

## ART 250-002 US-Introduction to Ceramics

T-Th 11:00am-1:50pm

Spring Semester 2013

Instructor: **Brian Weaver**

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Office hours: Art Building Room 117. Monday & Wednesday 12:00pm – 1:00pm;

**Or by appointment – contact me through email.**

### Course Description

The purpose of this course is to introduce and familiarize the student with the techniques, processes, and concepts associated with the use of clay as a **fine art medium**.

Lectures and demonstrations will cover clay preparation, the fundamentals of wheel throwing, basic hand-building techniques, surface development including glazing, and kiln firing. Class projects will focus on the acquisition of technique, formal design, and the creation of ceramic objects that are formally and conceptually expressive. The projects will be discussed and developed in reference to both contemporary and historic concerns in the ceramic medium. Both the vessel and sculpture traditions in ceramics will be explored.

Slide presentations and films will provide examples of historical and contemporary ceramics. Students are expected to continue a personal investigation of this material through research in the university library where there is an extensive collection of books on ceramics (call numbers starting with NK3700, TT, TP) as well as the periodicals Ceramics Monthly, American Craft, and Studio Potter. Many other resources are available on-line.

### Course Requirements, Grading, and Policies

1. **Attendance is mandatory.** Students are expected to be present in each class, for the entire class period. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class at 8:00am. A student who is not present when roll is taken will be counted as absent. **No distinction will be made between excused and unexcused absences.** If you arrive in class after the roll has been taken but within the first 15 minutes of class, you will be marked tardy instead of absent. A tardy counts as ½ an absence. Therefore, for every two late arrivals to class, an absence will be counted. After the third absence of the semester, the instructor may lower the student's final semester grade by one letter grade for each subsequent absence.

**A student who misses a class or is late for class is still responsible for any material discussed and any announcements made during class. The student is also responsible for making up the missed work time.**

2. **Working outside of class is required.** You will be able to accomplish a lot during class time but it will be necessary to work outside of class in order to complete your projects in a timely manner, in order to reinforce the techniques we are acquiring, and in order to conduct personal research. When we are throwing on the wheel, daily practice outside of class is strongly recommended.
3. Participation in loading and unloading the electric and gas kilns is required. Sometimes these activities will take place outside of class.

4. Assignments are due periodically and will receive a preliminary evaluation in a class critique at the completion of each project. Criticism and discussion are important aspects of artistic activity and development. Therefore, attendance and active participation at all class critiques is a very important **requirement** of the course.
5. The following criteria will be used in evaluating work during critiques and in grading the work. **Please note that only completed work will be critiqued.**
  - the finished work must show evidence of an understanding of the technical, aesthetic, and conceptual aspects of the assigned projects
  - the degree of effort and involvement apparent in the work
  - the degree of innovativeness and creativity shown in the work
  - the quality of technique (craftsmanship), emphasizing improvement over the course of the semester

Taking the above criteria into account, projects will be graded as follows:

A (Excellent) will be given to those projects which undertake and successfully resolve creative and challenging solutions; which demonstrate superior conceptual, expressive, and technical abilities. A sustained and committed work ethic must be evident.

B (Good) will be given to those projects that complete the requirements of the assignment in a creative manner, display a good level of technique, and in which a good work ethic is evident.

C (Average) is given to those projects that satisfy the specifications of the assignment on an adequate level. Reasonable effort has been demonstrated in order to complete the assignments.

D (Passing - Minimum) will be given to those projects which attempt to address the assignments but which fall short in understanding, creativity of solution, quality of technique, and effort.

F (Failure) is given to projects that fail to demonstrate an understanding of the assignment and display a lack of creativity and effort.

6. A vocabulary exam, counting for 5% of the final grade, will be given at the end of the semester. It will cover the basic ceramic terminology discussed throughout the semester.

7. A work-in-progress grade will be given at midterm. The final, semester grade will be based on the following:

**85%** - the evaluation of all finished, glazed work presented at the final critique.

**10%** - class performance and attitude throughout the semester, including studio maintenance, participation in loading and unloading kilns, and participation at critiques.

**5%** - Vocabulary Exam on basic ceramic terminology

Extra credit is given for volunteering as a student monitor in The University Gallery, first floor Art Building. For extra credit to impact your final grade, a minimum of five hours must be logged as a volunteer. There is a sign up sheet in the Art Office across the hall from the Gallery.

**\*\*\*Remember that your final grade will be subject to the attendance policy stated above\*\*\***

8. Studio Policies:

- The ceramics studio is a pet-free, child-free zone 24/7.
- **Do not mess with other peoples' stuff. Look but don't touch.**
- All cell phone use is prohibited during class time.
- Smoking is not allowed in WTFA including the kiln court areas of the ceramics studio.

### 9. Positive Social Work Environment

In addition to being responsible for the proper use of facilities and equipment, all students are responsible for maintaining a positive social work environment. A baseline expectation is that all students will be civil and cooperative in their dealings with other students. The necessity of sharing workspace and equipment requires that cooperation take place. A positive sense of community will foster productivity and the creation of good work.

