

**Ceramics I&II: Intro to Hand building**  
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- 1.1 Course Prerequisites and Expected Technical Skills
- 1.2 Student Outcomes
- 1.3 Teaching
  
- 2.1 Black Board
- 2.2 Responsibilities of Student
  
- 3.1 Text Books
- 3.2 Tool List
  
- 4.1 Building Policy
- 4.2 Health & Safety
  
- 5.1 Project Evaluation
  
- 6.1 Criteria for Project Evaluation
- 6.2 Semester Evaluation
  
- 7.1 Attendance
- 7.2 Extra Credit
- 7.3 Important Information for Success in this Class
  
- 8.1 Policies for Audit Students

**Ceramics I** is an introductory course designed to explore various processes involved in the making of ceramic sculpture. The emphasis of this course will be hand building techniques paired with individual creativity. Techniques of building such as coil, slab, pinch, mold making, pattern and armature use will be learned from demos and practice. Assignments will progressively develop skills and intellect to form a fundamental ability. Lectures and demonstrations will cover studio procedures, ceramic materials, kilns and firings. Development will be emphasized in project grading.

At the end of this class, you will be able to:

- Acquire an understanding of the application of ceramic materials at earthenware temperature range. Knowledge will be gained through observation of studio practice and individual experience.
- Understand the possibilities and limitations of ceramic media.
- Practice the use of basic ceramic construction methods to generate three dimensional forms that demonstrate and understanding of 3-D design principles.
- Develop conceptual understanding of ceramic art in connection with techniques employed in specific projects
- Develop practical ceramic studio skills through group clay mixing, slip and glaze making kiln loading, firing and unloading.

- Acquire an appreciation for the breadth of ceramic history and integrate this awareness in solutions to projects
- Begin to develop a personal approach and perspective within the medium.

### **1.3 Teaching:**

Throughout the semester, I will give many lectures and demonstrations which is when you will learn a lot about technique and creative thinking. I expect you to be at class on time and ready to work. This is much different than a distance education class in terms of attendance. You need to be here to learn all of the skills necessary to operate in this studio safely and effectively. I will also give individual instruction. I will also be available by appointment on Fridays and on weekends. There will be times when I will be finishing demonstration pieces, making clay, or loading kilns which means I won't be talking with you about your work. I believe it is important for you to have time to work without me hovering around and correcting any problem you have with a piece. You will find value in developing your ability to solve problems on your own. If you do want to discuss your work with me, do not be afraid to ask.

I will conduct group and individual critiques of your work throughout the semester. Critiques are meant to give you positive instruction and pointers. In order to learn anything from critiques, you need to have your work finished and you need to be in class during scheduled critiques.

### **2.1 Wall**

All course information will be available to you on blackboard. This will include the syllabus, schedule, project descriptions and due dates, kiln manuals and notes on materials. The semester schedule has listed the dates in which the above material will be utilized. I will expect you to read this material in preparation for lectures and demonstrations.

### **2.2 Responsibilities of the Student:**

I want you to come to class with energy and enthusiasm. Be prepared to get to work once class begins. Hand building encompasses many different techniques and processes. It can be very time consuming, especially if you fall in love with it. It is in your best interest to be efficient.

Clay work is not a clean profession. Wear appropriate clothing to the studio:

- Work pants and shirt
- Apron(optional)
- Shoes(no sandals or bare feet)

During each workday, two students will make clay and clean wedging tables. I will post a semester schedule on the clay room door. There will be times where we might run out of clay on a weekend. With a partner, take it upon yourselves to make a batch or two of clay.

Studio procedures are posted and must be adhered to. They are meant to insure a safe and efficient working environment. These include:

- 1 Putting your work away onto shelves
- 2 Sponging off your table
- 3 Leaving your work area spotless

- 4 Properly disposing of water and clay
- 5 Cleaning up clay making area

Disregard of these procedures will result in you losing your privileges.

Offering support for your peers is necessary. In order for a large group situation to work, you have to be willing to help load kilns when needed, move bags, give pointers to fellow students.... Be ready and willing to help when you see an opportunity. I want you to be able to work well within the classroom community.

Students who are new to this process should not be intimidated or let down by the fact that there might be an experienced clay student working next to you. Use that work around you as inspiration and not as a model to grade your own work by.

