

### PART 3: ADVANCED DRAPING

#### Introduction

Part 3 covers more advanced draping and the main goal of these sections is to enable students to learn the technical skills that will allow them to sculpt clothes with more complex seaming and shaping.

Section 3.1: *Coats and Jackets* focuses on fine tuning subtleties in shape and form, while in section 3.2: *The Grand Gown* students will develop their skills of visualization, learning to hold the image of a finished garment in mind while working with large and complicated pieces. Section 3.3: *Draping on the Bias* explores the benefits and drawbacks of bias draping and construction and the final section, 3.4: *Improvisational Draping*, encourages students to work more freely and intuitively.

In all these sections students will learn to consider how the energetic flow of a garment is influenced by grainline placement and how emphasizing focal points or details can sharpen the intended attitude of a garment. Incorporating these abstract elements brings a student closer to the goal of being able to create a signature look.

#### 3.1: Coats and Jackets

*Objectives:* The main aim in this section is to teach students to become more adept at draping away from the mannequin to create a shape. The section also helps them to understand in greater detail how shoulder fit and sleeve shape function, and how to work with various types of collars.

#### General Guidance:

- Many students may have had little or no experience of wearing a very high quality tailored coat or jacket, as these are often well above their budget. Either bring in examples of high quality jackets, or have the students try some on at an establishment that carries couture jackets. Point out how the height of the armhole, or the cut of the sleeve, affect movement and comfort.

- It is important that students understand the ergonomic qualities of the two-piece sleeve. The seams allow for more room at the outside of the elbow, and for fullness to be trimmed away at the inside. Shaping a well-fitted two-piece sleeve is not terribly difficult. The challenge is to see when a sleeve is too wide for the jacket, or too straight for the fit of a coat.

- When working with lapels and notched collars, the student should understand the subtle adjustments that need to be made to the collar as the break point and roll line change.

#### Student Pitfalls:

- Students often tend to drape too closely on the mannequin, whereas with coats and jackets the shape needs to fall freely and independently off the form – the way a jacket or coat naturally would. Discuss with your students the amount of ease needed when making a garment intended to be worn over sweaters, shirts, or trousers.

- When draping the collars of coats or jackets, it is important that the shoulder seam first be finalized and firmly pinned. Students will often allow the part of the shoulder seam closest to the neck to remain unresolved, or too loosely fitted. This will later affect the way the collar works. Remind them that this area of the shoulder seam in particular affects the balance of the coat or jacket.

- Students often match up their two-piece sleeve seams with the seams on the panelled jackets. This usually creates too much bulk in the armhole, and should be done only with very lightweight fabrics.

#### Teaching Hints:

- With advanced draping, students must look more carefully at their drapes, as a general fit is not good enough. Suggest that they study their drapes in front of a mirror, or from a distance, and take time to really see the contours of their shapes. See page 214 for an example of the subtle but important difference a slightly closer fit makes in the back panel seam.

- As with blouses, coats and jackets often have many proportions to coordinate. It helps to finalize one or more of the elements, such as an important pocket or the width of a belt, early on. This finalization of one element will make it easier for the student to decide the rest of the proportions in relation to it.
- When students drape a wider lapel, as on page 225, remind them to start their centre front line into the width of the fabric to accommodate the fold-back.
- On the swing coat with shawl collar (pages 246-247), students should understand the importance of clipping into the shoulder at just the right point to create the shawl collar, otherwise they may end up having to clip and repair that area multiple times before getting it just right.

### Exercises/projects:

An additional project for this section is available in the Tutor's Resource Guide.

### Video:

29. The Two-Piece Sleeve

### Key Terms:

Break point: The point at which the topmost closure causes the lapel to fold back.

Notched collar: A collar that is set onto a fold back lapel.

Raglan sleeve: A sleeve that extends at a diagonal to the neckline.

Roll line: The line on a coat or jacket indicating the fold of the lapel from the roll and stand of a collar to the first button.

