Sewing Class Notes
4/18/17
Style Sheet for these Projects:
http://housing.x10host.com/sewing_class_style_sheet_04_17_17.pdf
Table of Contents (Three Class Outlines)

Gathered Skirt Project

Class 1: Introduction

Get Acquainted
Janome 10-Stitch Machine
Duffel Bags for Storing Supplies and Class Projects
Tags
Why Sew a Skirt?
Learning to Cut Sheets

Class 2: Threading and Testing the Sewing Machine

Machine Components
Threading Your Maching and Filling Your Bobbin With Three
Testing the Stitches of Your Machine
Repeat Steps to Thread Your machine and the Bobbint

Class 3: Fabric Edges and Seams

Finishing Raw Edges
Sewing Your Side Seam
Stitching the Elastic Enclosure

Class 4: Adding Elastic

Adding Elastic to the Band Enclosure
Pin and Close the Elastic Enclosure

Class 5: The Hem

Dowse to Determine a Length
Press the Skirt
Using a Seam Gauge to Turn Fabric Edges (to Pin)
Hand Basting and Hem Stitching
Class 6 - 12: Sew a New Garment (Skirt)

Scrub Pants Project

Class 1: Introduction  
Get Acquainted  
Janome 10-Stitch Machine  
Duffel Bags for Storing Supplies and Class Projects  
Tags  
Sewing Supplies  
Cut King Sheets  
Fabric Scraps (from the Contour Sheet) for Sewing Tests

Class 2: Threading and Testing the Sewing Machine  
Machine Components  
Filling a Bobbin  
Threading  
Sewing Test  
Repeat (Practice)

Class 3: Creating (True) 3X Pattern Pieces with Kraft Paper  
Pinning Kraft Paper Pattern Pieces to Fabric  
Cutting Fabric

Class 4: Finishing Fabric Edges & Sewing Seams  
Finishing Fabric Edges  
Pinning Pattern Pieces Together (in preparation for sewing)  
Sewing Seams  
Pressing Seams Open

Class 5: The Elastic Band Enclosure
Using a Seam Gauge to Turn Fabric Edges (to Pin)
Pressing
Hand Basting
Sewing the Enclosure

**Class 6:** Adding Elastic

Guiding Elastic Through the Enclosure with a Large Safety Pin
Sewing the Ends of the Elastic with Hand Turns on the Machine
Sewing (and Completing) the Elastic Enclosure

**Class 7:** Hemming Pant Legs

Marking the Hems with Pins
Using a Seam Gauge to Turn Fabric Edges (to Pin)
Pressing
Hand Basting
Hand Stitching the Hem

**Class 8 - 12:** Sew a New Garment (Scrubs)

**Button Hole Project**

**Class 1:** Introduction

Get Acquainted
Janome 10-Stitch Machine
Duffel Bags for Storing Supplies and Class Projects
Tags
Sewing Supplies
Fabric Scraps for Sewing Tests

**Class 2:** Threading and Testing the Sewing Machine

Machine Components
Filling a Bobbin
Threading
Sewing Test
Repeat (Practice)
Class 3: Buttonholes

Practice Bound Buttonholes
Identifying Tools Needed to Make Bound Buttonholes
Class 1: Gathered Skirt Project

Introduction

*Vintage: Too old to be considered modern, but not old enough to be considered antique.*

- Urbandictionary.com

Although I have not taught a live sewing class, I have taught hundreds of "Intro to the PC" and "Intro to the Mac" classes. The first class in these courses are always "getting acquainted" sessions that includes personal introductions. Someone begins by stating his/her name and then what they hope to learn. This class also includes a tour of hardware (in this case, the Janome 10-Stitch machine). Because a sewing class includes hands-on projects, tagged duffel bags are intended to store each participant's supplies and project pieces (the duffels and supplies are re-used in future classes).

