



## The Power of Women

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### **Mentor Statement**

This design was created in a junior-level apparel draping studio course. The objective of the course is to teach students key apparel draping techniques and allow the students to apply these techniques to creative draped designs. The final project for the semester, inspired by Cobb, Orzada, and Roelse's (2019) multi-course sustainable design challenge was a zero-waste upcycling project. Students were randomly assigned pieces of fabric that had been previously donated to the department and were tasked to drape and construct a garment of their choice that utilized the entirety of the fabric. The purpose of this mentorship relationship was for the student to explore sustainable design approaches from a pre-consumer waste perspective. As design mentor, I provided guidance and support as this student made their design choices. When a challenge presented itself, I stepped in to assist the student in the problem-solving process. I chose to sponsor this student due to the creative approach the student took to execute the desired silhouette as well as the student's attention to detail that led to a well-constructed garment.

### **Statement of Purpose**

In a world where environmental issues are at the forefront of concerns, the fashion industry is no exception. The fashion industry is a very large producer of waste, specifically textiles, that in turn negatively impacts the planet. There is an estimated 13 million tons of textile waste created each year within the industry that continually grows (Rauturier, 2022). Now more than ever, it is important to look to creating sustainable designs that will conserve resources and reduce waste. For this project, I was tasked to create a zero-waste garment using draping techniques. As part of the design challenge, I was given a leftover piece of fabric donated to the department size 86.5" by 57.25" and then had to create a garment using every part of the fabric. Since I did not get to select my fabric, I was challenged to pull inspiration from the print and drape of the fabric to influence my design and silhouette decisions. This

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task challenged me to create a design that was sustainable and change my thought process to achieve this purpose. I decided to interpret the thin stripes with a touch of pink as a powerful woman in the workplace—a more feminine take on the “power suit.” The purpose of this design was to upcycle the provided fabric into a sophisticated garment that exudes femininity and power while using zero-waste design approaches. My goal for this design is to leave the wearer feeling empowered while contributing to a more sustainable industry one garment at a time.

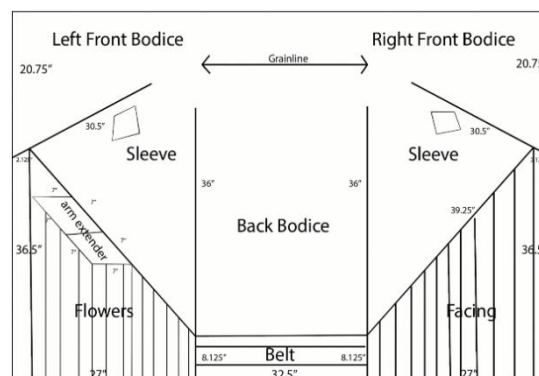
### **Aesthetic Properties and Visual Impact**

The fabric provided for this garment was an integral part in the design process. The fabric is a stripe with thin bands of black and pink stripes reminiscent of a business shirt design. This stripe led to my inspiration of powerful women in the workplace. While the stripes reminded me of a button-down business shirt, I chose to highlight the pink coloring to take it in a feminine direction and reinvent the fabric design. To play into the stripe pattern, this garment experiments with the opposition of stripe directions. The front and back have opposite direction of stripes that creates a duality between them. However, because most of the garment is one large piece, the stripes flow from one direction into another, creating a smooth transition between the opposition. For example, the stripes are vertical at center front, but transition to be horizontal down the back. This garment displays texture through the gathered flowers at the neckline and sleeve openings. The flowers are intended to break up the flat garment and draw the eye to create impact moments across the garment.

### **Process, Technique, and Execution**

To begin the zero-waste process, I first draped ten designs to explore my options with the fabric I was given. From these ten designs, I learned how the fabric lays and works before ultimately deciding on the final design. Once my design was chosen and draped how I desired, I developed a marker to determine where to cut the fabric to ensure zero fabric waste was left (see Figure 1). For example, I cut the corners of my fabric in an uncompleted triangle so that the side seam and sleeve seam were one continuous seam and no full disconnect of the sleeves occurred. I cut my fabric in a way that left the bulk of it one large piece. The front of the dress, back, sleeves, and collar are all one piece of fabric allowing the stripes to create a nice flow across the garment and reduce the waste of fabric. Some of the leftover fabric was then pieced together to create a belt, facing, and gussets in the arm. The gussets were placed at the underarm to

increase the mobility of the wearer's arms. All other pieces of leftover fabric were cut into strips, gathered, and tied together to create "flowers." Each flower was individually sewn and placed into the collar and sleeve openings. The facing provided structure along the buttons and allowed the collar to stand up with more structure. Finally, since this garment was mostly one piece, darts were placed strategically to allow the draped garment to fit the form more closely-highlighting the fit and flare silhouette.



*Figure 1.* Marker layout.

### Cohesion

This garment brings together the sophisticated power of a working woman with feminine aspects throughout. The structured collar, modest length, and silhouette display the power while the flowers, pink fabric and buttons, and long, flowy sleeves bring the feminine aspects into the garment. The pink flowers and multi-directionality of the stripes in the fabric seamlessly embed the zero-waste approach to the "power suit." These elements were brought together cohesively to visually display how a woman can leverage femininity and power in the workplace.

### Originality and Innovation

This is a unique piece bringing together the elements of zero-waste and design. This garment is a more sophisticated piece that is able to be worn in the workplace while also being a sustainable garment that leaves zero fabric waste. This is a one-of-a-kind piece with elements like the flowers being difficult to replicate exactly and is fit perfectly to the form. This garment is original through its innovation in the zero-waste category and the duality of femininity and power in the workplace.

### References

- Cobb, K., Orzada, B. T., Roelse, K. (2019). Process dialogue: Layering complexity through 3D sketch and drape. Learnings from multi-course sustainable design challenge. *International Textile and Apparel Association Annual Conference Proceedings*, 76. doi: <https://doi.org/10.31274/itaa.8792>
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