Two-piece sleeve: A standard sleeve seamed in two places for more precise fit, usually labeled 'top' sleeve and 'under' sleeve.

### **3.2: The Grand Gown**

Objectives: The main aim of this section is to study the process of creating the 'Grand Gown,' from the foundation and petticoat understructure to draping the gown itself.

### General Guidance:

- The creation of a grand gown can be a daunting challenge and the exercises and examples in this section make the process understandable by breaking it down into easily accomplished steps: supporting the skirt, corsets, and petticoats.
  - Following the steps in the section project, the Gwyneth Paltrow Oscar gown, gives students the chance to become more adept at handling large sections of fabric.
  - It is important for students to maintain a vision of the final dress while working, as it is easy to become lost in the details of the design (or in the large pieces of fabric). It is, therefore, helpful to keep the sketch or photograph of the finished gown nearby to refer to.
- ### Student Pitfalls:
- The idea that the foundation supports the weight of the gown from the ribbon at the waist is often hard for students to grasp. It is counterintuitive that the gown appears to be held up by the bustline. Until the gown is fitted on a live model, it is difficult to appreciate how important the waist ribbon is. Even standard size models have varying measurements from bust to waist, and the ribbon will make it possible to set the waist properly. Make sure that your students do not omit this step.
  - When working with large sections of fabric, it can be disheartening to set a piece and then realize later that the grainline is tilted off, and that many pins have to be removed. It is better for students to set all the pieces initially, check that the grainlines are all balanced, and then go back in and fine tune the drape.

- Don't let students cut off the top edge of the foundation prematurely. It can remain higher than the dress until the very end, when the overdress is finalized. The two can then be paired up and trimmed, and marked together.

### Teaching Hints:

- The height of a model in heels should be considered if the dress is to be worn. It is a good idea for students to calculate the length of the finished dress, and set the mannequin ahead of time to the appropriate height.
- The point made about the Lady Gaga 'understructure' (page 265) is that even with a specific shape created by the understructure, the fabric laid on top will add its own quality of drape to the effect. The type of fabric to be used for the overdress must, therefore, be considered when making the understructure. If it is a heavy fabric, for example, then a heavier crinoline will be needed.
- With the 'Glinda ruffled petticoat' (page 266), the petticoat is created in calico because it is easy to work with and illustrates the concept of 'building' volume with ruffles. However, stiff crinolines may work better, even if they are more difficult to drape and sew. The pictured gown probably has some sort of hoop skirt inside, but because hoops tend to move oddly and unnaturally, it may be preferable not to use them.
- Encourage students to search out interesting types of netting and crinoline for building the understructure, but make sure that they don't choose ones that are too difficult to handle.
- Have students work in front of a mirror if possible so that they can continue to see the bigger picture.
- When students feel they have finished their draping, encourage them to take a break and come back to it later with fresh eyes. They can then make final adjustments to the silhouette before they mark it.

### Exercises/projects:

An additional project for this section is available in the Tutor's Resource Guide.

### Video:

30. Draping the Gown

### Key Terms:

**Corset:** A woman's close-fitting undergarment, usually using boning and lacing, designed to support and shape the upper body.

**Crinoline:** A crisp net-like fabric usually made of nylon that is used to hold out skirts.

**Foundation:** The top part of the understructure of a gown.

**Petticoat:** The lower part of the understructure of a gown; it can have any amount of fullness.

## 3.3: Draping on the Bias

Objectives: The aim of this section is for students to understand the basic premise of bias draping and construction, and its benefits and drawbacks.

### General Guidance:

- The first exercise in this section, the camisole, is intended to teach fitting on the bias and the second exercise, the chemise, provides practise in observing free-falling bias sections and how to create shape while joining them.
- The Harlow gown draping project is about seeing how the spiral energy of the bias works as it wraps the body and provides a good exercise in creating attitude in a dress.

