**INSTRUCTOR’S MANUAL TO ACCOMPANY:**

***Draping* Second Edition by Karolyn Kiisel**

indicates there is a video demonstration of the draping technique referred to

**Part 1**

**Introduction**

Learning to drape is a crucial skill for a designer; it is the primary tool for developing a signature style and flair. For the beginning designer, however, it can be daunting and in Part 1 of this book the emphasis is on engaging students in the draping process, making it seem accessible, easy, and creative.

Although fine draping is a couturiere’s art, draping is also something people have done for themselves for centuries – creating beautiful, practical shapes from simple lengths of woven cloth. In section **1.1 The Foundations of Draping** the aim is to show students how easily two-dimensional fabric can be turned into a three-dimensional garment. In section **1.2 Draping Skills for Classic Fit** the essential basics of darting and developing a block from a drape are introduced, while in section **1.3 Dresses** the techniques of seaming and toile preparation are covered.

While it is essential for students to master the technical skills introduced in these first three sections before moving on to more complex techniques, it is just as vital that they learn the subjective skill of observation. Being able to recognize specific grainlines, see good composition as it relates to proportion and silhouette, and identify the mood and tone of a design are all important.

**1.1 The Foundations of Draping**

**Objectives**: The main goal of this section is to introduce students to basic techniques, to teach sensitivity and dexterity in handling fabric, and to provide valuable exercises for developing an eye for proportion and balance.

**General Guidance:**

* The photographs for the exercises and project are intended to be a proportion guide for your students’ drapes. Often students see these proportions slightly differently and, even when attempting to follow these set examples, tend to come up with different results. While this is a healthy indication that they are beginning to develop their own personal style, it is important to point out how their look varies from that of the example.
* After a group finishes their drapes, it is useful to do a review or critique and let the students observe each other’s work. Pointing out subtle differences in the drapes will help them hone their observational skills.

**Student Pitfalls:**

* It is important while draping to be constantly aware of grainline directions. Students will often confuse the length and crossgrains so it is a good idea to suggest that they use a small arrow to indicate the lengthgrain when marking the muslin (calico) initially (pages 23-25) . When draping, the drape may sometimes not look quite right; the muslin piece may have been turned 90 degrees and will need correcting.
* Beginning to work with gathering can be awkward and often results in fabric that is bunching and uneven. Demonstrate the technique of pulling the fabric on both sides of the elastic so that students can observe close-up how this evens out the gathers.
* A common mistake is pinning in the wrong direction. Remind students that the pin enters the fabric at the folded edge, and that the pins should be perpendicular to the seamlines . Pinning properly will help to reduce puckering and improve the appearance of the drape.

**Teaching Hints:**

* Make sure each student’s fabric is perfectly on-grain and well pressed ; this will teach the important skill of recognizing grainlines. Encourage students to spend time manipulating the fabric, experimenting with how it moves and drapes.
* Demonstrate an awkward proportion so that students can see how much better the drape looks when a good proportion is achieved.
* Observe the accuracy with which students are marking their grainlines, the neatness of their pinning, and smoothness of their cutting. Steer them towards time-efficient and concise methods of working.
* Look at the tools your students are using. It is important that their scissors are a comfortable fit and that they have the right pins and wrist cushion so that they can focus on the draping rather than struggle with equipment.

**Videos:**

1. Tearing the Muslin (Calico)

2. Blocking the Muslin

3. Pressing the Muslin

4. Marking the Grainlines – Measure and Mark

5. Marking the Grainlines – Pick and Pull

6. Marking the Grainlines – Thread Tracing

7. Analyzing the Three Grainlines

8. Visualizing Volume

9. Aligning the Grainlines

10. Pinning Two Pieces of Muslin Together

11. Turning Up and Pinning the Hem

12. Pinning, Marking, and Turning Seams

13. Transferring the Toile to a Pattern Paper

**Key Terms:**

Crossgrain: The weft thread direction.

