Wheel-throwing Ceramics

Art 202 • Spring 2019 • TuTh 2:00 – 3:30 pm • Russell Hall 004

Instructor: Summer Zickefoose
Contact: email zickefse@westminster.edu • phone (724) 946-7267 • campus mail 211
Office: Patterson Hall 311 and Russell Hall 005
Office Hours: Tuesday 3:30 - 4:00pm (RH), Thursday 8:30 – 9:20am (RH), Monday 1-2pm (PH), and by appointment

Course Description:
This course introduces students to creating ceramic forms utilizing the potter’s wheel. A range of techniques will be demonstrated as starting points to using the wheel as a tool for creating forms. The design, function, decoration, and presentation of the thrown forms will be emphasized through course assignments. In addition to using the potter’s wheel, students will learn about a number of different finishing surfaces that can be applied to ceramics, how to make clay and how to load, unload, and fire an electric kiln. Most importantly, using the potter’s wheel is a skill that must be learned through practice, so patience, perseverance, and the ability to make mistakes and move on are all necessary to get the most out of the course.

Course Outcomes:
Solo and collaborative 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. Utilizing a variety of wheel-throwing techniques to create both simple and unique forms.
2. Approaching the use of clay and the potter’s wheel with your own sense of curiosity, experimentation, and expression.
3. Beginning level wheel-throwing methods, surface application, clay making and loading electric kilns.
4. Putting critical thinking skills to use through design of projects, individual/group critiques and evaluating artwork outside of class.
5. Utilizing problem-solving in response to the technical challenges presented in the assignments.
6. Recognizing and appreciating the importance of ceramic objects within our own and other cultures.
7. Seeking out and appreciating artists using clay and the potter’s wheel as a means of visual expression and to create functional forms.

Methodology:
This course will be taught through demonstrations of techniques in class and supplemented with videos and or examples of contemporary and historical made using the wheel. The work days provide opportunity to practice in class with and assistance if needed. Students will also contribute to the loading and firing of kilns, making clay, participating in critiques and discussion, and respond to art experiences outside the classroom. Homework in this course consists of occasional assigned readings or videos to watch outside class, drawing inspiration for the forms and surfaces you create and designing these ideas through sketching, as well as the extra work outside of class required to complete each assignment. For each hour of class time, you should be spending one to two hours outside of class time on work related to this course.

Inspiration and Design:
Keep a sketchbook or collection of notes/documents throughout the semester where you track your creative inspirations. This inspiration may come from any number of sources, not necessarily from other pottery. For example, you may draw much of your inspiration for the decoration of the surfaces from fabric patterns. You should also collect images and notes about the artists whose work you admire. Maintain a practice of sketching out designs for the forms and decorations you will apply to the assignments. Additionally, use the sketchbook to keep notes on glaze tests and combinations. I will often check in with you and ask to see some of your ideas/documentation as you begin new projects.
Reference Texts:
*Hands in Clay: An Introduction to Ceramics* by Charlotte F. Speight and John Toki
*The Craft and Art of Clay* by Susan Peterson
*Make It In Clay* by Charlotte F. Speight and John Toki
*Pottery in the Making: Ceramic Traditions* edited by Ian Freestone and David Gaimster
*The Encyclopedia of Pottery Techniques* by Peter Cosentino
*Ceramics: A Potter’s Handbook* by Glen C Nelson

Assessment Methods:
You will be evaluated in this course by your effort towards learning the techniques and forms presented through the projects, consideration of design qualities once skills are gained, and critical thinking towards gallery assignments and critiques. Your effort, enthusiasm and ambition towards each project is an important factor in the success of your portfolio. Your evaluation will also include participation and critical thinking in critiques, gallery and artist assignments.

Projects:
There will be five technique and form-based projects assigned throughout the semester. Each project will have set goals in terms of technique, size, or surface and a number of forms to complete as a parameter for how many to make to gain the skills. The projects do allow and encourage that you meet the technical challenges with your own unique perspective. The projects will be turned in as both unfired pieces for the practice portfolio and fired and edited pieces for the design portfolio.