**Singer Stores**

It's been 50 years since I started to sew which may be the reason why I've been prompted to produce notes about a few of my projects. In 1966, when I was 12 years old, I took an introductory sewing class at a Singer retail store in Kenmore, New York. According to writer Shaun Nelson-Henrick, who wrote "As You Sew, So Shall You Reap," for the September 13, 1976 edition of New York Magazine, Singer offered sewing classes all across the country, see:

http://housing.x10host.com/sewing_class_article_new_york_mag.pdf
Why Sew a Skirt?

My skirt project was launched because I could not find a skirt in the stores where I usually shop (Marshall's, TJ Maxx, Ross). I realized the type of skirt I was looking for—is very easy to sew. I did not own a machine, but I was thinking about purchasing a Janome 10-Stitch machine because the price is so reasonable ($69.99). Janome has an excellent reputation and there was free shipping available through Walmart's Web site. With sales tax, I spent $74.

My family is about 87% Sirian, but I must be on a "phase out" list because I have not worked since 2014. As a result, I knew I needed to find inexpensive fabric for my skirt. The problem was, I wanted to create a "full skirt" with lots of fabric gathered at the waist. Fabric comes in 45 inch widths and the total cost for a skirt made from Walmart's cheapest polyester fabric was more than $20. I did not really like the pattern—a tiny yellow gingham print and I decided to keep searching for other fabric. When I thought of the idea of using King size sheets, I went to Walmart, JC Penney, Tuesday Morning and Target. Most of the sheets were solid colors and the prices for large sheet sets were more than $50. I wanted a floral print (Lilly Pulitzer-like). Next, I went to Fort Lauderdale's Swap Shop where I found a set of printed Queen-size microfiber sheets for $20. As I continued my search, I saw more solids and then found a remarkable selection of floral printed King size sheet sets at Steinmart—some as low as $9.

Learning to Cut Sheets

Sheet sets come with one flat sheet, one fitted, or "contoured" sheet and two pillow cases. I decided to practice on the pillow case fabric and make a Toddler size skirt. I found a blogger who created a step-by-step set of instructions that were perfect, see:


When I was ready to start an adult-size skirt, I realized that flat sheets have a large hem at one end with stitches that need to be removed. The more expensive sheets have larger hems. Use a seam
ripper to remove the hem (look for photograph in the Buttonhole project toward the end of this book).

A king size flat sheet is approximately 76 inches wide and 80 inches long (there is no exact standard and this size is approximate). When you make up a bed, the hem is at the top of the bed and with the stitches removed, you have about 6 extra inches of length. I realized this meant that the fabric needed to be cut lengthwise—down the middle. This would give the skirt a maximum amount of fullness.

My mother's has a small dining room table that fortunately has a leaf. My ideal cutting surface is a ping pong table (the surface I used as a teenager). Tournament size tables are 108 long.

I used my tape measure to mark the center of the sheet with pins and then followed this line with my scissors.

The contour sheet required more work because the stitches that form "pocket corners" need to be removed. To turn this sheet into a rectangle, a set of "wings" need to be removed (wings is a name I made up), see:

http://housing.x10host.com/dimensions_gathered_skirt_08_17_16.pdf

I made a mistake on the first skirt by cutting off the wrong set of wings. Later, I realized that wings need to be cut off the shorter edge. This will leave two finished edges for your skirt’s vertical seam. Similar to the flat sheet, the remaining rectangle will need to be measured and cut down the middle.

Remarkably, the fabric you cut from a set of king size sheets is enough for 4 adult skirts.
The Sewing Dictionary

Donna Gettings Apperson has created a sewing dictionary. This helpful resource is available at: www.thesewingdictionary.com.
Class 2: Gathered Skirt Project

Threading and Testing the Machine

“Janome” means “snake’s eye” and was taken from the appearance of the latest bobbin design (1935).
- Wikipedia.com

When you begin to sew, you will realize that a sewing machine has two spools of thread that supply threads that become interlocked as stitches are formed. The spool beneath the fabric is called a "bobbin" that you will need to fill with the color thread you are using. The Janome 10-Stitch machine comes with 3 standard-size bobbin spools.