Grainlines: These refer to the direction of the threads. Woven fabrics consist of two threads – warp and weft – interlaced at right angles.

Lengthgrain: The warp thread direction, sometimes called the straight grain.

Selvage edge: The bound edges on either side of the fabric.

Thread trace: A hand-sewn straight stitch line used to mark seams or edges during draping or the marking and truing-up process.

Warp thread: This is the vertical thread which runs parallel to the selvage.

Weft thread: This is the horizontal thread which runs crosswise.

**1.2 Draping Skills for Classic Fit**

**Objectives:** This section provides a natural progression from working with the woven panel. The main goal here is for students to learn how different darting techniques affect shape and fit and the steps that take a drape to a finished block.

**General Guidance:**

* The exercises and projects in this section teach students to use different types of darting and seaming to make bodices with a classic fit. It is useful to relate what was learned in the previous section to these new techniques by pointing out that they are still working with a woven panel but trying to control more carefully the way it drapes on the body.
* When bodices are complete, put them on forms and encourage students to study the differences in the way they look. This will help train their eyes to see subtleties in line and silhouette.
* Taking a drape to a finished block needs to be done carefully, with much attention to detail. If it is to be a block that will be used for future design extrapolations, the balance at the shoulders and side seams needs to be checked thoroughly and the amount of ease carefully executed.

**Student Pitfalls:**

* Students will often make the bodices fit too tightly as it is easier to drape very close to the dress form. However, the garments are not intended to be molded to the form, but should have the same kind of ease that slim-fitting clothes do when worn (pages 54-58 and 84-85).
* A common error is for students to make the darts too deep, which results in a very pointed bust look. Darts should be as shallow as possible while still achieving the fit required. Students also often need reminding that the dart should stop an inch (2.5 cm) or so before the bust point .
* Students are often tempted to skip steps. It is important to do the “re-pin” to see how their truing process changed the drape, and important to mark all corrections carefully and with a color coding (pages 71-73).

**Teaching Hints:**

* Stress precision with locating and marking grainlines, as the bodices need the strong grainline down the center front . The darts will be difficult to execute well if the fabric is off-grain.
* Move through the darting exercises fairly quickly (page 53). They will be challenging for students to execute and it is better to do more of them rather than focus on perfection. Folding darts and matching up seams will improve through repetition.
* When truing the bodice or skirt block, note that balancing the side seams is a concept that is a little difficult to understand. It does take some pattern drafting knowledge to see why the two seams need to “walk” and how to take volume from one and add to the other if they are not balanced. Ask students to study the diagrams on page 68 carefully.

**Videos:**

4. Marking the Grainlines – Measure and Mark

9. Aligning the Grainlines

14. Trimming and Clipping

15. Side Bust Dart

16. Adding Ease and the Difference Between Fit Ease and Style Ease

17. Using Draping Tape

18. Marking the Drape

19. Truing the Drape

20. Truing the Pattern: Using the Right Tools

21. Fitting the Dress

22. French Dart

**Key Terms:**

Bust point: The fullest part of the bust.

Crossmarks: Lines designating the intersections of fit seams, stylelines, or darts.

Ease: The extra fabric allowed in the fit of a garment.

On-grain: Means that the lengthgrains or crossgrains are in balance and properly placed.

Petersham ribbon: Ribbed ribbon used in hats, corsets, and waistbands designed for reinforcement.

Truing: The process of correcting and equalizing any discrepancies in sew lines created during draping.

Waistline: The narrowest part of the waist area on the form.

**1.3 Dresses**

**Objectives**: Studying the complex shapes of the female figure is an important aspect of all garment construction. The main goal here is for students to learn how to handle the fit of bust fullness, waist, and hip curves.

