Handbuilding Ceramics

Art 106/Directed Study • Spring 2018 • TuTh 2:00 – 3:30 pm • Russell Hall 004

Instructor: Summer Zickefoose
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Office: Thompson-Clark 303 (primary) or Russell Hall 005
Office Hours: Tuesday 5:30 - 4:00pm (RH), Thursday 8:30 – 9:20am (RH), Wednesday 1-2pm (TC), and by appointment

“You can’t use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have.” - Maya Angelou

Course Description:
This course advances skills in hand-building and wheel-throwing ceramics and clay and glaze materials studies. The projects in the course raise pertinent conceptual, spatial, and technical questions related specifically to working with clay at a more advanced level. Slip-casting, glaze and clay testing will be taught in addition to new challenges in presentation/installation and the conceptual direction of student work. Students will contribute to the weekly work in the clay studio, such as loading and unloading kilns, mixing clay and general studio maintenance. Students will be asked to give thoughtful consideration to the meaning of clay as a material, the historical precedence of ceramic objects, and the ability of the material to communicate their ideas.

Course Outcomes:
Solo projects are the primary means of teaching and learning in the course. The studio projects are supplemented with lectures, readings, demos and critiques. Upon successful completion of the course, students should be proficient at the following:
1. Understanding the limits and possibilities of clay as a material.
2. Using a variety of hand-building methods and surface applications to construct three-dimensional forms.
3. Approaching the use of clay and project challenges with your own sense of curiosity, experimentation, and expression.
4. Applying critical thinking skills through brainstorming exercises, individual/group critiques, readings, and project development.
5. Applying problem-solving skills related to the technical and conceptual problems presented by the projects.
6. Recognizing and appreciating the importance of ceramic objects within our own and other cultures.
7. Understanding how artists working with clay conduct research, generate ideas and make choices about form, style and process.

Related Fine Art Program Outcomes:
1. Conceptualize, identify, create, and solve aesthetic art and design experiences.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of art elements and principles of design.
3. Become aware of and analyze ideas and content behind aesthetic creations and related experiences.
4. Provide a critical analysis of their own work and the work of others.
5. Demonstrate the ability to communicate the conceptual information in their work when applicable.
6. Develop team skills including taking and giving constructive criticism, leading and or following directions.
7. Develop diverse studio skills, with opportunities to pursue their studio art preferences.

Text:
No formal textbook; articles and other readings will be assigned and/or made available throughout the semester to supplement the projects and lectures.

Reference Texts:
The Craft and Art of Clay by Susan Peterson
Hands in Clay by Charlotte F. Speight and John Toki
Methodology:
The structure of a studio art course includes multiple “studio work days” for each project where students develop and construct projects during class. This allows for ongoing dialogue with the instructor and classmates in relation to the project as well as opportunities for brainstorming, problem-solving, and project assistance. Additionally, the course is taught through individual and group critiques of studio work, demonstrations of tools and techniques, and slide lectures of contemporary and historical work related to the projects. Students will contribute to the loading, unloading and firing of kilns, make clay and participate in critiques and discussion. Homework in this course consists of occasional assigned readings, sketchbook/creative exercises and gallery assignments, as well as the extra work outside of class required to complete each project.

Out of Class Work:
In order to complete the projects on time, with care and ambition towards the project idea, it will be necessary to spend time outside of class working. In addition to the time spent working on the project, you will need to dedicate some time to the development/planning stage of the project. This may mean collecting materials, or developing your ideas through writing, brainstorming or sketching. You may find inspiration for your project ideas in any number of ways—collecting found images, taking photographs, sketching, making lists, diagrams, or mathematical equations, collecting color samples, etc. I will often check in with you and ask to see some of your ideas/documentation.

Evaluation:
You will be evaluated in this course by the quality of work and the degree to which this work demonstrates your understanding of the concepts presented in this course. Your effort, enthusiasm and ambition towards each project is an important factor in your overall evaluation. Your evaluation will also include class participation with an emphasis on collaborative problem-solving and critiques. You will receive a grade for each project completed and discussion, critique and participation grades at the completion of the course.