It is important for the class atmosphere to be conducive to learning and working. Disruption of this atmosphere through unsafe work habits, unruly behavior, and disrespect towards classmates or myself will result in a faculty initiated withdrawal from the class.

**Cell Phones must be turned off while working in the ceramics lab... This includes during class time. Work time is your time not to be disrupted by the outside world. You make check messages, etc on break time.**

There are radios available for use. Be sure to wash your hands before using it. Be considerate of those around you when choosing the music and adjusting the volume.

At the end of the semester, there will be a final cleanup during class time. Attendance is mandatory. If you do not show up, your final grade will be lowered by one letter.

### **3.2 Tool List:**

Bucket	Large and Small Trim Tool
Small Elephant Ear Sponge	Old Ruler
Large Sponge	
Cheap 2" House Painting Brush	Old Towel
Bamboo Brush	Apron
Small Tupperware	Needle Tool
Fettling Knife	Dry Cleaning Bags or Thin Plastic Drop Cloth
Wire Tool	Soft Plastic Rib
Metal Rib	
Glazes	

### **3.3 Tool Suppliers:**

The Bookstore located on the Mohegan Campus should have everything you need. Other wise you can try Michaels's Art's and Crafts or Jerry's Artarama

#### 4.1 Building Policy

The Arts Building ceramics studio is open for work during class time only. You can work outside of scheduled class times when I or a work study student is available to monitor. Scheduled class times are posted on the outside of classroom doors.

#### 4.2 Health and Safety:

It is important that we do our best to keep the classroom a safe and healthy working environment.

**Dust:** Dust accumulates quickly and can become airborne quite easily. Clay dust contains large amounts of silica. Silica can become imbedded in the lining of the lungs. Over time, scar tissue forms around the silica particle. The result is the loss of lung capacity. This is commonly called silicosis. It is best to wash clay covered clothing on a regular basis in order to reduce airborne dust. If dust gets kicked up into the air, there is a vent system that circulates the dusty air out and clean air in. It is always best to clean your table and the surrounding floor with a wet sponge, hose and a squeegee instead of paper towels. Water helps keep dust particles down.

**Heavy Lifting:** Many chores in the ceramics department require lifting heavy bags, kiln shelves, and equipment. Do not attempt to lift heavy things by yourself. There are plenty of people that can help you. Loading the kiln requires long arms and upper body. Stools are provided to make loading safer.

**Clay and Glaze Materials:** Over time, we have altered our glazes to eliminate the use of harmful materials. There are MSDS notebooks available for your review if you have any questions concerning the materials in use.. Thorough cleaning of your work area is a must.

**Training:** You will be properly and thoroughly trained in all steps involved in the making and processing of ceramic work. This is meant to:

1. Insure a safe and accident free environment
2. Teach you the skills to work in an independent studio successfully

#### **You will be trained in:**

1. Safety Procedures
2. Kiln Loading
3. Electric Firing

#### 5.1 Project Evaluation:

You will be given 4 assignments throughout the semester. Projects will be due on specified dates.(subject to change)

Project #	Title	Due Date	
		Green	Glazed
1	Organic Objects	Oct 1	Oct 15
2	Historical Vessel	Oct 29	Nov 12
3	Tubes & Architecture	Dec 3	Dec 10
	Final Critique		Dec 17

If you have not finished an assignment, your project evaluation will go down a full letter for every week that it is late. If your project is not done on time, it is your responsibility to present your work to me once it is finished so that I can evaluate it.

**Any work unfinished for the final critique will be graded an F.**

### **6.1 Criteria for Project Evaluation**

Listed below are the criteria for which I will use to grade your assignments. Following these guidelines will not only insure a good grade but most important, interesting and creative art.

- A.
  - 1. Creativity and Research: Projects are considered and completed in an innovative and imaginative manner. You have taken the time to study and explore source material outside the studio.
  - 2. Production: Contributions exceed the assignments, demonstrating individual resourcefulness. Projects are completed on time.
  - 3. Individual Improvement: Growing. Work shows advancement from prior skills and knowledge.
  - 4. Craftsmanship: Projects are finished with great care and attention to details. You display the ability to present aesthetic expression through quality workmanship.
  