**General Guidance:**

* The exercises in this section continue to teach students the techniques of darting and the use of different types of seaming to create loose and fitted dresses. The pinning and clipping process provides valuable practice in smoothing out curves and aligning top and lower edges of all the pieces. Re-pinning the half muslin to see the result of the draping will show students where they may have made errors.
* After a group finishes their drapes, it is useful to do a review or critique and let the students observe each other’s work. Pointing out subtle differences in the drapes will help them hone their observational skills.

**Student Pitfalls:**

* Students naturally seem to pin very tightly to the dress form. If the seams are straining and making pulls, then students need to remove the pins individually and figure out where to ease the fit a little (page 106, Step 6, pull corrections).
* It is important while draping to be constantly aware of grainline direction. With so many pieces lined up together, one of the pieces can easily begin to shift off-grain as the pins are tightened up. It will be easy to see if one is slightly tilted – a common error that needs correcting.
* Another common mistake is using either too few or too many pins. Encourage your students to check the photographs and to notice that more pins are required when the fabric needs to be supported. Using too many pins will make the seamlines appear wrinkled and puckered.
* Pinning in the wrong direction is also a common error. Remind students that the pin enters the fabric at the folded edge, and that the pins should be perpendicular to the seamlines. Pinning properly will help to reduce puckering and improve the appearance of the drape.

**Teaching Hints:**

* Placing pins closer together is necessary on very fitted garments. However, since students will sometimes need to correct and re-angle their muslin pieces during draping, it is better to get all the pieces set on the dress form, and then for students to go back and refine the fit, placing more pins in-between existing ones as required.
* Encourage your students to stand back occasionally to check their stylelines. It is easy for them to become too focused on the details and not see the bigger picture. Having a mirror close by is useful in checking the drape from a distance.
* Draping princess-line seams can be time-consuming and difficult to learn. Make sure that your students follow the draping order: first pinning the seams wrong sides together , then checking the fit and curves of the lines, then trimming, clipping, and turning the seams to the inside . They will not be able to see what line they are creating until they do this last step.
* The Audrey Hepburn sheath dress should be done slowly and carefully to allow students the time to really finesse the darts and the shape (pages 112-116).

**Videos:**

12. Pinning, Marking, and Turning Seams

14. Trimming and Clipping

23. Long Vertical Darts, Front and Back

24. Taping the Stylelines

**Key Terms:**

Hipline: The fullest part of the hip, usually considered to be 7 inches (18 cm) down from the waist.

Off-grain: Means that the lengthgrains or crossgrains are tilted too much, or not in the correct position to balance the garment.

Princess line: The vertical line that divides the torso in half from center front to side seam. Usually it begins at the center of the shoulder, but it can also curve out from the armhole.

Styleline: A seamline that runs from one point of a garment to another, used specifically for style rather than to help with the fit of a garment.

**Part 2**

**Introduction**

In Part 2, as the garments become more complex, the challenge is to develop a good eye for balance, proportion, and silhouette. The goal is for students to be able to recognize when these are achieved: from the smallest construction details to the collar or sleeve of an individual garment, from the individual shapes of the garments to whether the silhouettes of an ensemble are working together.

Precision and dexterity come with practice as students work with creating volume and movement using tucks, pleats, and gathers in section **2.1 Skirts**; experiment with the complex curves of sleeves and collars in section **2.2 Blouses**; the fitting of pants in section **2.3 Pants**; and the manipulation of stretch fabrics into different looks in section **2.4 Knits**.

As students continue to make the myriad decisions involved in the construction of garments and ensembles in these sections their individual styles and looks should hopefully begin to emerge.

**2.1 Skirts**

**Objectives:** The main goal of this section is to enable students to learn different methods for creating volume and movement. Utilizing these techniques on various styles of skirt will help students see how to sculpt specific shapes.

**General Guidance:**

* An important part of a designer’s skill set is in knowing which technique to use for the desired effect. The exercises and project in this section are intended to teach students how to use different types of darting, gathering, tucking, and pleating to create a specific effect.
* After a group finishes their drapes, it is often useful to do a review or critique and let the students observe each other’s work. Pointing out subtle differences in the drapes will help them hone their observational skills.

