

AXD 231, Ceramics: Handbuilding Processes

University Studies Requirement: 3B

Course Overview:

This course will focus on the use of clay as a material for making art. A variety of handbuilding and forming techniques will be explored through the context of making objects. The use of clay, slip, glaze, and various firing methods will all be presented.

Course Purpose

To thoroughly acquaint the student with all aspects of the ceramic process ranging from an awareness of the geological origins of clay materials to all the numerous handbuilding forming techniques, to an understanding of the ideas embodied in historical and contemporary ceramics. The objective of this course is that each student develops technical expertise as well as personal awareness through the material, pursuing individual ideas and conceptual development.

University Studies Course Rationale:

Through lectures, critiques and handbuilding projects, students develop an understanding of the evolution of ceramic wares with a focus on the cultural context, and formal and conceptual aspects of historical and contemporary Ceramics. In image lectures, each project is introduced by examples of clay from prehistoric to contemporary times in order to deepen an aesthetic and interpretive understanding of Ceramics. Students acquire appropriate disciplinary terminology to speak articulately about their work as well as the work of others to participate in mandatory group critiques. Critical analysis of formal issues, as well as cultural and historic context of ideas and imagery are the heart of these critiques. Course content and methods allow students to explore their ideas effectively through clay and to understand the evolution of methods and ideas, images and formal elements as a mode of communication. At the end of each ceramic assignment, students are required to write a reflection analyzing the interconnected nature of idea.

This course takes place in the studio and includes lectures, demonstrations, discussions and critiques. The instructor works closely with each student to also offer one-on-one instruction and feedback of ceramic projects in process. Students use a variety of handbuilding methods, all supported by the introductory lectures of each unit and assigned research homework for each project.

Learning Outcomes:

Course-Specific Learning Outcomes:

1. Build using the pinch, coil, chunk and slab methods.
2. Model the human form.
3. Participate actively and thoughtfully during critiques.
4. Utilize appropriately knowledge of ceramic handbuilding terminology and cultural examples and firing processes.
5. Present to the class information on a historical work of art.
6. Evaluate your own, and others', work critically.
7. Analyze your personal aesthetic interests and develop conceptual individual directions.
8. Document your inspirations and project ideas in your sketchbook.
9. Implement a variety of surface decoration techniques.

University Studies 3B Learning Outcomes:

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Articulate the cultural context, and historical, formal and conceptual aspects of the ceramic object researched as reference.
2. Interpret and create informed responses (via writing and presentation) to the ceramic research studied through the analysis of the form, content, context and methods of production using appropriate terminology.
3. Explain the ways in which the ceramic form expresses the values that humans attach to their experiences.

Examples of Texts and/or Assigned Readings:

Berger, Guy and Nancy N. Schiffer. *Pueblo and Navajo Contemporary Pottery*. Schiffer, 2004.
Claire, Lilly. *Vitamin C: Clay and Ceramic in Contemporary Art*. Phaidon Press, 2017.
Cooper, Emmanuel. *Contemporary Ceramics*. Thames & Hudson, 2009.
Illian, Clary. *A Potter's Workbook*, U of Iowa Press, 1999.
Speight, Charlotte. *Hands in Clay*. McGraw-Hill, 2003.

Course structure

During the semester there will be four units and multiple projects assigned. Each unit introduces different building methods as well as opportunities for personal and conceptual investigation. You receive a grade for each Unit throughout the semester along with a participation grade. To complete Units you will need to spend three to four hours weekly outside of class in the studio. Please use the studio as much as possible!

We will begin class at 6:30 PM, working together for thirty minutes starting with demos and discussions and, several times during the semester, looking at images. We will work until 9:00 PM, at which time you will be responsible for cleaning up your area.

Critiques are sometimes small group, individual or organized by the entire class; they are all mandatory and will be announced at the end of project units. Failure to present finished work or attend critique constitutes lowering the unit grade by one letter grade.