Projects:
There are three main projects assigned in the course. The projects are structured around ceramic hand-building or wheel throwing techniques, chemistry of clay and glazes, installation and display methods and conceptual approaches to using clay. They ask that students come up with ideas and strategies for addressing these themes in their own way. Brainstorming, problem-solving and experimenting are all part of the process of making the projects.

A range of processes will be utilized throughout the course and vary per project and according to student ideas. Demonstrations will be given periodically or as needed per project. Projects are evaluated according to the rubric criteria below and in relation to the course outcomes. Depending on the goals of each project, these areas will weigh differently on the final grade for the project. A specific project evaluation rubric will be available with each project.

Project Rubric Criteria: (example)
Design/Formal Qualities /16 pts (course outcome 3, 4)
Consideration of all formal qualities of the vessel – form/shape, lip/edge, foot/base, texture/surface
Unity of visual elements – does the lip, texture, base and body of the vessel make a cohesive form?
Consideration of all viewing angles
Creativity & Problem-Solving /18 pts (course outcome 1, 2, 6, 7)
thoughtful consideration of project theme
project solution illustrates experimentation and critical thinking throughout design process
effort made to illustrate content/meaning through form
Craft & Presentation /8 pts (course outcome 2, 5)
Use of coil & pinching techniques - joints, consistency, even thickness, ability to control the form
Surface application
Technical problem solving
Effort/Ambition/Preparation /8 pts (course outcome 2, 4, 5, 6)
effective use of in-class time, prepared with sketches/ideas/materials
ambition and scope of project proportional to time allowed for project and appropriate to level of skill
Process Book:
Students will keep a sketchbook that will include drawings, observations, responses to readings, and other research related to the problem solving and process of each project. This might include any form of brainstorming or collection of found images, photographs, sketches, lists, diagrams, mathematical equations, color samples, or absolutely anything that is part of your process of idea generation and problem-solving. The process book is turned in with each project and is evaluated as part of the Creativity & Problem-Solving and Effort, Ambition & Preparation sections of project rubrics.

Critique:
Critiques will be used to evaluate in-process and finished works. Attendance on these days is extremely important, as it is your opportunity to provide and gain feedback on the projects. There will be a variety of critique methods utilized throughout the semester. It will be expected that you make every effort to offer your opinions and suggestions on your classmates’ work, in addition to making use of the art and design vocabulary introduced in projects, lectures, and readings. Each critique is evaluated and graded individually and separately from project grades.

Gallery Assignments/Artist Assignment:
These assignments are in response to the exhibitions in the Foster Art Gallery and require that you describe and analyze the artworks you see. The assignments are also an opportunity to utilize the language of art and design that is introduced through projects and is useful in both the making and critiquing of artwork. The artist assignment will be a response to an artist lecture or artist research.

Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Projects (3 @ 65 ea)</td>
<td>195pts</td>
<td>240-226 = A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallery Assignment</td>
<td>10pts</td>
<td>225-216 = A-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artist Assignments (2)</td>
<td>20pts</td>
<td>215-209 = B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15pts</td>
<td>208-199 = B</td>
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<tr>
<td>(firing, loading/unloading, critiques)</td>
<td>240pts</td>
<td>198-192 = B-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>191-185 = C+</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>150-144 = D-</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>143-0 = F</td>
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</tbody>
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Grading Scale:
184-175 = C
174-168 = C-
167-161 = D+
160-151 = D
150-144 = D-
143-0 = F

Attendance:
Students are responsible for attending class sessions and scheduled lectures/demonstrations. You should come ready to work with all necessary materials at the beginning of class. Your final grade will be affected if you miss more than 3 class periods due to unexcused absences. Absences will be excused at the professor’s discretion and only if notified by the student prior to the absence and with proper documentation. A student will automatically fail the course if they have missed more than 6 class periods due to unexcused absences.