**Student Pitfalls:**

* Students tend to place darting and tucking in skirts fairly arbitrarily. Remind them that the purpose of darting and tucking is to accommodate fit below the waist, the fullness of the tummy, or the derrière. The darts/tucks should, therefore, emanate towards those areas.
* The sides are where women prefer to look slim so, whenever possible, encourage students to arrange gathering or pleating away from the sides.
* Students sometimes find it difficult to grasp that flare is created by an upward curve from the center front, and that, for example, when draping the A-Line skirt (page 141), or the bias circle skirt (page 143) , the first pinning needs to be down a few inches from the top edge of the muslin so that the piece can be clipped and dropped as the flare is created.

**Teaching Hints:**

* A useful demonstration is to put three different sections of fabric – one cut on lengthgrain, one crossgrain, and one bias grain – on the dress form as a kind of skirt panel to show how differently the three grains fall .
* Beginning to work with gathering can be awkward and often results in fabric that is bunching and uneven. Demonstrate the technique of pulling the fabric on both sides of the elastic so that students can observe close-up how this evens out the gathers (page 157).
* When determining skirt lengths, students need to decide whether the skirt is being made for a fit model (who would be of average height) or a runway model (who would be very tall). Students should figure out where on the cage of the dress form the knee will be and then use that point as a reference for marking length.

**Videos:**

7. Analyzing the Three Grainlines

25. Creating volume with Pleats and Tucks

26. Draping the Bias Circle Skirt

**Key Terms:**

A-line skirt: A skirt that fits narrowly at the waist and flares at the hem, creating an “A” silhouette.

Dirndl skirt: A traditional style of skirt made from a rectangle drawn in at the waist.

Pleats: Fabric that is folded together and then pressed flat; often stitched down from the inside or on top.

Tucks: Fabric that is pulled together and stitched down; usually smaller than a pleat.

Yoke: An upper, fitted piece of a skirt, a blouse or shirt, or pants that supports another, usually fuller section of fabric.

**2.2 Blouses**

**Objectives:** The main goal of this section is to teach students how to work with the complex curves of sleeves, understanding how lift and cap height work, and also to establish what makes a well-fitting sleeve. The basics of draping a collar are also covered.

**General Guidance:**

* With sections 1.2 Draping Skills for Classic Fit and 1.3 Dresses, the emphasis is on accommodating the bust and executing a close fit. In this section more ease is needed. The challenge in the blouse exercises is to create beautiful bodice shapes away from the dress form, not fitted closely to it.
* Train the students’ eyes by constantly pointing out how the height of the collar stand, or amount of volume of a sleeve, change the look of the garment and how slight differences can make it look either dated or on-trend.

**Student Pitfalls:**

* When working with the many elements of a blouse, one issue for students seems to be that the drape gets easily out of control and often messy. To help with this, the foundation of the blouse – the bodice – needs to be firmly set on the dress form. Encourage your students to pin the bodice securely at the center front and to turn and resolve shoulder and side seams before moving on to the collar or sleeve.
* Precision is crucial for a collar drape . Before draping the collar, the neckline has to be resolved either by taping it or marking it with a chalk line.
* Before draping the sleeve , the armhole needs to be delineated either with a chalk line or tape.

**Teaching Hints:**

* Before draping a blouse, discuss with your students the amount of ease needed to create a bodice shape that is not closely fitted to the dress form.
* Make sure students use a stuffed arm when draping the sleeve. It may be easier for students to drape the bodice first, turn the side and shoulder seams to the inside, then remove the bodice from the form, attach the stuffed arm, and continue with the draping of the collar and sleeve.
* Draping collars takes precision. Check that shoulder seams are turned to the inside and necklines and break points are resolved before students begin.
* Sleeves can be difficult to drape. If the student seems to be floundering, simply mark what he or she has draped so far, remove it from the dress form, and place it on the table next to a classic sleeve block or pattern. Allowing the student to see what his or her shape looks like compared to a classic sleeve shape will help him or her to visualize how to smooth out the curves and finish the sleeve drape on the dress form.

