

CLOTHING ALTERATIONS FOR EVERY BODY

SYLLABUS

Portland Community College Cascade Campus | 705 N. Killingsworth St. Portland, OR 97217 | 971-722-6111

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Clothes aren't always made to fit bigger bodies, trans bodies, disabled bodies or any body that doesn't match standard sizing. Learn how to adjust proportions, add comfort, reshape a garment or modify clothing for access needs. Explore simple and practical sewing techniques for a fit that feels good.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understand basic hand stitching
- Understand basic fitting, pinning and measurements
- Understand the beginner basics of how to take in a seam, let out a seam, take up or let down a hem, add darts and add extra fabric to a garment.

INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACH

I generally begin each class with a brief presentation, a live demonstration, or both. We'll use the first day to establish a shared understanding of alteration principles, learn a few basic hand stitches, and practice some skills using muslin. I'll then meet with each student individually to assess the garments they've brought and help determine what alterations are feasible within the scope of the class.

I don't follow a syllabus rigidly. I prefer to adapt the class based on where the group is at and what students are working on. Each session may shift slightly depending on the types of garments people bring in and the pace of the group. My goal is to keep the class practical, flexible, and focused on what will be most useful to you.

Important Note: We will be covering just the tip of the iceberg. Alteration is not magic. While we can improve fit, comfort, and function, there are limitations to what can be achieved through alteration. Some complex adjustments require advanced skills beyond the scope of this course, and the structure of certain garments or the nature of fabrics may restrict possibilities. It is important to have realistic expectations and understand that not every garment can be perfectly altered. Our focus will be on practical, achievable changes, and learning how to evaluate what alterations are possible is just as important as mastering the techniques themselves.

Lectures, Demos and Exercises:

For the first 3 weeks, I'll be doing some powerpoint presentation lectures that will give you a lot of information. I will send them to you for review as well. I will take you through many different demonstrations and exercises, some of them you will follow along, others you will simply watch to get an idea of how the process works. Then during the last couple weeks, I'll help you individually alter your own clothing.

The first couple of classes will be hand sewing boot camp. You'll learn how to handle a needle and sew a variety of seams. You will be making a little sampler of sorts.

Lecture Presentations:

- Week 1: history, intro and overview of all the different beginner alterations you can do
- Week 2: Taking In and Taking Up
- Week 3: Letting Out and Adding Panels.

Guided Exercises:

- Threading and Knotting the needle
- Basic hand stitching seams: Running stitch, whip stitch, back stitch
- A few different ways to start and tie off a seam
- Intermediate hand stitches: Herringbone stitch, Invisible Hem, Blanket stitch, Buttonhole stitch

Demos:

- Adding a Pocket
- French Seams
- Adding a Dart
- Adding a Panel
- Taking in and Letting out a seam

MATERIALS

- **Clothing you want to alter** -IMPORTANT: bring a few pieces that need different types of alterations. We will not necessarily get through all of them. Please keep in mind that it is best to start with clothing you don't care as much about and get comfortable with the process before you work on anything that is important or expensive. This is a good time to bring something you were thinking of getting rid of anyway.
- Sewing Supplies:
 - Thread that matches your chosen clothing. You may wait until week 2 to choose. I will supply some basic colors.
 - Needles of various sizes
 - Thimble
 - Scissors - preferably fabric scissors
 - Thread snips
 - Seam Ripper
 - Tailor's chalk
 - Pencil
 - Ruler
 - Measuring tape for sewing
 - Straight pins
 - Notebook and pencil - or digital app to record measurements.
 - If you need to significantly let out a garment, matching fabric. You won't need it until class 2, and we can discuss it.
 - Optional:
 - Safety pins
 - Disappearing or washable fabric marking pen

Instructor Will Provide:

- Muslin for practice
- Basic thread colors
- One Iron and ironing board
- Handouts
- A few basic supplies, including a couple pairs of scissors, needles, chalk, and needle threaders

Consent and Comfort in Fitting

This class will involve activities that may require fitting garments on our own bodies. To respect personal boundaries and comfort, all fitting will be self-directed. I will not touch any student's body unless explicitly asked for assistance. In those cases, I will request clear, explicit consent before any contact, and check in continuously throughout. Your comfort and autonomy are a priority.

TECHNICAL EXPECTATIONS

This course is conducted in person. You will need basic digital literacy to communicate with me and view materials. Let me know if you need materials in another format. I often send PDFs of our presentations for review.