#### **Statement on Accommodations for ADA eligible students:**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services  
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
Gee Library, Room 132  
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835  
Fax (903) 468-8148  
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

#### **Statement on Student Behavior:**

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenet of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct)

### Assignments

A handout will be provided that lists the objectives for each project.

#### **I. Handbuilding projects**

##### Coil and pinch techniques

Create a **symmetrical vessel** that you have designed after studying historical references. A contour drawing will serve as your "road map" in building this vessel. Height: 12-14"  
Surface: Choose one of the following themes: animal, vegetable, mineral, to generate ideas for imagery that will activate the surface through slip application.

Create two contrasting forms using the pinch technique: a **symmetrical tea bowl** and an **asymmetrical, organic form**.

##### Slab technique

**Arrow.** Design a variation on the arrow form that includes curved as well as straight lines. Construct the form first out of cardboard and then use the cardboard pieces as templates for constructing the arrow out of clay slabs.

**Teapot.** Must incorporate the formal vocabulary of a teapot but does not have to be functional.

## **II. Throwing projects – learning how to throw on the potter's wheel**

- 1) Learn the **fundamentals** of centering and pulling a cylinder.
- 2) Beginning throwing project: throw a **cylinder** at least 7" in height from 2 ½# of clay.
- 3) Set of six functional **mugs** with pulled handles, trimmed foot rings, and slip treatment of the surface.
- 4) Two **bowls**: continuous inner curve; two different shapes; trimmed foot rings.

### **Materials List**      **IMPORTANT: Write your name on all your tools and supplies!!**

The ceramic tools are available in the campus bookstore. Other supplies can be found in Wal Mart, the Dollar Store, art stores, kitchen stores, or hardware stores.

Ceramic tool kit: sponge, needle tool, wooden rib, metal rib, cutting wire, loop tool, ribbon tool, wooden modeling tool.

Additional tools and supplies: stiff blade fettling knife, small plastic bucket, garbage bags, small lidded plastic container, wooden paddle, two artist's brushes, dust mask, large towel, large kitchen sponge, notebook or sketchbook for drawing and taking notes.

Optional: surform tool, paint scraper, natural sponge, workshirt or lab apron.

In addition to the above list, you may find the need for other basic art supplies or tools such as cardboard, mat knife, ruler.

Studio policy on kiln firings: Any work that is defective or damaged (such as too heavy, cracked, broken, etc.) will not be fired. Extra work must meet the standards of the studio and will be fired only as kiln space is available.

**ART 250-002****Spring 2013****COURSE SCHEDULE**

<b>January</b>	<b>15</b>	Tuesday	Course Introduction: Welcome to Ceramics!
	<b>17</b>	Thursday	Clay body information and clay mixing
	<b>22</b>	Tuesday	Coil demonstration
	<b>24</b>	Thursday	Coil workday
	<b>29</b>	Tuesday	Pinch pot demo and workday
	<b>31</b>	Thursday	Coil and pinch workday
<b>February</b>	<b>5</b>	Tuesday	Workday. Slip application and texturing demonstration
	<b>7</b>	Thursday	Critique: Coil and pinch
	<b>12</b>	Tuesday	Handbuilding demonstration: slab techniques
	<b>14</b>	Thursday	Handbuilding workday - arrows
	<b>19</b>	Tuesday	Finish arrows
	<b>21</b>	Thursday	Teapot demonstration
	<b>26</b>	Tuesday	Handbuilding workday - teapots
	<b>28</b>	Thursday	Workday
<b>March</b>	<b>5</b>	Tuesday	Workday
	<b>7</b>	Thursday	Critique: Arrows and Teapots
	<b>19</b>	Tuesday	Throwing demonstration: centering and the cylinder
	<b>21</b>	Thursday	Throwing practice
	<b>26</b>	Tuesday	Throwing practice
	<b>28</b>	Thursday	Throwing practice
	<b>April</b>	<b>2</b>	Tuesday
<b>4</b>		Thursday	Thrown cylinders due. Mug demonstration.
<b>9</b>		Tuesday	Mugs
<b>11</b>		Thursday	Mugs
<b>16</b>		Tuesday	Bowl demonstration
<b>18</b>		Thursday	Bowls
<b>23</b>		Tuesday	Last day for wet clay. Mugs and Bowls due.
<b>25</b>		Thursday	Load final bisque kiln. Studio clean up.
<b>30</b>		Tuesday	Last class day. Vocabulary Exam. Glazing.
<b>May</b>	<b>2</b>	Thursday	Load final glaze kiln.
	<b>7</b>	Tuesday	Final Critiques (Part 1): 11:00am – 1:00pm
	<b>9</b>	Thursday	Final Critiques (Part 2): 11:00am – 1:00pm

Keep this schedule and up-date it throughout the semester. Demonstrations covering slip decorating techniques, glazing, kiln loading and firing, etc. will be scheduled when appropriate, as will slide lectures and films.