The subject of filling a bobbin and other topics are included on a set of notes I've been collecting about the Janome 10-Stitch machine and aspects of my projects, see:

http://housing.x10host.com/janome_setup_08_24_16.pdf

For example, this PDF document contains URLs to YouTube videos that I found very helpful while getting acquainted with the machine.

The manual for the Janome 10-Stitch machine can be found online at:
Spend some time looking at the names of the machine's components (Section 1: Names of Parts).

The Walmart Web site also has an "Interactive Tour" that is useful:


**Threading Your Machine and Filling Your Bobbin With Thread**

On my PDF document of notes, look for a YouTube video titled "How to Thread a Sewing Machine" that contains a useful lesson on how to fill a bobbin. The two women in the video also thread the machine and cover a necessary step that involved pulling the bobbin thread up through the plate mechanism. The camera angle is not great for this step, but a lot can be gathered from listening to their conversation.

If the bobbin is not loaded correctly, you will notice you do not have nice even stitches on both sides of fabric that you sew. Use the "wings" you cut from the contour sheet as a test piece of fabric.

**Testing the Stitches of Your Machine**

See my discussion about the need for a sewing test on pp. 117-118 of the following document:

http://housing.x10host.com/path_to_ascension_04_08_17.pdf

Use the excess fabric I've nicknamed "wings" to test the stitches of your machine.

**Repeat Steps to Thread Your Machine and the Bobbin**

A properly threaded machine is so important, it would be a good idea to practice the step once more.
Class 3: Gathered Skirt Project

Fabric Edges and Seam

*Selvage: an edge produced on woven fabric during manufacture that prevents it from unraveling.*

- Quizlet.com

There will be very little work involved in finishing the edges of your fabric because you can use several finished edges from the sheets. Sheets are mass produced and the finished edges will be a little puckered, but they can be pressed.

**Finishing Raw Edges**

At this point, you will need to make a decision which edge will be used to form a elastic waistband enclosure. I've made several of these skirts and I realize the best edge for the waist is the edge that looks the straightest. You will want your hem to be precise, but it will not need to be as precise as your waistband.

**Using a Seam Gauge to Turn Fabric Edges (to Pin)**

A seam gauge (sometimes called a sewing gauge) is a perfect tool for finishing the raw edges of your fabric. There is a sliding component that can be positioned at .5 inch which is the amount I like to turn the fabric.
With your slider at .5 inches and your pin cushion filled with straight pins, work along the raw edges of your fabric turning the edge over and inserting pins to hold the fold.

**Press the Section You Turned**
When your pins are in place, set up your iron board and iron. With the heat on medium (some synthetic microfiber fabric may melt if the temperature is set too high), press the section you turned. The crease will need to be adequate enough to remove the pins. Note: Some microfiber fabrics are easier to press on the wrong side.

**Hand Baste a Straight Stitch**
Microfiber is slippery fabric that will not hold straight pins. As a result, I have found it convenient to use a contrasting color thread and hand baste sections that have been pressed. I use a couple of diagonal stitches to hold the thread, see:

https://www.pinterest.com/pin/194780752610138862/

Sit down and continue to use your seam gauge to turn:

- *Additional One Half Inch to Finish Seams*
  This will cover the raw edge of the fabric.

- *1.5 inches For an Elastic Enclosure*
  There will be so much fabric to "gather," you will need an extra half inch around your 1" elastic.

![Elastic enclosure pressed and basted with a contrasting color thread.](image)
Sewing Your Side Seam

Your side seam will be the next step. Look closely at your fabric to determine the front and back sides. To pin your side seam, you will need to line up the edges—front sides together. Begin at the waist. You will probably need to release a few of your basting stitches to do this. Place pins perpendicular to where you will stitch your seam.

Seam allowance is usually 5/8ths of an inch. The pressure foot and plate on the Janome 10-Stitch machine are made of plastic, so I approximate this measurement.

Stitching the Elastic Enclosure

Stitch the elastic enclosure and leave about 6 inches open (I leave the section around the side seam open). You will need this section open to work with your elastic.
Class 4: Gathered Skirt Project

Adding Elastic

Notions: Items sewn or attached to an article, such as buttons, snaps, and collar stays. The term can also include small tools used in sewing, such as thread, pins, marking pens, and seam rippers.

