Arts & Life

My fall 2026 fashion predictions

By SOPHIE MURRAY
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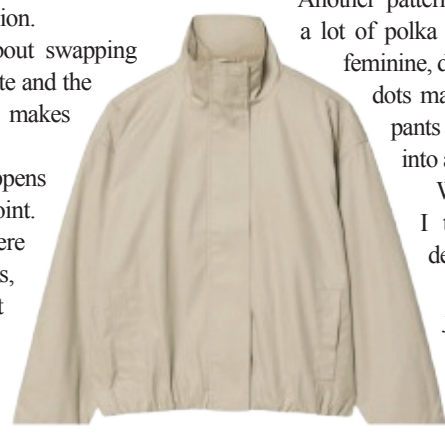
As the temperature gets cooler and the leaves begin to change, there's one thing I look forward to most: the fashion.

There's something about swapping out the bright color palette and the barely-there layers that makes fall feel like a fresh start.



The weather also happens to be at the perfect point. It's not freezing cold where you need a ton of layers, but it's also not so hot that you're sweating the second you step outside, which means there are endless opportunities for your wardrobe.

Of course, some fall staples will never go out of style; however, it will be interesting to see what new and unexpected fashion trends pop up this time around.

While it's certain people's wardrobes will fill with the traditional burgundy and brown color palette, what are the new trends that we didn't have last year?



One of my favorites from this past spring and summer has been stripes, especially striped sets.

I loved utilizing stripes to create a beachy coastal vibe. A blue and white striped set instantly feels like summer.

This fall, though, I think stripes will get a little moodier. A linen-style striped set in colors like brown and white or deep purple and white would be perfect for the transition from summer to fall.

Another pattern I love is polka dots. I see a lot of polka dots, but typically in a more feminine, dressed-up way. I can see polka dots making their way onto hoodies, pants and casual shirts, turning them into a reliable fall staple.

When it comes to jackets, I think the brown suede jacket for the fall feels softer and more relaxed. This is nothing new to fall fashion, but I think people will be styling them more oversized or purchasing a men's jacket, especially paired with a fitted bottom.



Speaking of elevating styles we've seen before, I am very excited to see a return of plaid.

I think plaid has always been a fall staple, but it's going to come around much chicer this year. I imagine baggy plaid shirts, casually half-tucked into a really nice pair of fitted, not skinny, but fitted pair of jeans. The half tuck gives it a chill and relaxed look, but it still comes off as intentional.

To speak more on intentional pieces, I think there will be a lot of layering which will be perfect for comfort but look very put together. For example, a sweat skirt with a knitted sweater or a workout dress with a cropped sweater on top.

On the same note, I am especially interested in layering different cuts and silhouettes, including asymmetrical pieces. An asymmetrical cut of a lace shirt peeking out from under a baggy sweater or even extending through the sleeves adds an unexpected detail to a traditionally simple outfit.



ILLUSTRATION BY SOPHIE MURRAY

For pants, I definitely think track pants are going to be big.

Track shorts were everywhere this summer, often with contrasting colors. It only makes sense that the trend will continue into the cooler months. I think people are going to make them look very upstyled and feminine, making them feel less like a gym outfit and more like something structured and complete.

Another sporty trend I think will have a moment is baseball shirts: the classic style with the different-colored body and sleeves.

These have been popping up all over stores recently. They're comfortable and casual, but the contrast between the body and the sleeves adds enough detail to really elevate an outfit.



Since everyone has been loving mocknecks recently, I think the high-neck style silhouette is going to move beyond just the traditional mockneck sweatshirt. I think there will definitely be higher necklines in jackets, coats and other pieces this fall.

Finally, I'm hoping to see more color in shoes.

I love Adidas Sambas, but I especially love them in unexpected colors like blue, green, red and pink. I hope that people start to add more color to their shoes and let that speak for the entirety of their outfit, allowing the shoes to tie it together.

If my predictions are right, this fall is going to be all about layering, casual yet intentional looks, sporty pieces and just enough pops of color to keep things interesting.

Trump and the history of mail-in voting

By JAY BOOTH
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Mail-in voting has gone back centuries, with some of the first recorded instances of the practice taking place back in 1813. Since then, it's had a minimal impact on presidential elections, until recently.

For the most part, mail-in votes were a form of absentee voting, which is when a person votes in a place that they are not physically in but where they have permanent residence, such as a college student living out of state.

It's a system that worked smoothly for decades. Cycle after cycle, thousands of mail-in ballots have been cast and have been counted properly, expanding voting access to more people and enriching the democracy of the United States.

However, in recent cycles, mail-in voting has become a forefront issue due to the complaints of one man, stemming from a change in voter behavior with mail-in ballots themselves.