**Videos:**

27. Turning Front Over Back

28. Draping the Sleeve

29. Draping the Convertible Collar

30. Sleeve and Armhole Curves, and Range of Lift

**Key Terms:**

Bodice: The top part of a dress or blouse; the front and back sections not including collars or sleeves.

Collar stand: The part of the collar that stands up from the neckline before the collar rolls over and lays on the blouse back/shoulder area.

Ease: The extra fabric allowed in the fit of a garment.

Sleeve cap (or “crown”): The section of the sleeve above the underarm line.

**2.3 Pants**

**Objectives**: The main aim in this section is to provide students with an understanding of the basic premises of pant (trouser) construction. The historical examples are intended to help students conceptualize that the legs of the pants are basically two rectangles.

**General Guidance:**

* The exercises in this section should be done quickly, with more attention to precision given to the main project, where proportion and fit are key.
* After a group finishes their drapes, it is often useful to do a review or critique and let the students observe each other’s work. Pointing out subtle differences in the drapes will help them hone their observational skills.

**Student Pitfalls:**

* As the pant is being adjusted on the form, students often let the grainlines shift as they focus on the waistline and pocket treatments. The lengthgrains should remain vertical and firmly attached to the waistband or top edge.
* A common mistake is in using too many pins . Encourage your students to notice when their side seams are falling smoothly. If there are a lot of pulls and puckers, suggest they try removing some pins to figure out where the seamlines may not be smooth enough.
* Pinning in the wrong direction is also a common error. Remind students that the pin enters the fabric at the folded edge, and that the pins should be perpendicular to the seamlines. Pinning properly will help to reduce puckering and improve the appearance of the drape.

**Teaching Hints:**

* Make sure each student’s fabric sections are perfectly on-grain and well pressed. Pants need to be hanging smoothly to see the silhouette and if the muslin panels are off-grain, the seams will tend to twist.
* Students may sometimes need to correct and re-angle their pant legs during draping, and it is better to get the two pieces set on the dress form, and then to go back and refine the volume and fit, placing more pins in-between existing ones as necessary.
* Point out that darts and tucks are accommodating fullness of the front tummy area. If they are too close to the center, the fullness gets lost in between the legs and causes wrinkles in the crotch area (page 223).
* Remind students that finessing the pant fit has to do with how the crotch curve is cut away and joined from center front to back .
* Once a pant is up on the dress form with inseam and outseam pinned, make sure students know that once balanced, any further taking in or letting out of the volume needs to be done equally to both seams .
* Encourage your students to stand back occasionally to check their silhouettes. It is easy for them to become too focused on the details and not see the bigger picture. Having a mirror close by is useful in checking the drape from a distance.

**Videos:**

1. Tearing the Muslin (Calico)

2. Blocking the Muslin

3. Pressing the Muslin

31. Draping the Crotch

32. Fitting the Pant (Trousers)

**Key Terms:**

Crotch curve: The curved seamline that runs from the waist to the top of the inseam.

Inseam: The inner leg seamline from crotch to hem.

Outseam: The side seamline from top edge at waist to hem.

**2.4 Knits**

**Objectives**: Knits are an essential fabrication in today’s fashion industry, a staple of T-shirts and bathing suits, but also of evening wear. The main purpose of this section is to help students appreciate the distinction between utilizing the stretch, as in a bathing suit, or not using it, as in a flowing gown.

**General Guidance:**

* When introducing the concept of knits, clarify that garments which utilize the stretch of the knit are more often drafted from blocks, as they usually need to be overlocked or sewn together to really see the silhouette.
* In general, the grainline of the knit that has the most stretch goes around the body, not up and down. This could be either lengthgrain or crossgrain, so the direction of the knit needs to be identified before draping can begin.
* It is very difficult to locate and mark grainlines on knits as they tend to stretch

off-grain when they are rolled onto tubes for shipping. Knits tend not to follow the selvage edge as wovens do, and are often difficult to re-block.

