

Role Of Social in Clothing

[Clothing](#), like other aspects of human physical appearance, has various [social](#) aspects. Wearing specific types of clothing or the manner of wearing clothing can have the deliberate purpose, or the desirable or undesirable side-effect, to correctly or incorrectly be interpreted in terms of class, income, belief and attitude.

For example, wearing expensive clothes can be due to (a combination of)

- being rich
- liking to spend much money (as much as one can afford or even more)
- spending one's money for a large part on clothing
- managing to obtain clothing cheaper than usual

An observer can see the resultant, expensive clothes, but may be wrong about the extent to which the four factors apply. All factors apply reversely for wearing cheap clothes, and similarly for other goods such as a house, a car, etc.

Other messages clothing can give:

- stating or claiming identity
- establishing, maintaining and defying [social group](#) norms

Dress codes

Dress codes may apply:

- by law
- for employees, pupils/students, etc. - sometimes a [uniform](#); sometimes depending on the day, see [Casual Friday](#); see also international standard business attire
- for customers, e.g. for a [disco](#), nightclub, casino, or more relaxed rules (e.g. shoes required, and not bare chested) in shops and restaurants
- on special parties; sometimes a special kind of clothes is the theme of the party
- in social life in general.

Legal Dress Code

Almost universally nudity in a public place is illegal, except in special nudist areas, which exist in fairly many countries. (However, among some peoples full nudity is accepted or the norm.) For woman bare breasts are also often illegal; however, see also top free equality. In a non-public place nudity tends to be forbidden if another person is unwillingly confronted with it.

Wearing only [underwear](#) is sometimes also illegal, and in some countries even less bare skin may already be illegal, especially for women.

Cross-dressing may also be illegal, especially a man wearing women's clothing.

In Tonga it is illegal for men to appear in public without shirt.

Other Dress Code

Dress codes function on certain social occasions and for certain jobs. A [school](#) or a military institution may require specified [uniforms](#); if it allows the wearing of plain clothes it may place restrictions on their use. A bouncer of a disco or nightclub may judge visitors' clothing and refuse entrance to those not clad according to specified or intuited requirements: for example an establishment may not allow the wearing of sport shoes.

A **formal** or [white tie](#) dress code typically means Tail-coats for men and full-length evening dresses for women. **Semi-formal** has a much less precise definition but typically means an evening jacket and tie for men (known as [black tie](#)) and a dress for women. Lounge suit also known as **Business casual** typically means not wearing [jeans](#) or track suits, but wearing instead collared shirts, and more *country* trousers (not black, but more *relaxed*, including things such as [corduroy](#)).

Transparent or semi-transparent clothing can play with the boundaries of dress-codes regarding modesty, for example: in a wet T-shirt contest.

Dress codes usually set forth a lower bound on body covering. However, sometimes it can specify the opposite, for example, in UK gay jargon, *dress code*, means people who dress in a militaristic manner. *Dress code* nights in nightclubs, and elsewhere, are deemed to specifically target people who have militaristic fetishes (e.g. leather/ men).

Setting a dress code can often lead to great embarrassment. One particularly famous example is that of UK Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, who asked the Bank of England's board to wear lounge suits to their annual dinner, a highly prestigious occasion, as an act of modernism in tune with New Labour thinking (they usually wore [white tie](#)). However, he had not reckoned with their determination not to kow-tow, and when sat at dinner, he was the only person not dressed in [white tie](#), to his humiliation, and the glee of the UK broadsheets.

See also [shoe etiquette](#).

No shoes, no shirt, no service

Whereas in much of Europe, and in particular in Italy, dressing well is standard behavior, in America the norm is for a more dressed down appearance. The aphorism "no shoes, no shirt, no service" captures their commonly promulgated dress code, and sometimes appears on signs posted at commercial establishments such as restaurants and shopping malls. Another common aphorism claims "this store is not a beach", a phrase recited almost automatically by store employees when encountering someone who does not meet the minimum standards of body covering, modesty, decency, or the like. Beaches and urban beaches push these boundaries, as people wander from a beachlike setting to stores and restaurants nearby.

Many of the stores and restaurants on or near beaches have such dress codes but do not enforce them. For example, the Sunnyside Cafe, located at the Sunnyside Bathing Pavilion in Toronto, Canada, often does not enforce the "shirts, shoes" dress code.

Inverse Dress Code

Reverse dress codes, sometimes referred to as "undress codes", set forth an upper bound, rather than a lower bound, on body covering. An example of an undress code, is the one commonly enforced in modern communal bathing facilities. For example, in Schwaben Quellen no clothing of any kind is allowed. Other less strict undress codes are common in public pools, especially indoor pools, in which shoes and shirts are not allowed. This undress code is an exact reversal of the ubiquitous "no shoes, no shirt, no service" dress code that exists almost everywhere outside the public bathing environment. Places where nudism is practiced may be "clothing optional", or nudity may be compulsory, with exceptions.

Gender and clothing

Various traditions suggests that certain items of clothing intrinsically suit different gender roles. In particular, the wearing of [skirts](#) and [trousers](#) has given rise to common phrases expressing implied restrictions in use and disapproval of offending behaviour. For example, ancient Greeks often considered the wearing of trousers by Persian men as a sign of effeminacy.

Extreme flouting of conventions in this area may earn the label "cross-dressing".

Clothing deficiencies

Clothing deficiencies may reduce functionality and/or be unaesthetic, but also be considered socially improper. As far as other people know, a deficiency during the rest of the day after an "accident" such as a button falling off, a stain, or a tear, is more "forgivable" than putting on clothing like that on a new day. For poor people, deficiencies which are difficult or expensive to fix, these are not really improper, but just somewhat sad, but understandable.

Possible deficiencies in clothing itself may include:

- stains
- faded color
- smell

- tears
- broken seams
- thin spots
- holes
- missing buttons
- broken [zippers](#)

One or more safety pins may temporarily alleviate some of these imperfections.

Possible inappropriate clothing relative to the person wearing it includes garments:

- too large (wide, long)
- too small (tight, short)
- not corresponding to the sex, age or peer group of the wearer

Possible "inappropriate" or socially unacceptable ways of wearing clothing include:

- unbuttoned (notably the fly)
- unzipped (ditto)
- backward
- inside-out
- mis-matched socks
- a wide dress, skirt or shorts exposing underwear or genitals by the way one sits, or when blown upwards (see also Marilyn Monroe), etc.
- a [bra](#), wrongly positioned, revealing a breast (one such "wardrobe malfunction" has become notorious: see Janet Jackson).

Possible "inappropriate" or socially unacceptable situations of wetness include:

- transparency, due to wetness (or thin spots), exposing underwear or intimate parts
- wetness due to sweat
- wetness apparently due to urine, etc.