

ART 250-001 Introduction to Ceramics **Hours: 3**
Spring Semester 2015 MW 8-10:50am **Location: WTFA116**
Instructor: Barbara Frey
(903) 886-5209 email: Barbara.Frey@tamuc.edu
Office hours: WTFA 101. MTWR 11:00am – Noon
And by appointment – contact me through email to schedule an appointment.

Course Description

This course provides an introductory level experience in the use of clay as a **fine art medium**. Forming techniques, surface development and glazing, and kiln firing practices will be introduced. Both the functional and sculptural ceramic traditions will be explored.

Student Learning Outcomes:

At the conclusion of this course students should be able to demonstrate the following:

- knowledge of the world art history of ceramics
- knowledge of contemporary ceramics in the United States
- the ability to successfully manipulate clay through the basic handbuilding techniques of coil, pinch, and slab
- the ability to successfully manipulate clay on the potters wheel
- the ability to embellish the surface in an expressive and meaningful way using slips and glazes
- the ability to safely load and unload ceramic objects in both electric and gas kilns
- the ability to discuss, in an articulate, thoughtful manner during class critiques: the meaning, design, and technical processes used to create ceramic art objects

Method of Instruction: Lectures will introduce key developments in the world history of the ceramic medium and introduce the student to important contemporary American ceramic artists. Demonstrations will cover clay preparation, the fundamentals of wheel throwing, basic handbuilding techniques, surface development including slip application and glazing, and kiln loading and unloading.

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.

Powerpoint 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 Magazine*. Many other resources are available on-line.

Course Requirements

- **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.

- **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. Entry to the building at night and on weekends will be by swipecard using your university ID card.
- Participation in loading and unloading the electric and gas kilns is required. Sometimes these activities will take place outside of class.
- 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.

Assessment

- 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.**
 1. the finished work must show evidence of an understanding of the technical, aesthetic, and conceptual aspects of the assigned projects
 2. the degree of effort and involvement apparent in the work
 3. the degree of innovativeness and creativity shown in the work
 4. 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.

- 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.
- 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

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

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.

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, including e-cigarettes, is not allowed in WTFA including the kiln court areas of the ceramics studio.
- Studio Safety: Please wear shoes and proper attire for studio activity. Tie back hair and loose clothing when working around shop equipment. Wear a respirator when mixing clay or glaze materials, or spraying glazes.
- Lockers: Lockers are to be used for tool storage. Claim a locker by labeling it with your name, semester, and year. You must provide your own lock. At the end of the semester, clean out the locker by removing all contents and the lock. Failure to do so will mean the lock will be clipped and all belongings forfeited. If you are taking a ceramics class the following semester, label the locker as such and your belongings will not be disturbed.
- 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.

- **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.

The Clay Club

The Clay Club is a student organization chartered to promote interest in the ceramic arts and contribute to the cultural life of the university. The Clay Club is open to any student on campus but students enrolled in ceramics classes may have a special interest in joining and participating in extracurricular ceramic activities and events. The Clay Club sponsors visiting artists, fieldtrips, attendance at the annual national ceramics conference, and hosts fundraising events to help finance these activities.

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)

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
Gee Library, Room 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835; Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

Assignments

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

I. Handbuilding projects

Coil and pinch techniques

Create a **symmetrical vessel** that you have designed after studying historical examples. A contour drawing will serve as your "road map" in building this vessel. Target height: 14"

Surface: Using various slip application techniques, activate the surface of your vessel in response to the design principles found in Greek black figure vases or Native American Pueblo pottery.

After studying traditional Japanese teabowls associated with the Zen Buddhist tea ceremony, create two contrasting forms using the pinch technique: a **symmetrical tea bowl** and an **asymmetrical organic form**. Both forms will be glazed and fired using the traditional Japanese firing method of raku.

Slab technique

Assemblage: Robots and Spaceships. Construct either a robot or a spaceship using all of the following components: cylinder, cone, half sphere, sphere, cube, rectangle.

Contemporary reference: artists Ken Price, Anne Currier, Michael Geertsen

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

Historical reference: the teapots of Yixing, China, and Richard Notkin.

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 need other basic art supplies or tools such as cardboard, mat knife, ruler.

<u>ART 250-001</u>	<u>Spring 2015</u>	<u>COURSE SCHEDULE</u>	
January	19	M	Holiday: Martin Luther King Jr. Day. No Class.
	21	W	Course Introduction: Welcome to Ceramics!
	26	M	Coil Demonstration
	28	W	Coil workday
February	2	M	Coil workday
	4	W	Pinch pot demo and workday
	9	M	Slip application demonstration
	11	W	Workday
	16	M	Critique: Coil and pinch projects due
	18	W	Handbuilding demonstration: slab techniques
	23	M	Handbuilding demonstration: slab techniques
	25	W	Workday
March	2	M	Workday
	4	W	Teapot demonstration
	9	M	Workday: teapots
	11	W	Workday: teapots
	16	M	Spring Break
	18	W	Spring Break
	23	M	Critique: Assemblages and teapots
	25	W	Throwing demonstration: centering and throwing the cylinder
	30	M	Throwing practice
April	1	W	Throwing practice
	6	M	Throwing practice
	8	W	Throwing practice
	13	M	Thrown cylinders due. Mug demonstration.
	15	W	Mugs
	20	M	Mugs
	22	W	Bowl demonstration
	27	M	Bowls
	29	W	Last day for wet clay. Mugs and Bowls due.
May	4	M	Load final bisque kiln. Studio clean up.
	6	W	Last class day. Vocabulary Exam. Glazing.
	7	R	Load final glaze kiln.
	11	M	Final Critique: 8:00 – 10:00am

This schedule is subject to revision. We will up-date this schedule as needed throughout the semester. Clay mixing and demonstrations covering slip decorating techniques, glazing, kiln loading and firing, etc. will be scheduled when appropriate, as will slide lectures and films.