* Garments that use the flow of a knit can be draped, but need a special technique (page 232, drawing a grid) as they stretch during draping.
* After a group finishes their drapes, it is often useful to do a review or critique and let the students observe each other’s work. Pointing out subtle differences in the drapes will help them hone their observational skills.

**Student Pitfalls:**

* Students should guard against not draping on-grain. The grainline cannot be determined by measuring from the selvage edge. Developing an eye for seeing the grain of the knit is essential.
* Students may tend to drape tightly when working with stretch fabrics. Remind them that even if they are utilizing the stretch of the knit, it should be pulled gently to fit, not tightly.
* Students may tend to cut excess fabric away too closely to the seamline, causing knits to curl, run, or weaken at the edges. Encourage them to cut only minimally, using tape or chalk to mark the seamlines.

**Teaching Hints:**

* If working with a flowing style of garment that does not utilize the stretch of the knit, the student should be encouraged to work first with the fabric on the dress form in order to get a feel for the way it drapes before cutting into the knit.
* If the knit is very heavy and volume is being created, the use of safety pins while draping can help keep the seamlines stable, as straight pins tend to pop out.
* Encourage your students to stand back occasionally to check their silhouettes. It is easy for them to become too focused on the details and not see the bigger picture. Having a mirror close by is useful in checking the drape from a distance.

**Video:**

33. Draping with Knits

**Key Terms:**

Coco Chanel: The designer who first popularized knits in the 1920s.

Kimono sleeve: A sleeve that is cut in one with the bodice.

Knit: Fabric constructed by means of interlocking loops between weft and warp yarns.

Overlock: A machine that finishes the edges of fabrics with a series of threads that retain the stretch of the fabric.

**Part 3**

**Introduction**

Part 3 covers more advanced draping and the main goal of these sections is to enable students to learn the technical skills that will allow them to sculpt clothes with more complex seaming and shaping.

Section **3.1 Coats and Jackets** focuses on fine tuning subtleties in shape and form, while section **3.2 The Bias Cut** explores the benefits and drawbacks of bias draping and construction. In section **3.3 The Grand Gown** students will develop their skills of visualization, learning to hold the image of a finished garment in mind while working with large and complicated pieces.

In all these sections students will learn to consider how the energetic flow of a garment is influenced by grainline placement and how emphasizing focal points or details can sharpen the intended attitude of a garment. Incorporating these abstract elements brings a student closer to the goal of being able to create a signature look.

**3.1 Coats and Jackets**

**Objectives:** The main aim in this section is to teach students tobecome more adept at draping away from the dress form to create a shape. The section also helps them to understand in greater detail how shoulder fit and sleeve shape function, and how to work with various types of collars.

**General Guidance:**

* Many students may have had little or no experience of wearing a very high quality tailored coat or jacket, as these are often well above their budget. Either bring in examples of high quality jackets, or have the students try some on at an establishment that carries couture jackets. Point out how the height of the armhole, or the cut of the sleeve, affect movement and comfort.
* It is important that students understand the ergonomic qualities of the two-piece sleeve . The seams allow for more room at the outside of the elbow, and for fullness to be trimmed away at the inside. Shaping a well-fitted two-piece sleeve is not terribly difficult. The challenge is to see when a sleeve is too wide for the jacket, or too straight for the fit of a coat.
* When working with lapels and notched collars, the student should understand the subtle adjustments that need to be made to the collar as the break point and roll line change.

