

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

The group:

ART 3402A: Ceramics II, ART 3403A: Ceramics III, ART 4404A: Ceramics IV, ART 4405A: Ceramics V, ART 4406A: Ceramics VI, ART 4950x: Independent Studies in Ceramics.

Wonderful things:

This course is constructed to help you on your path to becoming an independent, accomplished artist. It's also designed to help you further your professional knowledge in ceramics.

You will design your own projects *in consultation* with your professor. This means that you will be able to work on things that you want to work on, and they will at the same time further your development and knowledge.

You will have the opportunity to explore a wide range of concepts and techniques in the field of ceramics today. This includes handbuilding, throwing, lowfire clay and firing techniques, raku, highfire gas reduction firing, and the mixing and use of glazes of various types. You will research some of your ideas using the internet and/or the library. You will learn important aspects of photographing and presenting images of your work in a professional way, and use Photoshop in that process. You will work with your own sketchbook/journal to develop ideas and stay organized and motivated.

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 have the opportunity to be an active member of the Mad Potters Organization. You may choose to participate in the MPO sale at the end of the semester, which helps you learn how to sell your work and perhaps some cash.

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.
- Keep a journal/sketchbook. We will talk about how to do this on the first day of class. You need to write in it during every work session. Drawings and/or clippings of images are important, too.
- 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 a lot of 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. No notebook = minus one letter grade. Not following instructions, such as not leaving your Photoshopped images where your professor expects to find them.
- 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, Ceramics I 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:

You're an advanced ceramics student now, so you know what you need. Provide your own tools, and your own specialty clay and glazes. I'm happy to give you advice here. Your supply fee goes towards providing you with handbuilding and throwing clay materials, and shop glazes.

A basic tool kit:

- 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. Source: Fort Pottery Co. (phone # 706-799-2296), ASU Bookstore, Bailies and Michael's (sometimes)
 - 1 fettling knife
 - 1 large sponge for cleanup
 - 2 bamboo brushes #4 and #8. Other sizes and styles of brushes as you prefer.
 - 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 or more containers to store your clay in. The container must fit under your part of your table. You might want to make or buy a wheeled platform for your clay container.
 - 1 metal dinner fork (not plastic).
 - 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. 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).

PROJECTS:

Each student will propose a set of projects to the professor. Your proposal should include a week-by-week schedule of your proposed activities. Be sure to allow time for drying and firing (remember that the beginning class will also be using the kilns). Use your drawing/notebook on a regular basis during the semester for planning purposes. Your final grade will include consideration of your notebook! Ceramics II students, please pay special attention

to your professor's instructions about your proposed projects.

Your notebook: during this semester, we will be using the notebook as an integral and crucial part of the course. You are required to make a journal entry for every work session you have with clay (i.e., every class and every outside clay work session). Record your progress, your hopes, your plans, what you are happy with about your work, and what you are not happy with about your work. Include drawings, technical notes from class, handouts, clippings, and anything else you find interesting and pertinent to the course.

Text: *Hands in Clay*, Charlotte Speight and John Toki, 5th edition. This is a good book that will answer a lot of questions. It's recommended but not required.

Required projects:

Mixing shop glazes: After instruction in class, you will mix one or more shop glazes. Make a test tile and test fire the glaze. Your assignment is finished when you turn in a bucket of appropriately mixed glaze and a test tile that shows the glaze fired and looking the way it should.

Photographing your work: Using our digital camera, you will learn to document your work. The project will involve practicing the shooting of your work early in the semester, then transferring the image to the classroom computer and learning to adjust it appropriately in Photoshop. During the later part of the semester, you will do this project again, turning in Photoshop-corrected images of some of your final, finished work for the semester.

Research project and presentation: Using PowerPoint and digital images, you will present an artist or visual idea related to ceramics to the class. This project will require research, which is often done by searching the internet. There will be preliminary stages required in this project at various intervals.

Ideas for additional projects:

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 Ite, 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 - (required)

Mixing and testing a studio glaze.

Testing and learning to use all of the shop glazes.

Development of throwing skills:

Please discuss the following with your professor if you are interested -

cylinder project

sets of bowls

containers with lids

pitchers

applying design concepts to thrown pots

Beyond your basic well-thrown pot: think about design. How can you make your pots stylish and functional? How can you make them uniquely yours? Make five **teapots**. The first should be your best example of what you can make now. Does it work? Is it well made? Then make four more design prototypes that function well, but look really different from your standard. Practice making your prototypes for awhile until you feel relaxed and the pots look and feel really good.

