Committee and a member of the LLC Tech Committee.

Steppin' Out with My Baby: All About Shoes, Fabulous Shoes!
Weekly Schedule of Presentations
Fall 2026

Week	*Date*	*Session A*	*Session B*
1	*September 15*	*Introduction to the Course* *Why Shoes Matter* *Course Syllabus, Technical Assistance, & Upcoming Class Presentations*	*Walk This Way:* *A Brief But Captivating History of Shoes* *Presented by Kip Brott*
2	*September 22*	*From the Canvas:* *Shoes in the History of Art* *Presented by Mandy Katz*	*Cinematic Footwear::* *Shoes Go to the Movies:* *Presented by Lisa Miles*
3	*September 29*	*The World of Music:* *Stay Offa My Blue Suede Shoes!* *Presented by Susan Baugh*	*Shoes On Display:* *Unforgettable Museum Exhibitions* *Presented by Mary Welch*
4	*October 6*	*By Design:* *Salvatore Ferragamo* *Presented by Mary Ellen O'Sullivan & Edie Weinstein*	*By Design:* *Stuart Weitzman &* *the Weitzman Shoe Collection at the New York Historical Society* *Presented by Roz Kurzer*
5	*October 13*	*By Design:* *Manolo Blahnik* *Presented by De Feldman*	*By Design:* *Christian Louboutin* *Presented by Gloria DePaola*

6	*October 20*	*Magnificent Obsession:* *Famous Shoe Collections* *Presented by Shari Levine & Karen Borger*	*Documentary Film Day* *God Save My Shoes* *(We'll watch the movie at home with a Class Discussion led by Celene Healy in this slot)*
7	*October 27*	*The Petite Female Foot in East & West:* *Chinese Foot Binding & the Lotus Shoe vs Cinderella's Glass Slipper* *Presented by TBA*	*From Kings to Rock Stars:* *The Stylish -- & Surprising --* *History of Men's Shoes* *Presented by Pat Moriarty & Rosemary Lowenstein*
8	*November 3*	*The Future of Fabulous:* *Innovation, Sustainability, &* *the Next Great Shoe* *Presented by Susan Baugh*	*A Shoe Fashion Show: BYOS* *(Bring Your Own Shoes!)* *Wrap-Up Discussion* *Closing Remarks*

Weekly Reading & Video Assignments
Steppin' Out With My Baby: All About Shoes, Fabulous Shoes!
Fall 2026

Week 1 – September 15

Session A
Introduction to the Course -- Welcome!
Why Shoes Matter
Course Syllabus, Technical Assistance, & Upcoming Class Presentations

Reading Assignment
Why Shoes Matter to An Outfit
https://fashionweekonline.com/why-shoes-matter-to-an-outfit

Video
Why Women Love Shoes
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3Q18BfdUfI

Session B
Walk This Way: A Brief But Captivating History of Shoes
Presented by Kip Brott

Reading Assignment
A History of Shoes from the Victoria & Albert Museum Website
https://www.vam.ac.uk/shoestimeline/?srsltid=AfmBOor-McCL0gUG4D3MrOzwJh-lXs8wp8dDu6Tb3DWq6DFxeU05GGR7

Video

Brief History of Shoes: From 40,000 BCE to Today

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gojm5R10vyw

Week 2 – September 22

Session A

From the Canvas: Shoes in the History of Art

Presented by Mandy Katz

Reading Assignment

Ghost in the Shoe: Footwear in Art History

https://davidtitterington.medium.com/ghost-in-the-shoe-footwear-in-art-history-fc6af48c6d8f

Video

The Most Famous Shoes in Art History

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cOjyf5QU4vc

Session B

Cinematic Footwear: Shoes Go to the Movies

Presented by Lisa Miles

Reading Assignment

The Most Iconic Shoe Moments in Film

https://www.harpersbazaar. com/culture/film-tv/g4070/iconic-shoes-in-film/

Video

Shoes In Films: Why Do Characters Wear Them?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Up4-oVJuTNk