**Student Pitfalls:**

* Students often tend to drape too closely on the dress form, whereas with coats and jackets the shape needs to fall freely and independently off the form – the way a jacket or coat naturally would. Discuss with your students the amount of ease needed when making a garment intended to be worn over sweaters, shirts, or pants.
* When draping the collars of coats or jackets, it is important that the shoulder seam first be finalized and firmly pinned. Students will often allow the part of the shoulder seam closest to the neck to remain unresolved, or too loosely fitted. This will later affect the way the collar works. Remind them that this area of the shoulder seam in particular affects the balance of the coat or jacket.
* Students often match up their two-piece sleeve seams with the seams on the paneled jackets . This usually creates too much bulk in the armhole, and should be done only with very lightweight fabrics.

**Teaching Hints:**

* With advanced draping, students must look more carefully at their drapes, as a general fit is not good enough. Suggest that they study their drapes in front of a mirror, or from a distance, and take time to really see the contours of their shapes. See page 260 for an example of the subtle but important difference a slightly closer fit makes in the back panel seam.
* As with blouses, coats and jackets often have many proportions to coordinate. It helps to finalize one or more of the elements, such as an important pocket or the width of a belt, early on. This finalization of one element will make it easier for the student to decide the rest of the proportions in relation to it.
* When students drape a wider lapel, as on page 271, remind them to start their center front line into the width of the fabric to accommodate the fold-back.
* On the swing coat with shawl collar (pages 292-297), students should understand the importance of clipping into the shoulder at just the right point to create the shawl collar, otherwise they may end up having to clip and repair that area multiple times before getting it just right.

**Videos:**

34. The Two-Piece Sleeve

35. Draping Shaped Darts

36. Turning the Seams of a Fitted Garment

**Key Terms:**

Break point: The point at which the topmost closure causes the lapel to fold back.

Notched collar: A collar that is set onto a fold-back lapel.

Raglan sleeve: A sleeve that extends at a diagonal to the neckline.

Roll line: The line on a coat or jacket indicating the fold of the lapel from the roll and stand of a collar to the first button.

Two-piece sleeve: A standard sleeve seamed in two places for more precise fit, usually labeled “top” sleeve and “under” sleeve.

**3.2 The Bias Cut**

**Objectives**: The aim of this section is for students to understand the basic premise of bias draping and construction, and its benefits and drawbacks.

**General Guidance:**

* The first exercise in this section, the camisole, is intended to teach fitting on the bias and the third exercise, the chemise, provides practice in observing free-falling bias sections and how to create shape while joining them.
* The Harlow gown project is about seeing how the spiral energy of the bias works as it wraps the body and provides a good exercise in creating attitude in a dress.
* Although it seems initially that cutting on the bias uses more fabric than cutting a garment on the lengthgrain, if the design is well thought out it actually offers great economy of cut.
* The benefits of working on the bias are the beautiful quality of drape that the grain creates and its ability to stretch and give over the dress form, allowing greater possibilities for fit.
* The main drawback of working with the bias is its difficulty to control. The give is unpredictable, and the stretch at the edges can create problems. These issues can be minimized for students by working with heavier fabrics that don’t give as much as, for example, a lighter georgette will.

**Student Pitfalls:**

* Students must calculate the bias accurately and not approximately. There is a “true” bias grain, and this is what they need to work with.
* If a student chooses a fabric or muslin that is too soft, it will be difficult and frustrating to work with. It is preferable to select a heavier fabric than one that is too light.
* Pulling too tightly to fit an area will create horizontal pulls . Note the “Fitting on the bias” box (page 311) which explains how to follow the grainline of the fabric and pull at that area to create fit. This is an important concept for students to understand.
* Bias fabric sections cannot be cut closely to the edges of the seamlines or they will spread and stretch too much. Students should accustom themselves to leaving large amounts of seam allowance when working with the bias.