- Wikipedia.com

Nearly all of the notions available in the United States are made by Prym Consumer USA formerly known as the Prym-Dritz Corporation and originally known as John Dritz & Sons. The Prym family are from Germany.

Fabric stores in the United States are closing (e.g. Baldwyn, Mississippi-based Hancock Fabrics closed 266 stores in 37 states in 2016). In contrast, Paris’ fabric (“tissus”) shops in Montmartre, at the foot of the Sacre Coeur, is a fabric district with specialty stores devoted to fabric, notions and tailoring supplies. A few examples include Marché St. Pierre and Tissus Reine that sell fabric, Dam Boutons specializing in buttons and Fried Frèse that sells pearls, buttons, and, beading—individually or by the pound. Lafayette Saltiel Drapiers, founded in 1925, is a fifth generation tailoring supply store that sells, suiting fabrics, shirting, linings, hair canvas, chest canvas, felt, underlining, interfacing, sleeve heads, shoulder pads, and button hole thread in different weights, sizes, shapes and colors.

Fortunately, Walmart and Jo-Ann stores sell Dritz products (now a brand of Prym Consumer USA).
Adding Elastic to the Band Enclosure

Once you have determined the correct length for your elastic, you will need to use two large safety pins (Size #3) to secure and guide your elastic through the band enclosure.

**Secure One End of the Elastic**
Use one of the large safety pins to secure the elastic to the open part of the waistband where you plan to insert your elastic.

**Attach a Safety Pin as a Guide**
Attach the other safety pin to the end of the elastic you plan to insert into the enclosure. Use your fingertips to guide this large safety pin through the tube you've created for your elastic.

**Sew the Ends of the Elastic Together**
When the elastic is completely through the enclosure and you know the band is not twisted, pin the ends of the elastic together with an overlapping section about 3/4 of an inch.

I rotate the wheel by hand at this point due to the thickness (so I don't break the machine's needle). I sew a small square on the overlapping sections of elastic.

**Pin and Close the Elastic Enclosure**
When your elastic is connected, you will need to pin the open section of the enclosure and stitch it closed.
The Hem

Hem: The edge of a piece of cloth that is folded back and sewn down.
- Merriam Webster

The tool we used more than thirty years ago to mark hems is no longer manufactured. A "hem marker" had a built-in ruler and metal clamp that could be positioned up and down—containing grooves for inserting a straight pin. A few eBay sellers have what remains of the American supply.

Hems need to be measured evenly from the floor. Without this tool, a plain, lightweight wooden yardstick will be needed—if measuring is necessary. I'm 5'8" tall and I wear this skirt mid-calf length with a 3-inch hem. Because the skirt is made from a large rectangle, there is no need to measure unless you need to cut off extra fabric.

Dowse to Determine a Length

You will need to dowse to determine an approved length for your skirt. At this point, you will know whether you will need someone to assist and mark the hem with straight pins.
Press the Skirt

Press the skirt and then examine the edge of the fabric where you will be forming a hem. Occasionally, I have had to trim a few jagged edges to form a straight edge.

Using a Seam Gauge to Turn Fabric Edges (to Pin)

The work along the hem is similar to the work you did to finish raw edges with the seam gauge. First, turn and pin the edge .5 inch. Then, press to form a crease. Next, use the seam gauge to turn a 3-inch hem. Pin and press.

Hand Basting and Hem Stitching

I find that hand basting the hem helps to secure the hem in place before I begin hand stitching. I use an overcast stitch, see:

https://www.pinterest.com/pin/194780752610138862/
Class 6-12: Gathered Skirt Project

Sew a New Skirt

*Microfiber: synthetic fiber finer than one denier or decitex/thread. This is smaller than the diameter of a strand of silk (about one denier). Silk is about 1/5 the diameter of a human hair.*

- Wikipedia

All of the inexpensive sheet sets are made of synthetic microfiber which is a very soft material that is also durable. At this point in the project, retrace your steps and create another skirt.
Class 1-12: Scrub Pants Project

Introduction

*Microfiber: synthetic fiber finer than one denier or decitex/thread. This is smaller than the diameter of a strand of silk (about one denier). Silk is about 1/5 the diameter of a human hair.*

- Wikipedia

Today, any medical uniform consisting of a short-sleeve shirt and pants is known as "scrubs." Using white microfiber to create a tropic-weight baggy summer pant for men is the goal of this project that is not yet launched. The intention is also to create white pants that can be worn with a Hawaiian shirt.