Week 3 – September 29

Session A
The World of Music: Stay Offa My Blue Suede Shoes!
Presented by Susan Baugh

Reading Assignment
84 Songs About Shoes, High Heels, & Boots
https://discover.hubpages.com/entertainment/Songs-About-Shoes-High-Heels-and-Boots

Video
Boogie Shoes by KC & Sunshine Band
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1AzQQrZfmc&list=RDj1AzQQrZfmc&start_radio=1

Paul Simon - Diamonds On The Soles Of Her Shoes (from The African Concert, 1987)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fmf9ZJ_Yn0A&list=RDFmf9ZJ_Yn0A&start_radio=1

Session B
Shoes On Display: Unforgettable Museum Exhibitions
Presented by Mary Welch

Reading Assignments
Fabulous Footwear: A Walk Through Fashion and Culture
https://www.si.edu/spotlight/shoes?page=2

Shoephoria! The History of Footwear – In Pictures
https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/gallery/2021/may/14/shoephoria-the-history-footwear-in-pictures

Video
2000 Years of Shoe History
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1dXgaRF8Kag

Week 4 – October 6

Session A
By Design: Salvatore Ferragamo
Presented by Edie Weinstein & Mary Ellen O'Sullivan

Reading Assignment
Salvatore Ferragamo: The Shoemaker to the Stars
https://cabanamagazine.com/blogs/masters-muses/inspired-by-salvatore-ferragamo?srsltid=AfmBOorZ3WUnK5HViyDImxRa7CJYGpt_Bntdgt0WnEeW3KKVV-24toRp

Video
The Forgotten Empire Of Ferragamo
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAj03mj41kI

Session B

By Design: Stuart Weitzman &the Weitzman Shoe Collection at the New York Historical Society

Presented by Roz Kurzer

Reading Assignment

Stuart Weitzman: Sole Purpose

https://www.mixtemagazine.ca/en/m22-en/stuart-weitzman-sole-purpose/

Walk This Way: Footwear from the Stuart Weitzman Collection of Historic Shoes

https://www.nyhistory.org/exhibitions/walk-way-footwear-stuart-weitzman-collection-historic-shoes

Video

Stuart Weitzman: What Women Want

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=weZU_vqV7z0

Week 5 – October 13

Session A

By Design: Manolo Blahnik

Presented by De Feldman

Reading Assignment

Head Over Heels: The Timeless Appeal of Manolo Blahnik

https://10magazine.com/manolo-blahnik-interview-10-magazine-issue-69/

Video

Manolo Blahnik for Vogue

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVNEuTk9Ga8

Session B

By Design: Christian Louboutin

Presented by Gloria DePaola

Reading Assignment

Is Gen Z Bringing Back Louboutins?

https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/29/style/louboutins-christian-louboutin-stilettos.html

Video

Why Louboutin Shoes Are So Expensive

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lZPUK1GdoTY

Week 6 – October 20

Session A
Magnificent Obsession: Famous Shoe Collections
Presented by Shari Levine & Karen Borger

Reading Assignment
19 Celebrities Whose Shoe Collections Are Completely Out of Control
https://www.ranker.com/list/celebrity-shoe-collections/nathandavidson

Video
My Shoe Closet Tour! by Amber Scholl, Blogger/Actress
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HvKDqCJ24xA

Session B

Movie Day: God Save My Shoes (2011)
A documentary film that examines the intense, often obsessive, psychological and sociological relationship between women and their footwear through interviews with designers, celebrities, and fashion historians We'll watch at home with a discussion in class led by Celene Healy.
Stream for free on Pluto:
https://pluto.tv/us/on-demand/movies/56e0b76c0e3d19cb31909157?utm_medium=textsearch&utm_source=google

Video
Official Trailer: God Save My Shoes
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=toPzV_iZQRk

Week 7 – October 27

Session A
The Petite Female Foot in East & West:
Chinese Foot Binding & the Lotus Shoe vs Cinderella's Glass Slipper
Presented by TBA

Reading Assignment
Her Half of History: Chinese Foot Binding
https://herhalfofhistory.com/2024/08/15/13-4-chinese-footbinding/

