

Fashioning the Body in Space



Clothing in outer space is usually depicted in popular culture as either a spacesuit (or some variation on that theme) or designs reminiscent of current styles. Is it really believable to think that if we were living on another planet, we would have access to the same materials we wear today? Fields of cotton? A DuPont plant manufacturing polyester? Would we have traveled to space with a lifetime's worth of clothing?

Life in outer space will be radically different from life on earth. We will have very different needs if we live on Mars, the Moon, or another planet in a galaxy far, far away. We will have incredibly different lifestyles living on other planets. What we wear will need to adapt to these new environments. This is not a class about spacesuit design, but rather about what we clothe ourselves in once we inhabit a new planet, and the challenges that that new environment and way of life presents.

In this collaborative studio, we will use speculative design as a framework for the semester. Working in small groups, students will “invent” a planet in outer space, and conditions for life on that planet. Those conditions will provide the design constraints for the semester. We will explore new materials, soft circuits and electronic textiles, ways of construction, and garment design. We will think about the role of the body in outer space, adaptations that will need to be made, and the new environment it is in.