ART 229A.01: Ceramics I

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SYLLABUS

Art 229 Ceramics I

Spring 2007, Art Annex room 128
Instructor: Orville Chigbrow
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Office Hours: Fri 9-5; M-TH 12-1
Phone: 243-6476

Course Description:

Prerequisite: Art 135, Three-Dimensional Fundamentals; or equivalent

U 229A Ceramics I. This class is an introduction to clay as a historical and contemporary art-making medium. It will acquaint you with a variety of basic methods of building with clay, with equal emphasis on hand building and throwing as well as elementary solutions to problems of glazing and surface treatment. This 3-credit course will provide the fundamental techniques of the ceramics process and begin enhancing your awareness of formal issues, design concepts, and critical thinking in clay. We will cover various methods of building with clay; coil, slab, carving from solid forms, and wheel throwing as well as investigate surface decoration using slips, glazes and stains. We will also experiment with different firing processes.

Class meets Monday and Wednesday from 2:10 P.M. – 4:00 P.M. Open lab is every Friday. I encourage you to come in and use this open time. I will be here to help you improve. The only way to be more than average is to practice, do more than is expected, work on assignments outside of class time, and practice some more.

Course Objectives:

1. Provide an opportunity for students to learn a variety of ceramic skills and process, i.e., the perception of form and the conceptual interaction of developed skills.
2. Develop basic competence in hand building and throwing techniques and surface decoration techniques.
3. Demonstrate understanding of basic materials and vocabulary related to clay, glazes, and firing.
4. Focus on finished works as well as associated processes.
5. Emphasize development of ideas through:
   a. Direct experience with the materials,
   b. Perfection of skills to the degree required to realize a concept and,
   c. Taking the idea to its final state.

Student Responsibilities:

1. Come to class ready to work by 2:10 P.M.
2. Work in class. Challenge yourself with the projects. Your work will improve if you thoroughly experiment with the possibilities of each technique and think through design and engineering problems. Don’t be satisfied by the first, safe or easy solution.
3. Commit to at least 5 hours of work outside of scheduled class time.
4. Participate constructively in class critiques.
5. Attend announced events outside of class time.
6. Complete projects on time and read the homework assignments.
7. View as much ceramic art as you can.
8. Turn off ALL cell phones and any other electronic communications device while in this class.
Recommended Text:

*The Craft and Art of Clay*, Fourth Edition, by Susan Peterson is available at the University Bookstore, through local bookstores and on line.

I strongly urge you to take advantage of the variety of ceramic books and magazines available in the library and bookstores. Review as many periodicals as you can find, e.g., Ceramics Monthly, Ceramics Review, Clay Times, Ceramics Art and Perception and Pottery Making Illustrated. Use the Internet to extend the depth of your visual database of ceramic art. Individual research is a very important part of any art student’s workload and education.

Course Fees:

Your course fees are used to purchase materials and supplies for YOUR use in this course. Class materials and supplies are not for family, the public or general use.

Additional Supplies:

Course fees do not cover personal tools required for this course. Students must provide: a basic tool set (needle tool, fettling knife, sponge, wire cut off tool, wooden and rubber ribs, wood modeling tools), one-gallon bucket, brushes, and light weight CLEAR plastic to cover work (dry cleaner bags or those clear bags in the grocery store vegetable department are great but garbage bags are terrible). An old towel and apron are suggested but not required. Ceramic tools and supplies are available at the U of M Bookstore for around $20.00.

Homework:

N.A.S.A.D. guidelines, supported by the Department of Art’s policy, require a minimum of 5 hours of independent studio work outside of scheduled class times for each four hours of class. There are only 12 class days left in this semester and many are dedicated to critiques or demonstrations. Attendance, as well as work outside of class, is directly proportional, and critical to your success in developing your new ceramic skills. Assignment due dates are listed in the course outline below. Projects are due at the beginning of class for scheduled critiques. Plan accordingly.

Attendance:

Attendance is required and roll will be taken between 2:10 and 2:15 each day. A tardy means leaving before class is dismissed and an absence means your body was not present in class when roll was taken. On the third unexcused absence your final course grade is lowered one full point, on the fourth absence 2 full points, on the fifth absence 3 full points, etc. Being tardy or leaving early is equal to ½ of an absence. You do the math. The only excused absences are: a medical emergency (a scheduled appointment during class time is NOT an emergency), death in your family or you are an active participant in an approved university event (which may affect some class cancellations on my end as well). Everything else is unexcused. See the Course and Studio Procedures handout for details about how grades are assigned.

Academic Misconduct and the Student Conduct Code

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at [www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/Index.cfm/page/1321](http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/Index.cfm/page/1321).
Studio Hours:

The studio is open every day from 7:00 am to 11:00 pm for enrolled students only. You may work on your projects at any time another class is not in session. Ask permission of the instructor if you need to work during a scheduled class, it usually is not a problem and there are quiet places to work in the studio. The studio is not normally open on scheduled holidays, during the breaks or during Finals Week. Do not use any tools, toxic materials or processes until I have provided the appropriate lecture.

Be aware of your surroundings, especially when working at night. The university has an escort service, use it. Never leave valuables or supplies unattended anywhere, even for a minute.