**Teaching Hints:**

* Make sure each student’s fabric is the right weight, and that the sections are perfectly on-grain and well pressed .
* Students need to understand that the very tight fit of a bustier will not be achieved on the bias without pulling and wrinkling. A bias fit is softer and needs a little ease to lay smoothly.
* The fitting technique on page 311 is important to understand. For an area to be closer to the dress form, follow the grainline up to the top and fit from there . Encourage students to experiment with this on the bias camisole.
* Bias seams on garments that are too tight are very difficult to finish smoothly. Bias side seams should be avoided on tight fitting garments.
* The Harlow gown (pages 318-323) is difficult to execute, and once the fabric is cut, construction options diminish. It may be a good idea to have students do this for the first time with an inexpensive, trial fabric.
* Thread tracing a final drape is an important skill. It needs to be done on the dress form, which can be awkward, but just needs practice.
* Remind students to thread trace on both sides of a seamline and crossmark liberally.

**Videos:**

1. Tearing the Muslin (Calico)

2. Blocking the Muslin

3. Pressing the Muslin

37. Fitting on the Bias

38. Draping the Bias Cowl

**Key Terms:**

Bias grain: The 45 degree angle on the fabric.

Camisole: A woman’s top that typically has narrow straps and a low neckline; often refers to a lingerie item.

Chemise: A woman’s top that reaches below the crotch and typically has narrow straps and a low neckline; often refers to a lingerie item.

Godet: A triangular inset used to create flare, typically at the hemline.

**3.3 The Grand Gown**

**Objectives:** The main aim of this section is to study the process of creating the “Grand Gown,” from the foundation and petticoat understructure to draping the gown itself.

**General Guidance:**

* The creation of a grand gown can be a daunting challenge and the exercises and examples in this section make the process understandable by breaking it down into easily accomplished steps: supporting the skirt, petticoats, and corsets.
* Following the steps in the section project, the Charles James gown, gives students the chance to become more adept at handling large sections of fabric.
* It is important for students to maintain a vision of the final dress while working, as it is easy to become lost in the details of the design (or in the large pieces of fabric). It is, therefore, helpful to keep the sketch or photograph of the finished gown nearby to refer to.

**Student Pitfalls:**

* The idea that the foundation supports the weight of the gown from the ribbon at the waist is often hard for students to grasp. It is counterintuitive that the gown appears to be held up by the bustline. Until the gown is fittedon a live model, it is difficult to appreciate how important the waist ribbon is. Even standard size models have varying measurements from bust to waist, and the ribbon will make it possible to set the waist properly. Make sure that your students do not omit this step.
* When working with large sections of fabric, it can be disheartening to set a piece and then realize later that the grainline is tilted off, and that many pins have to be removed. It is better for students to set all the pieces initially, check that the grainlines are all balanced, and then go back in and fine tune the drape.
* Don’t let students cut off the top edge of the foundation prematurely. It can remain higher than the dress until the very end, when the overdress is finalized. The two can then be paired up and trimmed, and marked together.

**Teaching Hints:**

* The height of a model in heels should be considered if the dress is to be worn. It is a good idea for students to calculate the length of the finished dress, and set the dress form ahead of time to the appropriate height.
* With the “Glinda ruffled petticoat” (page 332), the petticoat is created in muslin because it is easy to work with and illustrates the concept of “building” volume with ruffles. However, stiff crinolines may work better, even if they are more difficult to drape and sew. The pictured gown probably has some sort of hoop skirt inside, but because hoops tend to move oddly and unnaturally, it may be preferable not to use them.
* Encourage students to search out interesting types of netting and crinoline for building the understructure, but make sure that they don’t choose ones that are too difficult to handle.
* Have students work in front of a mirror if possible so that they can continue to see the bigger picture.
* When students feel they have finished their draping, encourage them to take a break and come back to it later with fresh eyes. They can then make final adjustments to the silhouette before they mark it.

**Videos:**

39. Visualizing Fabrics

40. Adding Sections of Fabric

**Key Terms:**

Corset: A woman’s close-fitting undergarment, usually using boning and lacing, designed to support and shape the upper body.

Crinoline: A crisp net-like fabric usually made of nylon that is used to hold out skirts.

Foundation: The top part of the understructure of a gown.

Petticoat: The lower part of the understructure of a gown; it can have any amount of fullness.