- Although it seems initially that cutting on the bias uses more fabric than cutting a garment on the lengthgrain, if the design is well thought out it actually offers great economy of cut.
- The benefits of working on the bias are the beautiful quality of drape that the grain creates and its ability to stretch and give over the mannequin, allowing greater possibilities for fit.
- The main drawback of working with the bias is its difficulty to control. The give is unpredictable, and the stretch at the edges can create problems. These issues can be minimized for students by working with heavier fabrics that don't give as much as, for example, a lighter georgette will.

### Student Pitfalls:

- Students must calculate the bias accurately and not approximately. There is a 'true' bias grain, and this is what they need to work with.
- If a student chooses a fabric or calico that is too soft, it will be difficult and frustrating to work with. It is preferable to select a heavier fabric than one that is too light.
- Pulling too tightly to fit an area will create horizontal pulls. Note the 'Fitting on the bias' box (page 289) which explains how to follow the grainline of the fabric and pull at that area to create fit. This is an important concept for students to understand.
- Bias fabric sections cannot be cut closely to the edges of the seamlines or they will spread and stretch too much. Students should accustom themselves to leaving large amounts of seam allowance when working with the bias.

### Teaching Hints:

- Make sure each student's fabric is the right weight, and that the sections are perfectly on grain and well pressed.

- Students need to understand that the very tight fit of a corset will not be achieved on the bias without pulling and wrinkling. A bias fit is softer and needs a little ease to lay smoothly.
- The fitting technique on page 289 is important to understand. For an area to be closer to the mannequin, follow the grainline up to the top and fit from there. Encourage students to experiment with this on the bias camisole.
- Bias seams on garments that are too tight are very difficult to finish smoothly. Bias side seams should be avoided on tight fitting garments.
- The Harlow gown (pages 292-299) is difficult to execute, and once the fabric is cut, construction options diminish. It may be a good idea to have students do this for the first time with an inexpensive, trial fabric.
- Thread tracing a final drape is an important skill. It needs to be done on the mannequin, which can be awkward, but just needs practise.
- Remind students to thread trace on both sides of a seamline and crossmark liberally.

### Exercises/projects:

An additional project for this section is available in the Tutor's Resource Guide.

### Video:

31. Fitting on the Bias

### Key Terms:

Bias grain: The 45 degree angle on the fabric.

Camisole: A woman's top that typically has narrow straps and a low neckline; often refers to a lingerie item.

**Chemise:** A woman's top that reaches below the crotch and typically has narrow straps and a low neckline; often refers to a lingerie item.

**Godet:** A triangular inset used to create flare, typically at the hemline.

### 3.4: Improvisational Draping

**Objectives:** When draping improvisationally, rather than working from a finished sketch and calico preparation diagram, the emphasis is on working freely, spontaneously, and intuitively. The aim in this section is for students to derive inspiration from a fabric, a piece of art, or an attitude or feeling they want to express, and then to have the confidence to create something unique on the spot.

#### General Guidance:

- While the section exercise and draping project provide a starting point, students should be encouraged to interpret what they see in their own way, feeling free to change the design presented while retaining some of the spirit of it.
- Although freedom and spontaneity are to be encouraged in this section, principles of good design still pertain. The shapes should exhibit balance, whether symmetrical or asymmetrical, and have interesting lines.
- The drapes should also be done neatly. Whatever folds, tucks, or seaming is used should show decisiveness and precision.

#### Student Pitfalls:

- Students may be hesitant, but should be given the confidence to experiment freely until they arrive at a garment they like.
- Improvisational draping still needs to have grainline balance, so students must be conscious of where they are setting the strength (lengthgrains) and bias areas of the fabric.

#### Teaching Hints:

- As your students are being given relative freedom in this section, they may feel that whatever they accomplish is acceptable. However, it may be necessary to point out aspects such as weak or messy areas, awkward transitions, too many focal points, etc.
- Encourage students to stand back and check the silhouette occasionally. It is easy for them to become too focused on the details and not see the bigger picture. Having a mirror nearby is useful in checking the drape from a distance.

#### Exercises/projects:

An additional project for this section is available in the Tutor's Resource Guide.

#### Video:

32. Improvisational Draping