Attendance

Attendance and class promptness is required. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. More than three absences constitutes lowering your final grade one letter grade. Three or more tardies lowers your final grade one-letter grade. Seven absences is an automatic failing grade.

Grading

Four Unit project grades will be given. In addition, a participation grade will be given which includes your class readiness and attendance, critique participation, as well as class and colleague supportiveness. At midterm, I will discuss your class grade with you, and you may feel free to make an appointment with me to discuss your grades at any time.

Unit #1 20%
Unit #2 20%
Unit #3 20%
Unit #4 20%
Participation Grade 20%

Example Learning Activities and Assignments:

Build using the pinch, coil, chunk and slab methods.

Outcome Map:

Univ St Learning Outcome	Teaching and Learning Activities	Student Work Products
1	Image presentation to look at cultures that referenced form such as early Mexican from Jalisco, Colima, and Nayarit regions, Roman culture, early Persian, and funk movement in California.	Make a referential project of a found object. For example, a gourd as seen in early Mexican western region or a stack of books as seen from the 1960's California funk movement using trompe l'oeil method of close, almost exact representational qualities.
2	Intro to material using the pinch, coil, chunk and slab methods as referenced in slide presentations.	End product will be a lifelike object and critique discussion time will center not only on the strength of the elements of design but the nuances learned by seeing the cultural example.
3	Group Critique	Critique enables students to explain the ways in which the art form expresses the values that humans attach to their experiences and explain how this fits in a larger continuum of the international art world.

Course Outline:

Weeks 1-3: Unit #1 – Intro to material, referential project of found object. Image presentation to look at cultures that referenced form such as early Mexican from Jalisco, Colima, and Nayarit regions, Roman culture, early Persian, and funk movement in California.

Weeks 4-6: Unit #2 – Historical project. Research and reinterpretation of historical form. All building methods, glaze intro and kiln loading and firing. Image presentation that introduces chronological development on historical ceramics. This comprehensive introduction covers cultures such as Egyptian, Greek, Roman, early Islamic, Spain and Italy, Japan and China, Europe as influenced by the previous cultures, Africa, Native American, Meso-American and American immigrant pottery.

Weeks 7-10: Unit #3 – Complex, opposing qualities object form. Review of construction and underglaze, slip and glaze development. Image presentation and required research on hybrid form; examples from historical and contemporary ceramics encouraging the reflection on hybridity while encouraging independent project development.

Weeks 11-14: Unit #4 – Human based project - Final project. Image presentation and research required that reflects on the articulation of human form in clay referencing cultural examples from early Persia, Greek/Roman, German, English, Meso-American, Native American, African and contemporary ceramics, particularly 1960 to the present.

Week before Final Exams glaze, fire, and finish all semester projects.

Required Tools

1. Pottery tool kit – available in bookstore.
2. Hand towel
3. Small plastic bucket
4. Paint brushes
5. Lightweight plastic to cover projects in progress.
6. Small plastic containers with lids
7. Lock for locker

Required Materials:

Terra Cotta clay is purchased by the 25# bag at \$15.00 each. Average clay needs will be 75-150# for the semester. **Recycled clay is always free. Glazes and slips are included in your lab fees.**

Studio Access and Etiquette:

You have access to the studio when it is not being used for class times until 2:00 AM each evening. Take care and pride in your space, clean up after yourself and carefully store works in progress. There is no eating or smoking in the studios.

Cell phones are to be silenced and put away during class hours.

I-pods are permitted (at a reasonable volume) on workdays only.

Beverages are permitted (with lids/caps), and food is permitted on critique days.

Accommodation Policy: Students seeking academic accommodations or adjustments must contact the Office of Access and Success to request services. In order to determine eligibility for an academic adjustment/auxiliary aid, the student must register at the Center for Access and Success and provide documentation of the disability.

Policy on Academic Honesty: The university's policy on academic honesty, including plagiarism, appears in both the undergraduate catalogue and the student handbook. The following link to the policy will provide more detailed information. <http://www.umassd.edu/studenthandbook/academicregs/ethicalstandards.cfm>