Patterns for "scrubs" contain pieces that can be cut up and used for a range of sized (e.g. Small to 3X). Instructors who teach this class will need to put a sample together to determine whether the sizes are accurate. When I was a teen, I discovered McCall's and Simplicity patterns ran small. This course will need to include a discussion of how to alter patterns using Kraft paper. Make a garment using 3X pieces and find someone who can try them on.
Class 1-2: Button Hole Project

Introduction

Tailor: A person who makes, repairs, or alters clothing professionally, especially suits and men's clothing.

- Wikipedia

Class 1 and 2 are identical to classes that introduce the other projects. The need for these two "getting started" classes will depend on the students in the class.
Notes
Class 3: Button Hole Project

Buttonholes

Bound buttonhole: one that has its raw edges encased by pieces of fabric or trim instead of stitches
- Wikipedia

Many years ago, I took a tailoring course that included bound button holes and covered buttons. The raw edges of a buttonhole are usually finished with stitching. Bound buttonholes are constructed with small pieces of matching fabric. Contrasting fabric pieces can also be used.

Practice Bound Buttonhole Made with Matching Fabric

There are several different techniques that have been developed to produce bound buttonholes. For a very clear introduction, read Julia Bobbin's tutorial called "Bound Buttonholes and Facings" at:

Juliabobbin.com/2012/12/tutorial-bound-button-holes-and-facings.html

Use scrap pieces of fabric (from one of the "wings" cut off the contour sheet) to make a practice bound buttonhole. Steps include:

Measure Your Button to Determine the Length
Using the formula from sewing.org (see box in this chapter), I measured the diameter and thickness of my button. Accord-
ing to sewing.org, as a general rule, the two added together equal the necessary buttonhole length.

\[
\text{Button} = \frac{3}{4} \text{ in} \quad \text{Thickness} = \frac{1}{8} \text{ in} \quad (\text{convert these to 8ths}) \\
6/8\text{ths} + 1/8\text{th} = 7/8\text{th}
\]

**Using Tailor's Chalk, Mark the Buttonhole**
I used tailor's chalk to mark the 7/8th buttonhole on a piece of scrap fabric.

![Image of tailored fabric with chalk marks]

**Skip Julia's Interface Step**
This buttonhole is not created for a coat (no need for extra strength).

**Create Buttonhole Lips**
My buttonholes are 7/8th of an inch. Julie says to add one inch to that measurement (1 and 7/8ths). This is going to be the width of my button-hole strips that will become button-hole lips. For the height, I chose 1/4th. Multiply this by 4 to get the height of buttonhole strips (1 in).

My buttonhole strips would be 1 7/8ths X 1 inch. The next photo shows how I used tailor's chalk to mark the strips.
**Buttonhole Lip Construction**

With the wrong sides of the fabric strip together, strips need to be folded in half along the width (long side).

On the right side of the garment, line up one of the pressed strips along the edge of the button-hole marking with the raw edges of your button-hole lip along the button-hole marking. With the fabric marker/chalk, transfer the end of the button-hole markings onto the strips so you can see where you need to start and stop sewing.

Line up the second button-hole strip and pin it down. The raw edges of each lip should now be touching in the centre. Continue the markings on this strip also.

Julie suggests extra pins, or basting the lips. I basted the lips in place and used contrasting thread (black) to sew straight lines to mark the chalk lines.

**Sewing the Center of the Lips**

Julie's direction says, "With a 1.5 length stitch or smaller, slow-
ly sew down the centre of each strip, reversing at the start and end. You want these lengths to be exactly the same as each other or you'll end up with crooked button-holes," and says, "If it helps, count each stitch as you sew it down so you can mirror that on the other side."

