



## A Modern Farthingale

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### Design Mentor Statement

This garment was created in the Junior-level course called *Industry Techniques*. The purpose of this project was to encourage students to use directional fabrics as a fashion design opportunity. The student needed to create a garment design using stripe fabrics. Two yards of 100% cotton and half-inch-wide black-and-white stripe fabrics were given to the student. To encourage students to be creative, the class visited a historic collection at the university; the collection director gave presentations about how stripes have been used by various designers. Draping techniques and developing production patterns were demonstrated. Then, the student was required to brainstorm five possible designs, and the instructor and student selected one design to produce. The student also had to use a draping technique for fitting the silhouette. After the student completed the top design, this student decided to produce the pencil skirt as an additional project to complete the look. I support this design because the student created an original design by creating interesting directional lines and utilizing historical references. The student also showed technical improvement through the execution of this project. In addition, this design demonstrated visual impact and high construction quality.

### Design Statement

*Statement of Purpose.* The purpose of this project was to create an interesting design using striped fabric. We were encouraged to experiment with different and challenging fabric manipulation techniques with the goal of creating an interesting design. Most of the top was made with a plain, black and white striped fabric. The skirt was made with a solid, black suiting fabric. I wanted to create a bustier that followed the silhouette of a Spanish Farthingale, while also experimenting with several pleating techniques. I chose each technique based on how it would affect the appearance of the striped fabric. One of these techniques is the cartridge pleat. I learned about it through my job in a theater costume shop. This kind of pleat was used in sixteenth century to control large amounts of fullness at the waist in skirts. But rather than simply repeating a design from a sixteenth century history book, I wanted to create a more modernized look.

*Aesthetics and Visual Impact.* The silhouette of the top is a strapless bustier, fitted closely to the body at the bust, straight down to the waist. From the waist a short peplum juts out, completing the top. The skirt is a plain, black pencil skirt with princess seams. The skirt is meant to highlight the peplum by fitting close to the lower half of the body. At first glance, this ensemble seems to shorten the upper body and lengthen the lower body. The top was designed with specifically for

Page 1 of 3

this striped fabric. My intention was to reduce the weight of the white stripes. This is where I incorporated various fabric manipulation techniques such as pintucks, piped seams, and cartridge pleats throughout the bustier and skirt.

*Process, Technique and Challenges.* For inspiration, I incorporated information that I obtained from lectures given by the curator of Fashion Collection at the university on how designers in the past have utilized striped fabrics in their own work. I also utilized inspiration from my other classes, *Fashion History* and *Theatrical Costume Design*. Both of these courses look at historical clothing, but with their own focus of research. *Fashion History* seeks to learn techniques and analyze where fashion has been and where it is going. *Theatrical Costume Design* seeks to replicate those same techniques and fashions as a storytelling tool in theater. These courses inspire me to look at the history of fashion and create detailed and beautiful designs like this one.

Before beginning the drape for the top, I made prototypes of possible fabric manipulations I would use in the design. Based on those prototypes, my instructor and I determined which prototypes would produce the most interesting results. One manipulation eliminated the contrasting stripe, in this case the white stripe. Another manipulation eliminated every other white stripe. The remaining white stripe was reduced by being sewn into a pintuck. Creating pintucks with this fabric was quite exhausting and time consuming. For each pintuck I had to hold up the fabric to the light and fold, matching the lines of the stripe up perfectly, and then pin in place before sewing. The difficulty here was that the white stripe was alternating from being sewn to the face of the fabric and the back of the fabric. The effect that this had made the black stripe thicker and the white stripe thinner. The last manipulation I did was cartridge pleats throughout the entire peplum. Not only were these pleats sewn by hand, the whole peplum had to be attached to the bustier by hand.

In preparation of the drape, I drew vertical lines on the muslin,  $\frac{3}{8}$ " apart. These lines made it easier for me to see the direction of the stripes and aided in the drafting of the pattern. The entire top was then draped on a mannequin. For the top, I determined that laces would be more fitting with this design rather than a zipper. I also decided that it would be more provocative if the laces were in the front. The skirt, however, has an invisible zipper at center back.

*Cohesion and Innovation.* This ensemble works cohesively together because of the overall uniformity of the direction of the stripes. One of the many aspects we were encouraged to consider was the effect stripes have on a person. The way I used the striped fabric in this piece shortened the body. The fabric itself I found challenging to look at. The intensity of the black



and white stripes was very taxing on the eyes, so I reduced the weight of white stripes in the design. The skirt, though it was not made with the same striped fabric, has design elements similar to the top. It has princess seams which complement the many vertical lines in the top. Also, sewn into those princess seams and side seams of the skirt are bias-tape piping. This is a repeated element found in the top at the empire bust line and reflects the texture of the white pintucks.

I believe that originality and innovation are two of the hardest aspects of my design process to define. Much of my inspiration comes from history, theater, and the books I read. It has always been my belief that true art is not made in a vacuum. This ensemble has multiple inspirations from history, including Shakespeare, ballerina tutus, and Dior's New Look... My originality and innovation can be seen in my approach to the project. I did not start with the design. I started with the fabric and sought to push the design limits of the stripes as far as possible. Simply speaking, I wanted to change the nature of the striped fabric as much as possible.