ACCESSIBILITY

This course uses digital courseware, software, or texts that may cause barriers for those using assistive, or accessibility-related technologies. If you encounter barriers, please contact the Access Tech Team at access-tech-group@pcc.edu or by calling 971-722-TECH (971-722-8324).

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Do not come to my class if you are ill with anything contagious! That includes a cold. Students and their families may have immune disorders. This is a CE class, and as such, whether you come to class or not is up to you. I may or may not be able to show you skills from a demo you missed. I will do my best to send you materials and get you caught up, but it's never the end of the world if you need to miss for any reason. I don't need to know why. However, students who don't show up to the first class or two without communicating with me first may be dropped from the course by PCC which is out of my hands, so please let me know if you need to miss the first class!

COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES

- Email me anytime. I will respond within a day or two unless it's a weekend or a holiday. If I don't, it may be because I missed it so don't hesitate to send a reminder.

ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION

There are no formal assignments, quizzes, or grading in this class.

PCC POLICIES AND DEADLINES

Visit the [PCC Policies](#) page for information on:

- Academic Integrity Policy
- Accessibility Statement & Resources
- Drop/Withdraw Deadlines
- Grading Policy
- Internet Etiquette
- PCC Payment Policy
- PCC Registration Policy
- Sanctuary College
- Student Rights and Responsibilities
- Title IX/Non-Discrimination

DROP/WITHDRAW DEADLINES

Students are responsible for adding, dropping, or withdrawing from classes. Please visit the PCC Registration Policy.

You can view your specific deadlines from the MyPCC Home tab under “View My Drop & Withdraw Dates.”

ACCOMMODATIONS AND SERVICES

PCC is committed to supporting all students. If you plan to use academic accommodations for this course, please contact your instructor as soon as possible to discuss your needs. Accommodations are not retroactive; they begin when the instructor receives the “Approved Academic Accommodations” letter from you (submitted in person for courses on campus; via email for Online Learning courses). To request academic accommodations for a disability, please contact an Accessible Education & Disability Resources counselor on any PCC campus. Office locations, phone numbers, and additional information may be located on the [Accessible Education & Disability Resources website](#).

Additional Note from Instructor:

I am a disabled instructor myself, and I understand that not all access needs require formal documentation. If you need a minor adjustment—such as support with sensory sensitivity, memory challenges, mobility considerations, or another access need you’d like to talk through—please let me know. I will do my best to accommodate you within the flow of class. If you need help navigating PCC’s accommodations system, I can support you or advocate on your behalf.

That said, I also want to be transparent that I am not compensated for prep or planning time, and my capacity is limited by that fact. I will work with you in good faith and with care, but there may be boundaries on what I can change or offer. We’ll figure it out together.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are required to complete this course in accordance with the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook. The Handbook establishes students' freedoms and protections as well as expectations of appropriate behavior and ethical academic work. The Handbook includes items such as the Policy on Student Rights, and the Student Code of Conduct Policy and Procedures.

GENERATIVE AI STATEMENT

The use of generative AI in this course such as, but not limited to ChatGPT, should be used only if it does not otherwise violate the Academic Integrity Policy of the College. Since this is a CE course, you can use it however you want to generate ideas or reference images, but I encourage you to do so in an educated and informed manner. AI is controversial for a reason and there may be ethical, privacy and copyright considerations to navigate.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The handbook contains the Code of Student Conduct and the Academic Integrity Policy. Cheating includes any attempt to defraud, deceive, or mislead the instructor in arriving at an honest grade

assessment, and may include copying answers from other students or using unauthorized notes during tests. Plagiarism is a particular form of cheating that involves presenting as one's own the ideas or work of another and may include using other people's ideas without proper attribution and submitting another person's work as one's own. Dishonest activities such as cheating on exams and submitting or copying work done by others will result in disciplinary actions including but not limited to receiving a failing grade. For further information, review the institution's Academic Integrity Policy.

SANCTUARY COLLEGE STATEMENT

PCC is a sanctuary college. For more information and resources, see the resources for undocumented students page.

INCLEMENT WEATHER STATEMENT

Our course will close if the college closes, but I'll do my best to prepare something and send it to you.

FLEXIBILITY STATEMENT

The instructor reserves the right to modify course content and/or substitute assignments and learning activities in response to institutional, weather, or class situations.