

Beginning Ceramics Group of Courses
Fall 2008
Prof. Priscilla Hollingsworth
Augusta State University

The group:

ART 1000A: Ceramics I for non-majors, ART 2401A: Ceramics I for art majors, ART 3000x: Humanities Studio Experience in Ceramics

Wonderful things:

This course is constructed to introduce you to a full variety of ways to work with clay at the college level. It will also help you learn how to figure out how to construct projects for yourself. During the early part of the semester, you will work on a set list of projects that introduce you to most of the major artistic ways of working with clay. These projects, while structured, will give you lots of opportunity for creative input. Later in the semester, you will be able to come up with your own projects, in consultation with your professor.

First, we'll cover the major handbuilding methods: pinching, coiling, and slabwork. Along the way, we will explore raku firing and lowfire electric kiln firing. Around midterm, we will begin wheelthrowing, and you will begin to learn about highfire gas reduction glazing and firing. After that point, you may pursue a mix of throwing and handbuilding projects.

You will have significant individual attention from your professor. You will also work within our small classroom ceramics community, which tends to provide a lot of support and feedback. You will have a special small group to work within, for such tasks as glaze mixing and other studio tasks. You will meet the advanced group of students, and will probably learn a lot from them, also.

Things you need to do to have a successful class experience, learn a lot, and get a good grade:

- You'll need sufficient quantity and quality of work.
- You'll need to get your supplies and have them ready to use in the Lab.
- Have paper and something to write with available at every class. When I give you technical information, write it down and learn it.
- Participate fully in the work needed to keep our lab running. You will do most of this with your assigned small group. Expect to learn important technical information while doing this.
- Art courses are hard work. There is a departmental expectation at ASU that a student in an art course will spend 6 (six) hours outside class *every week*, working on coursework. I will uphold this. I can tell you are doing this outside work because a) you've got lots of high-quality work, and b) you have sufficient lab sheet sign-ins.
- You meet the requirements of the attendance policy.
- Complete and turn in work or projects as assigned.

Things that could get in the way of your earning a good grade:

- Not having sufficient quantity and quality of work. Talk to your professor whenever you're in doubt about what this means.
- Not turning assignments in when they are due, not following instructions.

- Not participating fully in your small group's assigned tasks.
- Not meeting the attendance policy.
- Not working hard enough outside class/not signing in on the lab sheets by the door.
- Not responding to feedback about your work from your professor.
- Making work outside the Ceramics Lab and bringing it in later. The usual problem here is that your project wasn't able to get feedback from your professor while it was in process, or it broke while you were transporting it. Avoid heartbreak, and do your work in the Lab!
- Doing unsafe things, hurting other people's work, etc.
- Simply running out of time at the end of the semester. Plan ahead for drying and firing time!

The attendance policy:

The ASU attendance policy says you can't miss more than 10% of the course meetings. Here, that would be 3 (three) classes. After 3 classes missed, I can drop you from the course. If that happens after midterm, it could easily lead to a WF. Punctuality is part of attendance also. If you arrive late or leave early, I can assign you a "tardy". I count two tardies as equivalent to one absence. If, *at my discretion*, I were to allow you to remain in the course after 3 absences, there would also be a grade penalty.

The positive reason for this policy: *you can't learn fully unless you're there in class, participating, listening, learning, and doing the work.*

Lab access:

The ceramics studio is available to students currently enrolled in an ASU ceramics course at any time during the semester except when other classes are in session. This semester, Advanced Ceramics also meets in the Ceramics Lab. You may work during that class if you let your professor know your intentions (or you might be asked to come back later if the class is doing something for which they need privacy). After hours (generally after 5:00 p.m. and on weekends), you can gain access by calling Public Safety (737-1401). Public Safety requires that at least two people be present at all times in the studio.

Useful contact information:

Public Safety 706 737-1401

Ceramics/Sculpture Lab phone: 706 737-1789

Art Department Office: 706 667-4888

Priscilla at home: 706 733-8923 (Please don't call after 10:00 p.m.)