Famous Women With Small Feet
https://www.piccolashoes.com/blogs/petite-fashion-news/famous-women-with-small-feet

Videos
The Controversial History of Foot Binding in China
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GWW8yN7rTIg

Cinderella Tries on the Glass Slipper
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BEcfp9r1tU

Session B
From Kings to Rock Stars:
The Stylish -- & Surprising -- History of Men's Shoes
Presented by Pat Moriarty & Rosemary Lowenstein

Reading Assignment
Best Foot Forward: The Most Iconic Men's Shoes Ever Made
https://www.apetogentleman.com/best-mens-shoes-all-time/

Video
What Do Your Shoes Say About You? / British GQ
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rDBPgq8jpaM

Week 8 – November 3

Session A
The Future of Fabulous: Innovation, Sustainability, & the Next Great Shoe
Presented by Susan Baugh

Reading Assignment
AI Predicts: What Will Footwear Look Like in 100 Years?
https://www.kurufootwear.com/blogs/articles/ai-visualizes-shoes-of-the-future?srsltid=AfmBOorpJh3K5YgisDvaPlhO4NtKogTIsSn0YltcYJ0stqFCOsNNYzkJ#:~:text=Overall:%20%20The%20shoes'%20insoles%20appear%20particularly,hues%20seem%20to%20be%20a%20common%20theme.*

Video
Women's Shoe Evolution: 1300 - 3000
https://www.youtube.com/shorts/HGa7gsU2U-Q

Session B
Shoe Extravaganza: BYOS (Bring Your Own Shoes!)
Wrap-Up Discussion
Closing Remarks

Guidelines for Presentations

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Please Note: Need technical assistance with your presentation? Contact our resident "Tech Guru" Laura Tucker in-person (in the classroom) or by email at laura.tucker29@gmail.com

Format & Content

Following our historical timeline, ***each week two participants will give a presentation and lead a discussion for the group, one participant in Session A and the other in Session B in our 8-week course.***

A. ***Participants will select the topic of their presentations in advance on a first-come, first-served basis from a list prepared by the coordinators.*** *We will need a total of 12 presenters, so it will be important that most everyone sign up to present depending on our total enrollment. If you wish, you may double up with a partner so long as all sessions are covered.*

B. ***There are many different formats you may use for your presentation****, including Power Point, Google Slides, videos, film clips, flip charts, and handouts. But no matter what format you use, remember that shoes are "wearable art"* ***so be sure to include plenty of pictures in your presentation for maximum visual impact****. If you have shoes that are relevant to your topic, bring them along to show the class! Want to dress up like your favorite high-heeled screen goddess, celebrity, or movie character?* ***Do it!***

C. Many of our topics are historical by definition. *Is there an important timeline of events you wish to cover that will make your presentation more meaningful? If so, focus on chronology as appropriate.*

D. ***To complement the weekly presentations, the coordinators will assign reading material and videos of reasonable length that are to be reviewed in advance of each class; these can also be used in your presentation if you wish.*** *You may also wish to suggest an article, video, or some discussion questions to the class ahead of time when you present. If so, you can send out this information yourself, or you can send it to Laura & she will forward it to the class. Please try to get this information to your classmates as early as possible (e.g., at least one week ahead).*

E. Ideally ***your presentation should be approximately 30 minutes long with an additional 15 minutes for a discussion*** *led by you afterward, with assistance from the coordinators as needed.*

Research

A few suggestions for conducting research on your topic:

A. ***The Internet has a wealth of information*** *on the various topics we'll be considering. Just enter a search request – for example, "Mariah Carey's shoe collection." You may be surprised how much material comes up for your review (e.g., articles, videos, film clips, etc.).*

B. ***Books and magazines are another great source of information*** *(from the local library -- or try Amazon, Abe, E-Bay, etc. if you care to purchase at nominal cost).*

C. ***The coordinators will provide a selected bibliography*** *useful for preparing presentations or for optional further study.*