Course Structure:

Projects are due at the beginning of class on the assigned critique date. Participation in class critiques is part of the learning process and helps you to verbalize processes and concepts; everyone is required to participate during critiques. Ceramic art, like all art, is about visual, verbal, and written communication. The ability to communicate ideas, both in class and through writing and speaking, is an important part of the work we do. Class critiques provide you the opportunity to interact and hone your criticism skills. Be prepared to discuss your work and the choices you made as well as be receptive to feedback from the class and instructor. You will be expected to discuss elements and principles of art and to use ceramic vocabulary. Critiques make your next project better. Informal individual critiques will happen anytime you request one or as I think necessary. A successful work is one that conveys it’s meaning, using purposeful visual interest to do so. You, as an artist, are responsible for all of the information that is included in your work, which includes the choices you make during the creation of that work.

Time spent on a project is not, by itself, a significant consideration in evaluating the success of a project. If you just come to class and do the minimum required to complete the assignment you will earn an average grade. Higher grades are reserved for those who do more than is expected. You determine your grade by your degree of motivation. I am always available to consult with you on any problem you may be having with this course. In general, your projects will be graded on how well they exhibit the following four characteristics. Other criteria may be evaluated depending on the specific project. The grading criteria are both subjective and objective.

1. Application of assigned techniques. Did you work within the assigned limitations and demonstrate assigned techniques? I will be looking for evidence of involvement with the problems presented, the dedication and effort applied to them, and the quality of their solutions.
2. Exceeding the minimum. How far did you go beyond the minimum requirements of the assignment to produce more numerous and/or challenging pieces? How thoroughly did you explore the required techniques? How far did you reach beyond the obvious solution? I will appreciate evidence of imaginative thinking and of awareness of the possibilities of the medium
3. Execution and craftsmanship. This relates to the skill and quality of technique and finish in your work. Is your construction sound? Did you take time to finish and resolve surfaces, edges, and other details in an appropriate manner for your design? In the ceramic process, problems of aesthetics and design are inseparable from the craft techniques that express them. A well-crafted work by itself does not constitute a work of art nor can a great concept be expressed without the adequate technical skill. Craftsmanship, therefore, is an important part of your final grade.
4. Aesthetics. How effectively did you use principles of design? Is it resolved? How original and personal is your solution?
Final Exam:

There is no formal final exam in this class. Your final project is intended to meld all that you have learned and absorbed in this class. It is the culmination of months of work, looking at imagery, learning about other ceramic artists, using different clay construction methods, and stretching your imagination. The class critique of your final project is 3:20 – 5:20, Tuesday May 8th. Any artwork or projects left after this time will be discarded. There is simply no storage and the studios must be prepared for next semester.

Official Holidays:

The university and this studio are closed on and March 26th – 30th.

Projects:

Diversity Dinner Set (3X3): This project, like the last two, is worth 20% of your grade. This dinner set will consist of three thrown bowls (10 oz is about 2 ½” deep and about 5” in diameter), three thrown tumblers/glasses (cylinders 6” high by 2 ½” wide are about 12 oz) and three (drapemold) plates 12 inches across. Use these sizes as your goal for the greenware state. If you have experience throwing, try more pieces or increase dimensions. One set will be fired to Cone 10 reduction, one at low fire oxidation and the third in Raku. Because these three firing methods are very different, think about how you will visually or conceptually unify them: texture, design, surface treatment (look at the example board hanging over the slab roller for ideas, drawing with underglazes, sgraffito (scratching through a slip of one color to reveal another color underneath) etc. This project will require a great deal of throwing practice outside class time. I strongly suggest you come to the studio during my office hours and get some one-on-one help throwing. Refer to the outline below for due dates. Don’t miss them as firing takes time. Plan ahead.

Final Project: The final project is worth 40% of your final grade. Pick an object word and a descriptor word from the lists I will provide. You now have a conceptual point of reference for your final project. Use that phrase as a starting point to create an object that communicates and expresses that phrase (no words allowed). Consider how literal or subtle your image/object will be and how that may be perceived by the viewer. You may use any building or firing method but you may not use any part of a previously completed project from any course. Minimum size is 12” in any one direction.

Course Outline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/19</td>
<td>Syllabus review. Continue DreamScape. If you have any part of the food project waiting on the glaze shelf let me know. I am grading them on 3/20 at NOON.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/21</td>
<td>Put DreamScape in bisque by end of class! Pick descriptor phrases for final project. Take Food project home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/26 – 30</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>Critique Dreamscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/9</td>
<td>Bowl throwing demo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/11</td>
<td>Demo drapemould plate with thrown foot Trimming Demo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Task Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/16</td>
<td>Trim remaining 3X3 and put on bisque shelf by end of class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/18</td>
<td>Bisque 3x3. Begin Final project</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/23</td>
<td>Glaze 3x3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4/25</td>
<td>work day final work continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/30</td>
<td>work day final work continues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/2</td>
<td>Glaze Fire final project. Critique 3X3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/8</td>
<td>Final Project Critique 3:20 – 5:20 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**General Format for Grading**

Project: ______________________                                           Student: ________________________________

**FORM**

- **Execution and craftsmanship**: 3 Points Earned
- **Aesthetics**: Resolved (unified design – form follows function) 2 Points Earned

**Project**

- **Application of assigned techniques**: Addressed the Assignment Criteria. 3 Points Earned
- **Exceeded Minimum requirements**: Effort in class (challenged self, did more than the minimum project requirements) 1 Point Earned
- Project completed on time, 1 = yes, no = 0. 1 Point Earned
  - Subtotal of Points: 1

- I will deduct one point from the subtotal for each day that this project is late.

**Final Point Score and Grade:**

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<tr>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>D-</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Letter grades will be awarded after completion of each required assignment based on this 10-point system.