Priscilla in her studio: 706 667-4881

Priscilla's office in FAC: 706 667-4871 (You can leave messages at this number.)

Priscilla's email: pholling@aug.edu

Priscilla's web page: <http://www.aug.edu/~artpxh/>

Brian Fort at Fort Pottery Co.: 706 799-2296

Rules for safety and professional courtesy:

1. Do not operate equipment if you have not been trained to use it.
2. The clay mixer, kilns and pug mill can not be used without specific permission from your

- professor. **Clay can only be mixed in the presence of an instructor**, unless I give you specific permission on a one-session-only basis.
3. Do not create unnecessary dust. Clay dust is hazardous. If you must sweep, sweep gently. Wiping up dust with a damp sponge is a safe and convenient way to clean.
 4. Be aware when kilns are firing and use necessary caution around them. Do not operate kilns unless you have been cleared to do so by your professor! You must gain specific clearance to fire the electric kilns or the raku kiln from your professor **each and every time you wish to fire**. Students may not fire the highfire gas kiln (however, you may help fire the gas kiln under the supervision of your professor).
 5. Be as “green” as possible in the Ceramics Lab. Recycle aluminum drink cans by placing them in the blue recycle bin. Put reusable clay back in the barrel so that someone else can use it – and keep the lid on the barrel. If the clay is too dry or too wet to use, but has not been fired yet, put it in a recycle barrel in the clay mixing room. Be careful about heat and air conditioning – don’t open the big door if the heat or a.c. is on. Vent fans in the clay mixing room and for the electric kilns should be turned off when they are not in use.
 6. **Shoe rule:** At all times while in the Ceramics Lab, you will need to wear appropriate footwear. Closed-toe shoes are required. No bare feet, of course. The lightest shoe that will meet the policy is a clog that is closed at the toe area but open in the back. Work boots are wonderfully appropriate. A good plan is to leave a pair of workboots and socks (clean socks!) in your locker so that you always have them. *When rakuing, you should wear shoes that would protect your feet if you dropped a hot object straight from the kiln on them.* Be aware that the shoe policy in the Sculpture Lab is more stringent – only completely closed shoes are allowed there (closed at toe and heel and in between).
 7. Always clean up after yourself. Don’t leave clay or water on the floor - this is a very slippery combination. After using the glazing area, leave it clean. Do not leave your work sitting on a wheel if you are not using it.
 8. After using a wheel, leave it clean. If you have made a big mess on the floor, clean it up with a wet sponge. Turn off electric wheels after you have finished using them. **Leaving messes after you have been warned about this problem can result in substantial penalties.*
 9. Report damage to your professor immediately. After hours, call Public Safety if the situation is at the emergency level.
 10. Do not mix up any new or unknown clay or glaze recipes without clearing this first with your professor. Do not add any materials to your clay that are not in the recipe without clearing this with your professor first. This is a very serious rule!
 11. Only those who are currently enrolled in ASU ceramics classes have the right to be in the Ceramics Lab. If the presence of someone who is not supposed to be here is making you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, you have the right to call Public Safety and have that person removed. (As an alternative, you may wish to discuss the problem with your professor later if the situation is not an emergency.)
 12. Party elsewhere.
 13. If you are throwing away something heavy, take it outside and put it in the dumpster.
 14. Honor other people’s work – don’t touch it when it’s in a fragile state, and don’t allow your family or friends to do so.
 15. When the semester is over and grading is finished, remove your work and possessions. Anything of yours still remaining after final exams are over is the property of your

- professor, and she will dispose of it so that the next class may use the space.
16. Do your best to keep clay out of the sinks. Our plumbing is poor, and it needs to be babied. When the sinks back up, tell Priscilla (or you can call Physical Plant at 706 737-1590).
 17. Be careful to keep plaster and cement out of the clay supply. These substances cause the clay to explode or blow out in firing.
 18. It's great to learn from other students, but try to respect the time of others. Remember, they need their class time and work time also. It's fine to call your professor or ask her in person when you have questions.