D. ***Prior discussion of presentation with coordinators (especially Laura!):*** *The coordinators welcome the opportunity to meet with you before your presentation to discuss your topic and strategize on how to present it. Meetings can be scheduled in person or by phone or email.*

Additional Tips

A. We'll be studying a very exciting topic – ***fabulous shoes!*** *-- so your audience will be geared up in advance to learn.* ***Relax and enjoy putting your presentation together for them!***

B. ***Get organized!*** *Your fellow classmates will get the most from your presentation if it is presented systematically. Make an outline – what do you want to say and when do you want to say it? For example, you could start with an introduction that grabs their attention, continue with an illustrated discussion of your topic step-by-step, and end your remarks with a pithy conclusion that stimulates them to learn even more.*

C. ***Please don't read your entire presentation.*** *It's fine to work from notes but be sufficiently familiar with your material that you can speak to your classmates naturally. Eye contact is important too!*

D. ***Rehearse your presentation in advance****. Make sure you can move through your content easily within the allotted time. You might want to get feedback by presenting to a fellow classmate, friend, or family member. Listen to their suggestions and revise your slides/remarks to improve your impact on your audience.*

E. ***Check and recheck the technology you are using as part of your presentation.*** *Verify tech compatibility in the classroom the week before your presentation with one of the coordinators, especially Laura, (this will just take a few minutes). Various software programs can be used (PowerPoint, Google Slides, Apple Keynote, etc.) for your presentation.* ***Laura can provide further details on this.***

F. ***For additional excellent suggestions*** *please consult LLC's Collaborative Learning Guidelines, especially pages 16-24. The link on LLC's website is: https://www.lifelonglearningcollaborative.org/wp-content/uploads/Guidelines.pdf*

Selected Bibliography for Further Reading

★ = *Core Selection -- Recommended starting point*

Shoes in History & Culture

★ *Giorgio Riello. Shoes: A History from Sandals to Sneakers. Bloomsbury, 2006*

Elizabeth Semmelhack. Heights of Fashion: A History of the Elevated Shoe. Yale University Press / Bata Shoe Museum, 2014

June Swann. Shoes. B.T. Batsford, 1984

Shoes, Identity & Social Meaning

★ *Elizabeth Semmelhack (ed.). Shoes: Anatomy, Identity, Power. Rizzoli, 2020*

Rebecca Shawcross & Marie McLoughlin (eds.). Footnotes: On Shoes. Bloomsbury, 2020

Designers & Iconic Shoemakers

★ *Darla-Jane Gilroy. Ferragamo's Shoes. Rizzoli, 2018.*

Claire Wilcox & Nicholas Foulkes. Manolo Blahnik. Thames & Hudson, 2003

★ *Christian Louboutin. Christian Louboutin. Rizzoli, 2011*

Marie-José Niel. Roger Vivier. Rizzoli, 201.

Shoes in Film, Fashion & Popular Culture

★ *Linda O'Keeffe. Shoes: A Celebration of Pumps, Sandals, Slippers & More. Workman, 1996*

Colleen Hill. Shoes: The Meaning of Style. Yale University Press / FIT Museum, 2023

Men's Footwear & Masculinity

★ *Hardy Amies. The Englishman's Suit: English Dress from the Flannel Suit to the Conspicuous Consumption. Quartet Books, 1994*

Colin McDowell. The Man of Fashion: Peacock Males and Perfect Gentlemen. Thames & Hudson, 1997

Extreme Traditions & Cultural Practices

★ *Dorothy Ko. Cinderella's Sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding. University of California Press, 2005*

Beverly Jackson. Splendid Slippers: A Thousand Years of an Erotic Tradition. Ten Speed Press, 1997

Museums, Collections & Exhibitions

★ *Elizabeth Semmelhack. Bata Shoe Museum: Selected Highlights. Bata Shoe Museum, 2015*

Valerie Steele (ed.). Shoes. Rizzoli, 1999

The Future of Footwear

★ *Aurore Bardey et al. Futurewear: Sustainable & Innovative Materials. Thames & Hudson, 2021*