Democrats used to be the low propensity party (propensity is how often a voter shows up to vote - high propensity means they vote in even lower scale elections like midterms or local elections, lower propensity means they might only show up for presidential cycles, if that), but the main low-propensity demographic,white non-college educated working class voters, shifted to the Republicans around 2013.

Due to this, Democrats tend to do better than Republicans in lower-turnout elections and vote in methods beyond in-person voting on election day — such as mail-in voting.

The 2020 election exacerbated this discrepancy in voter behavior. Republicans were less likely to heed warnings about turning out in person due to the COVID pandemic, and Democrats were more likely to stay home and vote by mail. All voters were offered the option to vote by mail without a reason.

When President Donald Trump lost the 2020 presidential election by only 82,000 votes across Wisconsin, Arizona, Georgia and Nebraska's Second Congressional District, it was due to mail-in votes. Because they were mailed in, the counting took days, and due to the partisan split of the voting method, these mail-in vote drops tended to be more than 85% Democratic. The discrepancy stirred speculation of fraud — especially when large batches were dropped from urban areas right before the election ballot counters went to bed at 3 a.m.

Trump then, not wanting to admit defeat, claimed that mail-in voting was fraudulent in nature and was part of a Democratic scheme to steal elections.

In actuality, records of fraud are kept and are heavily documented. Fraud has been detected in less than 0.0001% of all forms of voting, including mail-in.

That percentage is small enough that the number of elections which statistically could have been "incorrectly decided" in our lifetimes could be counted on one hand, and it is likely none of those are presidential statewide contests.

Despite this, and the fact that Trump himself regularly votes by mail in his home state of Florida (he did so in a special election for the State House district that Mar-a-Lago resides in, which a Democrat ironically flipped), Trump continues to attack the method of voting. Politically, this is almost certainly due to the partisan lean of mail-in ballots, which still lean Democratic, though by a much smaller margin than in 2020.

His attack on mail-in voting has spanned months, starting with his proposition of the "SAVE America Act" in 2025. The act would require people to bring identification measures to register and vote in every state, on top of restricting mail-in voting. Opponents have claimed this would potentially disenfranchise married women whose IDs no longer match their last name, voters with non-English names and other groups. It has even been called a voter suppression bill. Due to the Senate filibuster, however, the bill has not passed the floor, much to Trump's verbal discontent.

After this attempt failed, Trump took matters into his own hands. With the U.S. Postal Service under the Executive Branch as an "independent" agency, he signed an executive order that changed how the USPS was to receive, handle and work through mail-in ballots.

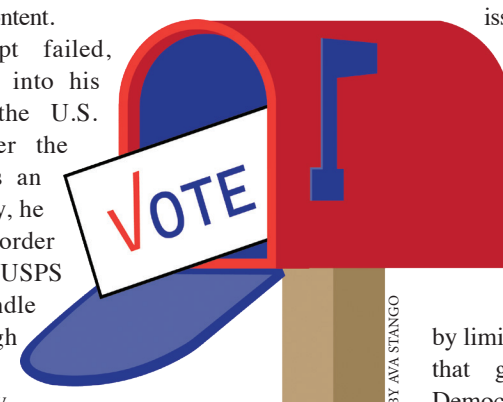

ILLUSTRATION BY AVA STANGO

Immediately, opponents launched a lawsuit, which is still awaiting an outcome. There's a pretty high chance it will make it to the Supreme Court, which has given Trump a mix of wins and losses this cycle. The main legal argument against it is that the USPS has no authority to control the ballots, as they are a formal election matter explicitly run by states that happen to go through the government agency. Proponents counter that the national government has the authority to make changes to this process, as the USPS is a federal agency that can control its own operations under all circumstances.

An injunction has been issued by U.S. District Judge Indira Talwani, but a whistleblower within the USPS leaked that the organization is preparing to follow the order anyway. Despite this, on Sept. 4, both North Carolina and Florida started mailing out ballots, officially starting the 2026 midterms — and complicating the matter more as the executive order's limitations may impact who should get ballots in these two states.

As the median voter is likely to blame the Republican-controlled government for their issues, the Democrats are likely to do well in the midterms. Restricting mail-in voting may be Trump's attempt to try to control how poorly things are expected to be for the Republican Party in November, doing so by limiting access to a method that generally is strongly Democratic.

But now faced with the legal challenges that have come forward against the order, Trump may be getting backed into a corner - and as his net approval nears a whopping -30, it's uncertain if even the Republican Party will follow him down that path. So in all effectual manners, the second Trump presidency appears to be coming to an end - whether the mail-in changes come into effect or not.