- B.
  - 1. Creativity and Research: Finished projects show some resourcefulness and consideration.
  - 2. Production: Contributions fulfill the assignments.
  - 3. Individual Improvement: Shows small marks of improvement.
  - 4. Craftsmanship: Finished projects display a general understanding of quality.
  
- C.
  - 1. Creativity and Research: Little time has been spent researching and considering projects.
  - 2. Production: Inconsistent.
  - 3. Individual Improvement: Ordinary. Lacking in noticeable leaps.
  - 4. Craftsmanship: Workmanship is average, lacking in distinction.
  
- D.
  - 1. Creativity and Research: Not meeting the requirements of the instructor
  - 2. Production: Lacking. Projects are not completed on time
  - 3. Individual Improvement: None to be noticed
  - 4. Craftsmanship: Projects are finished(if finished at all) with indifference
  
- F. Time Waster

### **6.2 Semester Evaluation**

Your grade for the semester will be based on the following average.

Projects	80%
Participation	20%

Participation will be graded on the following standards.

- A. You take a leading role in group activities such as making extra clay, loading and

firing kilns, and cleaning during and outside of class time. You actively participate in discussions and critiques.

- B You are willing to assist with clay making, kiln loading and firing, and cleaning during class time. You play a minor role in group discussions and critiques.
- C You make the required batches of clay for the semester. Participation in kiln loading and firing is minimal. Participation in discussion and critiques is infrequent.
- D Required chores are avoided and ignored. Discussions and critiques are treated with indifference.
- F Time Waster

### **7.1 Attendance**

You are allowed three unexcused absences for the semester. (none on pre announced critique dates). These may be for reasons of illness, religious holiday, etc. Please call or email me if you will not be attending class.

Unexcused absences after 3 will factor into your grade as follows:

- 4 absences lose one letter grade
- 5 absences lose two letter grades
- 6 absences lose 3 letter grades
- 7 absences course failure

The more classes you miss, the more information you will not know, the further behind you will get. If you miss more than 7 classes, be sure to withdraw yourself from class before the deadline arrives(April 16). Tardiness and leaving early will prevent you from learning important information. You will receive the equivalent of one absence for every two tardies. Info will not be repeated on your behalf. All missed work will have to be made up. Inconsistent attendance **will not** help you improve your skills. Becoming a competent sculptor takes diligent effort and a lot of practice. You will be informed at midterm of your grade to date. At that time, I will tell you what you need to work on in order to improve your grade.

### **7.2 Extra Credit:**

At the end of the semester, if you are looking for a way to make up for many unfinished projects with some cheap substitute project, only extraordinary reasons may get it. I don't do extra credit. I do offer extra help outside of class hours. My office hours are to be determined.

### **7.3 Important Info for Success in This Class**

#### **Working outside of class.**

Research outside of class can be the most beneficial to the development of you as an artist. Come prepared with your drawings, printouts, etc..even questions

I expect a lot from my students. A ceramics class doesn't mean 3 easy credits. I am not willing to give you a false impression of what being a ceramic artist/designer entails. It

requires much effort and time. Learning the skills and thought processes necessary to become a successful artist requires consistent effort **throughout the whole semester**. All assignments should be approached with diligence and excitement. I will work hard to give you the information that will help you develop skills and understand yourself as an artist. I expect you to work hard in return. **Poor excuses will not be tolerated!**

**\*\*\*Showing up for kiln firing outside of class.** –to be Determined

This is mandatory. You will be responsible for your own work as well as for your classmates work. Arrive for kiln loading and firings on time and with enthusiasm and energy. A healthy community effort makes a big difference.

### **Making use of class time.**

Class time is for working and learning. Be assertive and make your education worthwhile.

### **Understanding Project Goals.**

Each assignment will have a list of project goals. These are meant to clarify your understanding of where your work should be at the end of each assignment. Read these carefully and use them as a guide.

### **Journal**

I find that keeping a journal/sketchbook is a valuable tool for art making. It is a perfect place to: work out problems, develop ideas, write down thoughts, put pictures from magazines, develop forms, and take notes during lectures.

### **8.1 Policies for Audit Students**

Audit registrations are on a space available basis. Auditors may be dropped from the class to make room for credit seeking students.

All terms that apply for credit seeking students is the same for auditors: