

# Global Apparel Trade and Sourcing Sample Syllabus

(updated February 2025)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Global interdependencies that influence production, distribution, and consumer consumption. Study the roles of government, industry, and consumers in the global economy with a focus on the apparel industry. Analyzes practices to improve sustainability in producing apparel (Prerequisite: entry-level micro and macroeconomics).

## Open Educational Resources

- FASH455 Global apparel trade and sourcing (<https://shenglufashion.com/blog/>)
- Cottonworks: <https://cottonworks.com/en/topics/sourcing-manufacturing/>

## IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT

*“When we get dressed each day, we wear more than clothes. We wear the global economies, politics, legislation, and political will that make clothes even possible. We wear the synergy between business, policy, and politics that results in affordable, fashionable and safe clothes for hard-working families.”*---by Kevin Burke, former President of the American Apparel and Footwear Association (AAFA)

- **Textiles and apparel remain among the world’s largest and most economically influential industries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.** Globally, the market value of textiles, apparel, and apparel retailing totaled \$2,000 billion annually. In the United States, clothing and accessories sales contributed nearly \$307 billion to the U.S. economy in 2023.
- **The textile and apparel industry, mainly through international trade and sourcing, plays a uniquely critical role in creating jobs, promoting economic development, enhancing human development, and reducing poverty.** Globally, over 120 Million people remain directly employed in the textile and apparel industries today, and a good proportion of them are females living in poor rural areas. Notably, for most developing countries, the textile and apparel sector accounts for 60%–90% of their total merchandise exports and provides one of the very few opportunities for these countries to participate in globalization.
- **The textile and apparel industry remains strong in the United States in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, the sector has been critically different from the past because of globalization and technological advancement.** Across the supply chain, the U.S. textile and apparel industry directly employs more than 1.1 million people, ranging from textile mill workers, sourcing managers,

compliance specialists, retail floor associates, merchandisers, buyers, and marketing professionals, to name a few. The World Trade Organization ranked the United States as the world's fifth-largest textile exporter in 2023. The U.S. textile and apparel exports in 2023 totaled \$23.6 billion, destined for more than 50 countries worldwide. U.S. branded apparel also can be found in almost every corner of the world marketplace.

**Trade policy also shapes textile and apparel trade patterns and fashion companies' sourcing practices.** Because of its global presence and the complicated social, economic, and political factors associated with the sector, the textile and apparel industry is actively involved in many critical trade policy debates today. This is the case whether it is for addressing forced labor in the supply chain, reforming the de minimis rules, responding to the U.S.-China tariff war, or leveraging trade as an economic development tool.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of the course, the student will be able:

1. To comprehend the worldwide importance of the textile and apparel industry (including production, distribution, consumption, and trade) from economic, political and social dimensions;
2. To understand the composition, restructuring, major development trends and the competitive status of the U.S. textile and apparel sectors and to consider the domestic complex within the context of a global economy;
3. To understand the textile complex in major regions of the world, including their stages of development, functions in the global apparel value chain and key market conditions;
4. To analyze the unique trade policies for textiles and apparel and understand how they affect various segments of the industry (including manufacturers, retailers, and consumers) at multiple levels (including multilateral, regional and bilateral);
5. To aware of the major cutting-edge issues facing the world today and comprehend their potentials impacts on the future landscape of the textile and apparel sectors;

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### Week 1-2: Unit I Textiles and apparel as a global sector

- Phenomenon of globalization
- Impacts of globalization on the textile and apparel sector

#### Reading and course materials:

- [What is globalization](#) (CFR World 101)
- [Globalization, Unfolded A “Simple” T-Shirt’s Surprisingly Complex Journey from Idea to Doorst”](#) (CATO Institute)
- [Video Discussion: The Global Travels of a T-shirt](#)
- [Video Discussion: Textile Manufacturing in America, post-globalisation](#)
- [Debate: Is the U.S. Textile Manufacturing Sector a Winner or Loser of Globalization and International Trade?](#)

### Week 3-4: Unit II Theory of international trade

- Why international trade matters for textile and apparel?
- Mercantilism
- Absolute advantage trade theory
- Comparative advantage trade theory
- Factor proportion trade theory
- New international division of labor
- Global issues associated with textile and apparel trade

