

College of San Mateo
Official Course Outline

1. COURSE ID: ART 411 **TITLE:** Ceramics I

Units: 3.0 units **Hours/Semester:** 32.0-36.0 Lecture hours; 48.0-54.0 Lab hours; 64.0-72.0 Homework hours; 144.0-162.0 Total Student Learning hours

Method of Grading: Grade Option (Letter Grade or Pass/No Pass)

2. COURSE DESIGNATION:

Degree Credit

Transfer credit: CSU; UC

3. COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:

Catalog Description:

Basic introduction to ceramics and the creative process. Students will learn ceramic hand-building, wheel-throwing, glazing, and firing methods as a means of self-expression and communication. Extra supplies may be required.

4. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME(S) (SLO'S):

Upon successful completion of this course, a student will meet the following outcomes:

1. Articulate, orally and/or in writing, interpretations of the ceramic medium viewed as an alternative method of communication, principally as expressions of self, personal observations and perceptions, and other artistic objectives.
2. Conceptualize, formulate and analyze strategies to manifest ideas into artworks in ceramics.
3. Demonstrate the basic skills and techniques necessary in the effective and safe use of tools and materials to produce works of ceramic art.

5. SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:

Upon successful completion of this course, a student will be able to:

1. Develop an understanding of the possibilities of ceramics as an expressive tool.
2. Create ceramic forms, which requires a basic understanding of the characteristics of clay, clay processes, and building techniques.
3. Apply surface treatments using various beginning level surface techniques and materials to create desired aesthetic styles, designs, and content.
4. Differentiate among various ceramic materials, construction techniques, surface applications, and firing methods to achieve desired results.
5. Assess and critique ceramics in group, individual, and written contexts using relevant critique formats, concepts, and terminology.
6. Examine and describe historical and contemporary developments, trends, materials, and approaches in ceramics.
7. Safely handle and use basic studio equipment, tools, and materials.

6. COURSE CONTENT:

Lecture Content:

A. Characteristics of clay

- a. What is clay?
- b. Working with clay at different drying stages
- c. Various clay bodies and their properties

B. Visual imagery and form as a means of communication

- a. Elements of art: shape, form, texture, color, and value
- b. Principles of design: balance, unity, contrast, emphasis, pattern, rhythm, and movement
- c. Ceramics terms and their use
- d. Use of imagery to convey specific ideas, feelings, intuitions, and sensations

C. Concepts of abstraction and representational methods in the visual arts

- a. Abstraction: Using clay as a medium to create artworks that do not attempt to represent the real world.
- b. Representational Methods: Sculpting with clay to clearly depict real objects.

- D. Construction of functional and sculptural clay pieces
 - a. Hand building methods: pinch, coil, slab, modeling solid clay and hollowing out
 - b. Introduction to wheel-throwing techniques
 - c. Problem-solving and combining construction methods to translate ideas into clay
 - d. Solving technical problems (using supports, repairing cracks, clay timing, etc.)

- E. Surface design and techniques
 - a. Carving (reductive techniques) and adding clay (additive techniques)
 - b. Stamps and found textures
 - c. Ceramics tools
 - d. Stencil and resist methods

- F. Underglazing and glazing of art pieces
 - a. Application methods: brushing, dipping, and spraying
 - b. Temperature ranges and properties of glazes
 - c. Low fire glazes
 - d. High fire glazes

- G. Introduction to kiln firing and firing theory
 - a. Guidelines for loading clay pieces into the kiln
 - b. Gas and electric kilns
 - c. Firing atmospheres: oxidation vs reduction

- H. Overview of ceramics as a major medium of artistic expression, including the history of clay and its role in historical and contemporary cultures as both artistic form and functional craft
 - a. History of technologies
 - b. Important, significant, and interesting ceramists and cultures
 - c. The roles ceramics has in fine art, functional ware, decorative design, etc.
 - d. Importance and influence of culture on the ceramic process

- I. Studio Practice
 - a. Health safety practices in the studio
 - b. Safe use of equipment: slab roller, extruder, spray booth, pottery wheels, etc.
 - c. Consideration of others regarding sharing studio space

- J. Ceramics presentation methods
 - a. Choice of presentation (including pedestals, wall hangings, installation, etc.) and its influence on interpretation of the works

Lab Content:

1. Visual problem solving exercises that develop ceramic work and require exploration and manipulation of the basic materials used to create ceramic works.
2. Studio projects that explore the elements and organizing principles of ceramics including but not limited to pinch, coil, soft slab, hard slab, sgraffito, mishima, modeling, carving, and wheel work.
3. Development of skills and processes using a variety of surface and firing techniques appropriate to an introductory study in ceramics, which may include but are not limited to slips, engobe, terra sigilata, glaze, burnishing, in various firing atmospheres and temperatures.
4. Safe use of tools and specialized equipment.
5. Critical evaluation and critique of class projects.

7. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

Typical methods of instruction may include:

- A. Lecture
- B. Lab
- C. Activity
- D. Critique
- E. Discussion
- F. Field Trips
- G. Individualized Instruction
- H. Other (Specify): This course can also be taught through demonstration and supervised lab time where the

instructor works one-on-one with each student. For instance, a technique such as throwing on the potter's wheel is demonstrated to the entire class. The techniques involved are explained and student questions are answered. The students then practice throwing under the instructor's supervision, usually on a one-to-one basis. The student spends additional lab time at the potter's wheel as needed or desired.

8. REPRESENTATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

Representative assignments in this course may include, but are not limited to the following:

Writing Assignments:

Writing Assignments:

Common written assignments would review technical processes and procedures, reports and reactions to exhibitions, students' self-reflective critiques and analytical reviews of artworks (especially their own), and other writing assignments which demonstrate the students' development of abilities to have meaningful and insightful discourse about art and artworks (2-3 pages, 4 times per semester).

Reading Assignments:

The readings would include textbook assignments, review of articles concerned with critiques and/or critical commentaries about art, technical educational materials, and instructional manuals. In addition, instructor generated reference materials, instructional handouts and project commentaries are provided to the students (10-20 pages per week).

Other Outside Assignments:

A. Visual problem-solving exercises that develop ceramic work and require exploration and manipulation of the basic materials used to create ceramic works.

B. Sketchbook drawing and research assignments to develop ideas and artwork plans.

C. Studio projects that explore the elements and organizing principles of ceramic, including but not limited to pinch, coil, soft slab, hard slab, sgraffito, Mishima, modeling, carving, and wheel work.

D. Development of skills and processes using a variety of surface and firing techniques appropriate to an introductory study in ceramics, which may include but are not limited to slips, underglaze, glaze, additive, and subtractive techniques; in various firing atmospheres and temperatures.

E. Safe use of tools and specialized ceramics equipment.

F. Critical evaluation and critique of class projects. Students will set up their work for display and present the work to the class, discussing construction and surface techniques, ideas, influences, and the strengths and weaknesses of the piece. They will also participate by offering feedback and constructive criticism during the presentation by other students.

G. Studio projects that are based on knowledge/research of contemporary and historical ceramics.

a. Example of a representative project assignment (based on 1-6 above): ceramics hand-building project "Expressing a Social Issue in Clay". This assignment requires students to research an issue in society that they care about (e.g. social justice, sustainability, environment, health, education, homelessness, etc.). Students will read articles on the topic and look at artwork of others who are referencing the selected issue in their art. Based on their research they will sketch a plan for the piece using narrative tools, symbolism, and metaphor. The sculpture will be created using a combination of ceramic hand-building methods and surface techniques. Students will write an artist statement that summarizes their issue and reflects on the sculpture they create.

b. Example of a representative project assignment (based on 1-6 above): ceramics hand-building project "Object with a Twist". This assignment requires students to select a simple, every day, familiar object to sculpt. They will sculpt the object in a representational way, but change the scale of the piece by at least 25% and add changes or "twists" to the original by making modifications to the object's normal representation. A twist may include adding humor, a narrative, a change in feeling, a statement, a unique style, or making the object more animated, changing the surface character, or something similar.

H. Field trip or exhibition attendance related to ceramics.

a. Example of a representative field trip project assignment: as a class, take a tour of the San Francisco Asian Art Museum's ceramics collection. Participate in the docent- and instructor-led discussion. Complete the field trip assignment sheet requiring an analysis of 3 ceramics pieces in the museum's collection.

9. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF EVALUATION

Representative methods of evaluation may include:

- A. Class Participation
- B. Class Performance
- C. Class Work
- D. Exams/Tests
- E. Field Trips
- F. Final Performance
- G. Homework

H. Lab Activities

I. Oral Presentation

J. Portfolios

K. Projects

L. Quizzes

M. Typical methods of evaluation may also include the following: 1. Daily evaluation of proficiency in all phases of the ceramic process, including construction, surface techniques and glazing. 2. Rubric for grading completed class projects including time and effort, creativity and originality, use of ceramics techniques, and improvement. 3. Participation in individual and group critiques, including demonstrated ability to articulate concepts using proper terminology, and the expression of aesthetic judgments. Critique rubric is used to grade presentation, participation, and self-reflection. 4. Engagement in class discussions to provide evidence of critical thinking skill in applications of identification, comparisons and formulation of opinions, value judgments and conclusions. 5. Ability to organize ideas, think critically, communicate effectively, use proper terminology and relate ideas to artistic contexts in writing a research paper. 6. Quizzes, examinations, and individual critiques to ascertain acquisition of factual information and the ability to synthesize deductive answers from that information. 7. Evaluation of student's ability to recognize his or her own strengths and weaknesses while completing their class project records.

10. REPRESENTATIVE TEXT(S):

Possible textbooks include:

A. Cobb, S.. *Mastering Hand Building: Techniques, Tips, and Tricks for Slabs, Coils, and More*, 1st ed. Vancouver: Voyageur Press, 2018

B. Peterson, J., Peterson, S.. *The Craft and Art of Clay*, 5th Edition ed. London: Laurence King Publishing, 2012

C. Atkin, J.. *Handbuilt Pottery Techniques Revealed: The Secrets of Handbuilding Shown in Unique Cutaway Photography*, ed. Barron's Educational Series, 2013

Origination Date: October 2023

Curriculum Committee Approval Date: January 2024

Effective Term: Fall 2024

Course Originator: Jeanne Ichimura