I learned that I needed to change the stitch selector on the Janome to "A" which is the shortest stitch (there is no numeric reference in the manual).

The photo below is my first practice buttonhole. It turned out better than most of my practice buttonholes (a little puckered), but the stitch setting is too large (my Janome machine was set to "C").

**Clipping a Hole Through the Center of the Buttonhole**

![Image of buttonhole](image)

Cut a small hole through the centre of your button-hole. Cut into the corners of your button-holes making a 'Y' shape at both ends. Make sure you keep the lips out of the way.

This step takes practice. I found that it helped when I left my basting stitches in until after the clipping was complete.

The photo on the next page shows my basting stitches on contrasting fabric (setting "A" on the Janome Stitch Selector).
Buttonholes (from Sewing.org)

Buttonhole markings on a pattern indicate the buttonhole position. They do not indicate the buttonhole length, which is determined by the button. Measure diameter and thickness of your button: as a general rule, the two added together equal the necessary buttonhole length. (For instance, a button 7/8” in diameter and 1/8” thick needs a 1” buttonhole.)

TIP: Make a test buttonhole check, especially for buttons that are fabric covered, dome-shaped, ball-shaped or of some unusual shape. Cut a slit in a swatch of your fabric, and try the button in the slit. Lengthen the slit, if necessary, until the button slides through easily. The length arrived at is the one you will mark on the interfacing.

I used my mechanical lead pencil to make markings on strips made of white cotton.
Push the Buttonhole Lips Through the Cut
On the right side, push the button-hole lips through the cut so that all the raw edges are on the wrong side of the button-hole.

Sewing the "V" Down on to the Ends of the Strips
Carefully sew the V strip down onto the end of the two lips with only one line of stitches. You want to sew as close to the base of the V without sewing into the fold of fabric, otherwise you'll end up with puckers in your garment.

As you'll see in my completed buttonhold photos, I sewed too close in one of my practice projects and the result was puckers.

If you look closely, you will see the "V" that needs to be sewn to strips..

Completed Buttonholes
As you can see, there are a lot of variables in a bound buttonhole project. I need more practice.
This is a bound buttonhole that is puckered due to sewing the "V" incorrectly (no amount of pressing will get rid of the mistake.

This one turned out a little better, but I feel I still need to practice.
Identifying Tools Needed to Make Bound Buttonholes

The bound buttonhole project is much more complicated than making a gathered skirt or scrub pants. Additional tools are needed to produce accurate work. Examples include:

**Fabric Marking**
Tailor's chalk is clumsy to use. I found a blog created by a woman named Toni called "Stitch & Pink" that covers fabric marking tools in a "Tip of the Week" installment, see:


Two of Toni's suggestions that dowse a "Yes" include:

- Disappearing Ink / Mark B Gone Fabric Pen. Toni says the marks from these pens wash out well. She also says they dry out quickly and backups are necessary.

- Pilot FriXion Erasable Gel Pens— the heat from an iron causes the ink to disappear.
Schaedler Precision Rules

I had trouble finding a ruler I liked for this project and decided to introduce Schaedler Precision Rules. The rules were created by New York type designer John N. Schaedler. Staff lettering artist and photo technician Taro Yamashita helped design and develop the rules that contain thinner-than-hairline calibrations that represent divisions as fine as 64ths of an inch, half millimeters, and individual points.

I used my Pentel mechanical pencil to make thin visible marks on white fabric.

Measurements
I could not find an impressive measuring tool among sewing tools (see my box describing Schaedler Precision Rules).

Scissors
The buttonhole cut is impossible to achieve without a pointed scissors. I used a Westcott All Purpose Value Scissors that is imprecise. A cuticle scissors may do a better job.
Removing Stitches with a Seam Ripper

A seam ripper has a razor sharp edge that can easily cut threads you are trying to remove (I added this photo for people who have never heard of this tool).

Seam rippers can become dull after continued use.