Supplies:

Your supply fee goes towards buying your clay and the shop glazes that we mix up. You will need to buy your own personal tools.

This is the basic toolkit:

- 1 sketchbook/notebook, Plus something to write and draw with.
- 1 ceramic toolkit containing small sponge, large and small loop tool, wooden rib, metal rib, wooden knife, cutting wire and needle tool.
- 1 fettling knife
- 1 large sponge for cleanup
- 2 bamboo brushes #4 and #8 . Brushes for painting in oil or acrylic don't work very well for ceramics because they are meant for stiff paint, whereas you will be working with fluid glazes. Instead, use oriental bamboo-style brushes – they are designed for use with fluids.
- 1 bucket for throwing and to store your tools in. It would be smart to get a small bucket that will fit in a locker.
- 1 metal dinner fork (plastic breaks on clay).
- 10 plastic bags to keep your work wet. Garbage bags are good, shopping bags are bad.
- Optional: a barbecue apron to keep your clothes clean (or maybe a pair of overalls or a mechanic's jumpsuit if you prefer). A bath towel to keep your legs clean while throwing. Hand lotion. A lock if you plan to use a locker. Crocs-type shoes that you keep in your locker. A textbook would be handy (*Hands in Clay* by Speight and Toki is a good one).

Class assignments:

Note: exact specifications for these projects will be discussed in class. It is possible that not all of these projects will be assigned during this semester. There will probably be a specific deadline for the first project, and rolling deadlines for most of the rest of them.

Handbuilding -

- Pinching: 9 handheld pots. No flat bottoms.
 - 4 that are very spherical
 - 1 that exploits finger marks
 - 1 that is carved (carving, not surface scratching!)
 - 1 that is **not** very symmetrical
 - 1 with protrusions (use your imagination)
 - 1 with a very rough surface.

- Coiling:

One form at least 12" tall (your "training" pot).

One form at least 24" tall (requires research: go to the library and bring in 4 photocopies 5 drawings of forms that interest you - anything with volume).

- Slab Building:

First: a box with a lid (not your usual box – this box will have an unusual shape and/or special decoration).

Second: A form with architectural references.

Throwing -

Introductory throwing ("pet food bowls" – your first bowls might be very thick and somewhat uneven)

Bowls (more accomplished ones)

Cups and mugs (mugs have handles)

Cylinders (this makes your throwing easier and dramatically more skillful)

Pitchers (more advanced)

Sets of bowls (more advanced)

More Advanced Handbuilding (these are possible assignments only) -

Self-portrait: Build a lifesize head-and-shoulders portrait of yourself. Build it in a definite art style from the past or from another culture, such as Ife, Cubist, Inca, Post-Impressionist, Surrealist, Egyptian, etc. (Do research!). Don't use a mirror or a photo of yourself while making the piece. Why did you pick the style you did? Why does it interest you? What does it express about yourself?

Landscape in a bowl: Build a good-sized bowl (15-20" perhaps). Inside the bowl, construct a landscape. What kind of landscape, and why? Consider the relation between the shape of the bowl and the form and the meaning of the landscape. (Reference drawings and images are necessary.)

Fantasy teapot set: Build a teapot and several other elements such as creamer and sugar containers, teacups and saucers, perhaps a tray. All of the elements should be designed to go together. The set could be functional or nonfunctional. The design should be unusual. If you would never use a teapot, the design could be ironic - or perhaps you will choose to design a pitcher and a set of beer steins (be sure to emphasize the fantasy element either way). What does the design of your set say about the life you'd like to have or the occasion when you'd need to have a set like this on hand?

Technical -

Mixing clay.

Testing and learning to use all of the shop glazes.

My team number is

Team members:

Please note: If any student needs special accommodations because of a disability, please make an appointment to see the Director of Disability Services. Testing and Disability Services is located in the quadrangle and the phone number is (706) 737-1469.