Bowl design project: how many bowl profiles can you come up with? Draw this out first. Make up the most promising shapes, at least 6 or 8 of them. Which ones need changing to be more functional? How does your trimming technique need to change for different shapes? Should certain styles be thrown thicker or thinner? How does size affect the design and the finished bowl - should some styles be made only in certain sizes? How do the finished bowls affect your eating or using experience?

Pot design research: visit a china and crystal shop or similar area in a local department store. Examine the china, crystal, and pottery that you see. Look at thickness, shape, pattern, and color. What do you think of each product in terms of overall design? How are design and tradition working together - is it a fruitful interaction or a stilted one? What kind of dining and viewing experience do you want to provide for the users of your work? Imagine your work taking a direction towards becoming homey, relaxed, elegant, thick, thin, traditional, modern, wild, individualistic - or - what? Take your sketch book and make drawings and notes for yourself. Consider doing this with someone else from the class and compare notes.

More pot design research: after you visit the china department, go to the **library**. Find books with great pots from history and from other cultures. Now you have only pictures - you can't pick up the objects and feel them. But you can look at profiles, surface patterns, and color. Use your notebook: draw and describe what you find interesting about these pieces. Think about how you can use what you find in your own work. How will these influences affect your touch, the way you like to work, and the materials you are using?

A set of cups or drinking vessels designed for a specific occasion.

Five fantasy cups: 1 for a famous person (who?), 1 for a persnickety tea party, 1 for your dream car, 1 that appeared suddenly from your fairy godmother, 1 to be used by a specific group of extraterrestrial aliens.

A vessel project based on historical references (do research!). Consider decoration. What kinds of vessels can you think of - teapots, urns, planters, pitchers, ewers, bowls of various types - look them up.

Teapot or coffeepot project, thrown or handbuilt, to include a set of cups with handles and saucers.

Trophy/personal monument project. A trophy for what? Could be humorous, sincere, ironic.
Personal fetish project. What's a fetish? How does it have meaning in your life (does it protect you from trouble, does it represent a neurosis, is it mysterious?). Is it one object or a group of objects? What size? How will you present your fetish(es) - a box, bag, vessel, shelf, etc.?

A sculptural piece extending 36" or more in at least one direction, art historical research required.

Duality project: create two pieces, either sculptural or functional, that work together as one. Consider the following concepts: pairs, twins, mirror-images, image and shadow, yin and yang, parallel, perpendicular, opposites, complements, contrasts, balance, tension, rhythm, harmony, discord, etc.

Dream project: What kind of dream? (Sleep images, aspirations, prophecies, hallucinations, etc.)

Five interlocking vessels: make 5 interlocking vessels that carry the thread of a common theme throughout. One vessel cannot represent the chosen theme without the other supporting four. These 5 vessels must interlock in a thematic, conceptual, or literal way. What do they represent? How do their forms interlock?

Raku project: a set of related pieces with glaze research and experimentation required.

Plaster project: In this project, you learn to cast a one-part mold in plaster. After it cures, you can use the mold in a variety of ways to make original tableware or sculpture. For this project, we'll need several students in the class to agree to work on it at the same time.

Improving your throwing according to the Clary Illian method: This is a series of projects that will occupy most of the semester (however, you can work on other things while doing the project). A group of students will need to commit to it – it works best in a group rather than individually. To see the full description, get a copy of *A Potter's Workbook* by Clay Illian (University of Iowa Press, 1999). Using this method, you will learn a lot about throwing by a) throwing a number of each specified kind of form each week, b) sharing your results with others in your group every week via critique, and c) learning to expand the way you look at your pots as

much as you improve your technique. Here's a sample of the projects:

Cylinder design: suggesting the internal space within.

Beginnings and endings: Rims and bases.

The cylinder becomes a pot with a personality.

From cylinders into pitchers.

From cylinders into mugs.

Bowls with simple, open curves (think about feet).

Plate as shallow bowl.

Pots with lids (a set of assignments considering the lid to body relationship, then knobs). Then on to specific lidded pot forms, such as casseroles and teapots.

Even if we don't get to the end of this set of assignments, we're sure to learn a lot. But to make this work, a group of us will need to take it on enthusiastically.

Empty Bowls Project with Golden Harvest Food Bank and the Jewish Community Center.

Empty Bowls dinner date: February ?, 2009.

Other projects may be possible - please discuss your ideas with your professor.

My team number is

Team members:

My research presentation is due on:

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.