Project Grading Criteria:
Practice portfolios will be evaluated by how many are completed and the percentage that reach the set goals. Design portfolios are evaluated according to the design/formal qualities, creativity of the project solution, craft and presentation, and meeting the project requirements. Depending on project goals, these areas will weigh differently on the final grade for the project.

Project Rubric: (design portfolio example)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Design of Form</td>
<td>12 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsmanship</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Requirements</td>
<td>3 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort/Ambition</td>
<td>5 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
<td><strong>30 pts</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Design Critiques:
Design Critiques will be used to evaluate finished works of your own and your classmates. 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.

Gallery Assignment:
This assignment is in response to the exhibition 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.

Participation:
Participation in the regular work and function of the ceramics studio is essential to learning the entire process but also in contributing to the collaborative nature of the discipline. All students will be expected to help load and unload kilns, mix clay, fire kilns and keep the studio clean. We recycle all our clay in the studio and make all the clay we need. Regular participation in this work ensures we have a functioning classroom space.
Grading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
<th>Practice Portfolio</th>
<th>Design Portfolio</th>
<th>Gallery Assignment</th>
<th>Design Critiques (3)</th>
<th>Participation (firing, cleanup, loading/unloading/mixing)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>240-226 = A</td>
<td>100pts</td>
<td>80 pts</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
<td>30 pts</td>
<td>20pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>184-175 = C</td>
<td>225-216 = A-</td>
<td>225-216 = A-</td>
<td>215-209 = B+</td>
<td>208-199 = B-</td>
<td>208-199 = B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>174-168 = C-</td>
<td>174-168 = C-</td>
<td>167-161 = D+</td>
<td>198-192 = B-</td>
<td>198-192 = B-</td>
<td>198-192 = B-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160-151 = D</td>
<td>160-151 = D</td>
<td>150-144 = D-</td>
<td>167-161 = D+</td>
<td>167-161 = D+</td>
<td>167-161 = D+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143-0 = F</td>
<td>143-0 = F</td>
<td>150-144 = D-</td>
<td>143-0 = F</td>
<td>143-0 = F</td>
<td>143-0 = F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Attendance:
Students are responsible for attending class sessions and scheduled lectures/demonstrations. Demonstrations are essential to learning new techniques and missing class will impact your ability to progress. 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. Arriving 10 minutes (or more) late or leaving 10 minutes early counts as a tardy. Three tardies will count as an absence. If you are absent, you are responsible for the information presented during the missed class; there are no make-up lectures or presentations.

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:
If you are absent, you are responsible for the information presented during the missed class--there are no make-up presentations or demos due to missed class. Before returning to class, contact a classmate to shadow them on the wheel (Please do not come to class unprepared). 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:
The primary health hazard in the ceramics studio is dust, so the primary safety responsibility for students is cleanup. 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:
Students are expected to abide by the academic integrity policies outlined in the Westminster College Student Handbook. The Westminster College faculty and students are bound by principles of truth and honesty that are recognized as fundamental for a community of teachers and scholars. The college expects students and faculty to honor, and faculty to enforce, these academic principles. All forms of cheating are prohibited, including but not limited to the following: plagiarism, submitting work previously submitted for grading in another course, misrepresentation, falsification, fabrication, or professional misconduct. Any form of cheating will result in an automatic F for the assignment, and the issue will be presented to the Academic Dean for review.
Accessibility Statement:
Westminster College actively strives for the full inclusion of all our students. Students who have special needs that may affect their academic or personal life should seek resources on campus to assist them, such as Disability Resources, the Learning Center and Diversity Services. In this course, accommodations consistent with college policy will be made for students who are utilizing appropriate support services. After consulting with the appropriate support service, students are encouraged to speak with me in a confidential appointment about necessary accommodations.
Disability Resources: Thompson-Clark 209, craigfa@westminster.edu, 724-946-7192
Diversity Services: McKelvey Suite 240, diversity@westminster.edu, 724-946-6178
Learning Center: McGill Library 206, learningctr@westminster.edu
-Clark Hall. phone – 724-946-7192 e-mail – craigfa@westminster.edu

Materials:
sketchbook or collection of sketch pages
clay – 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)
plastic bucket - provided
shop towel - provided
3-4 kitchen sized garbage bags
dust mask (optional)