

[The following abstract is published in the 2012 edition of *Building Bridges*]

Presenter: Learon Inbar

Mentors: Professors Collette Chattopadhyay and Alannah Rosenburg

Title: **The Pursuits and Perks of Poverty: The Development of Egalitarian Ideologies in Medieval Europe Through textiles**

Word Count: 249

Effective two-part title; catchy primary title and informative subtitle

The use of alternative textile materials and the observance of Church doctrines and dress codes in medieval Western Europe reveal emergent egalitarian ideologies despite restrictions placed by the upper class. According to anthropologist Thorsten Veblen's theory of pecuniary emulation, the wealthy obtain power over the poor through the evidence of their wealth. Those with access to silks and dyes, the evidence of wealth in the Middle Ages, had the proof of power.

Opening sentence provides context and relevance of project

Through power of possessions, the wealthy of medieval Western Europe demonstrated a seemingly accepted authority over the lower classes. The upper class had dominated the textile trade through the barrier of high cost and also enacted sumptuary laws to retain exclusivity in the market. Despite these devices, the introduction of alternative textiles and cheaper dyes from local ingredients allowed the poor to acquire luxuries similar to the ruling class', therefore diminishing their authority and revealing strains of egalitarianism. For example, using a hue of purple created from madder, an inexpensive plant native to Western Europe (Jacoby 211) allowed them to circumvent sumptuary laws restricting royal Murex purple.

Logical break between paragraphs; second paragraph demonstrates problem to be addressed.

Although some religious houses moved toward ornamentation and luxury, affording nobles the power of emulation, early Christian doctrine and simpler monastic dress codes combated this because of poverty's role in the gospels. In their veneration of poverty as virtue (Tuttle 91), the Franciscan order in particular reversed the Veblenian theory by emulating those without means, instead of those with means, through their voluntary poverty, thus providing growing egalitarianism in the medieval Europe. **(Word Count: 249)**

Presents key research concept with citation

Articulates research conclusion and delineates specific solutions

Effective concluding sentence quotes key sources and reiterates

#### Works Cited

Jacoby, David. "Silk Economics and Cross Culture Artistic Interaction: Byzantium, the Muslim World, and the Christian West." *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 58 (2004): 197-240. Web 10 Oct. 2011.

Jaster, Margaret Rose. "Clothing Themselves in Acres': Apparel and Impoverishment in Medieval and Early Modern England." *Medieval Clothing and Textiles* 2 (2005): 91-99. Print.

Schneider, Jane. "Peacocks and Penguins: The Political Economy of European Cloth and Colors." *American Ethnologist* 5.3 (1978): 413-47. 08 Oct. 2011.

Tuttle, Virginia G. "Bosch's Image of Poverty." *The Art Bulletin* 63.1 (1981): 88-95. Web. 30 Nov. 2011.

Works Cited:  
Not included in the word count. Include the most important sources, even though some may not be cited within the abstract.