Your ability to be mentally present while in class is equally as important as being physically present. This means paying attention to your work as opposed to your phone, being open to what the class has to offer, and participating to your best and fullest ability.

What to do when you are absent:
Before returning to class, contact a classmate to gather information missed during your absence. If you have an extended illness or other difficulties that inhibit you from being present in class, contact me ASAP to make arrangements to make up the work or drop the course. If you know that you will be absent (excused or unexcused), it is a good idea to send me an email so that I know you will be absent. This does not automatically excuse the absence.

Studio Safety:
There are some potentially dangerous materials and tools in this shop. Safety issues will be addressed in all lectures and demonstrations concerning each project, including general studio safety. It is the student’s responsibility to follow all safety procedures in the classroom.
Studio Etiquette:
All persons using this lab are responsible for its upkeep. This includes cleaning your own and class work areas, maintaining tools and equipment, and returning borrowed tools and materials to their proper location. Make sure all of your materials are properly stowed away before you leave. Westminster will not be held responsible for missing or damaged property/projects. Out of respect for our collective work time, cell phone use during class, including texting, tweeting, and/or ringtone disruptions is prohibited. Due to the nature of the course, headphones may not be used during class. Always respect the work and working environment of other students in the class.

Academic Integrity:
You are expected to follow the academic integrity policies outlined in the Westminster College Student Handbook. Cheating is not tolerated in any form including but not limited to the following: plagiarism, submitting work from previous projects or other classes, misrepresentation, falsification, deception, fabrication, sabotage, collusion to cheat and professional misconduct. Any form of cheating designed to unfairly enhance your efforts or damage/harm/hinder the work or efforts of others will result in an automatic F for the course and the matter will be taken to the Academic Dean for review.

Accessibility Statement:
Westminster College actively strives for the full inclusion of all our students. Students with disabilities who require access solutions for environmental or curricular barriers should contact Faith Craig, Director of Disability Resources, located in 209 Thompson-Clark Hall. phone – 724-946-7192 e-mail – craigfa@westminster.edu

Materials:
Sketchbook or collection of sketch pages
Clay – some of the clay we use will be made in class
Ceramics tools – wire cut off tool, fettling knife, wooden and rubber ribs, serrated rib or fork, needle tool, spray bottle, loop tool/sculpting tools, sponge (most available in classroom)
Miscellaneous tools – these may be items collected from around your house, picked up at thrift stores, etc.
Course Calendar

Week 1:    • introduction of course, review syllabus, tools, clay and firing info
            Jan 16/18  • demos

Week 2:    • began class, syllabus, begin project #1
            Jan 23/25  • work session

Week 3:    • work session
            Jan 30/Feb 1 • have objects built and ready for slip-casting, begin building clay surround

Week 4:    • mold-making
            Feb 6/8    • finish and dry mod

Week 5:    • slip-casting
            Feb 13/15  • slip-casting, start project #2

Week 6:    • work session, critique project #1
            Feb 20/22  • begin making objects and test tiles for project 2

Week 7:    • glaze testing
            Feb 27/Mar 1 • glaze testing

Week 8:    • no class, Spring Break
            Mar 6/8    • no class, Spring Break

Week 9:    • fire test kiln
            Mar 15/15  • additional glaze and clay tests, finish up project #1

Week 10:   • work session, start project #3
            Mar 20/22  • work session

Week 11:   • work session
            Mar 27/29  • no class, Easter Break

Week 12:   • no class, Monday classes meet
            Apr 3/5    • work session, critique project #1

Week 13:   • work session
            Apr 10/12  • work session

Week 14:   • work session
            Apr 17/19  • work session, last day to build with wet clay

Week 15:   • critique of project #2
            Apr 24/26  • work session, load final bisque kiln

Week 16:   • last day to glaze, finish surfaces – load final glaze kiln
            May 1/5    • final critique

Week 17:   • Final Period, Thursday May 8, 11:30 - 2:00pm – mandatory final cleanup