#### Reading and course materials:

- [What is international trade theory?](#) (University of Minnesota Library)
- [Video discussion: Is Free Trade Worth the Cost?](#)
- [Video discussion: Historical Benefits of Trade](#)
- [Global Value Chain for Apparel Sold at Target](#)

### Week 5-6: Unit III Global textile and apparel activities

- Patterns of global textile production
- Patterns of global apparel production
- Patterns of employment in the global textile and apparel industry
- Patterns of textiles and apparel consumption
- Stage of development theory in the textile and apparel sector

#### Reading and course materials:

- [World Textile and Clothing Trade: Key Patterns and Emerging Trends in 2023.](#)
- [Video discussion: Used Clothing Trade Debate Continues in Kenya](#)
- [Stages of development in the textile complex key characteristics](#) (Lecture)

### Week 7-8 Unit IV U.S. textile and apparel industry

- NAICS code

- U.S. textile industry
- U.S. apparel industry
- U.S. fashion brands and retailers' sourcing strategies

**Reading and course materials:**

- [NAICS code](#) (lecture)
- [Exploring the Production and Export Strategies of U.S. Textiles and Apparel Manufacturers](#)
- [FASH455 Video Discussion: How Team USA's 2024 Olympic Outfits Were Made by Ralph Lauren](#)
- [USFIA Fashion Industry Benchmarking Study](#)
- [New Study: PVH Corporation's Evolving Apparel Sourcing Strategies](#)

(may add a mid-term exam/guest speaker event/review project here)

**Week 9 Unit V Textile and apparel industry in Americas and sourcing from the Western Hemisphere**

- Western Hemisphere textile and apparel supply chain
- Textile and apparel rules of origin in U.S. free trade agreements
- US apparel sourcing from CAFTA-DR and USMCA (NAFTA)

**Reading and course materials:**

- [Textiles and apparel rules of origin](#) (USTR CAFTA-DR series)
- [How Guatemala apparel suppliers are owning sustainability](#) (Just-Style)
- [FASH455 interview with Beth Hughes, VP of AAFA](#)
- [US apparel sourcing from CAFTA-DR and US Textile Exports: Myth vs. Reality](#) (Webinar)
- [Case study: Textile vs. apparel: renegotiating NAFTA](#)

**Week 10: Unit VI Textile and apparel industry in Asia and the flying geese model**

- Flying geese model
- RCEP and CPTPP

**Reading and course materials:**

- [Flying geese model](#) (lecture)
- [Video Discussion: The Outlook of China as an Apparel Sourcing Destination](#)
- [Video Discussion: The State of Textiles and Apparel "Made in Asia" \(updated February 2025\)](#)
- [New Study: Exploring India as an Apparel Sourcing Base for U.S. Fashion Companies](#)
- [Mega Trade Agreements in the Asia-Pacific Region and Textiles and Apparel Trade](#)

**Week 11 Unit VII Textile and apparel industry in Europe and the intra-region trade patterns**

- Intra-region textile and apparel trade patterns in Europe
- EU fashion companies' sourcing and supply chain strategies

**Reading and course materials:**

- [EU Textile and Apparel Industry and Trade Patterns](#)
- [Explore Mango's Apparel Sourcing Strategie](#)
- [Importing Clothing Made from Recycled Textile Materials? A Study of Retailers' Sourcing Strategies in Five European Countries](#)

**Week 12-13: Unit VIII Textile and apparel trade policy**

- U.S. trade policy objectives
- Mechanism of trade policy making
- U.S. textile and apparel trade policy

**Reading and course materials:**

- [To Renew or Not to Renew: What AGOA Means to Apparel Sourcing](#)
- [Sustaining Resilient Textile and Apparel Supply Chains](#) (USTR, January 2025)
- [What is the World Trade Organization](#) (CFR world 101)
- [Case study: Apparel Sourcing in the Shadow of the US-China Tariff War](#) (Updated February 2025)

**Week 14: Final exam/Final project****Additional instructional materials:**

<https://shenglufashion.com/for-educators/>