Casper College Course Syllabus

Art 2410  Ceramics I: Handbuilding and Wheel Throwing

Fall Semester 2015
Lecture Hours: 2  Laboratory Hours: 4  Credits: 3
Class Time: 2 – 4:50 pm MW or TTh
Room: VA 110
Instructor: Mike Olson
Office phone: 268-2509  E-mail: molson@caspercollege.edu
Office: VA 111
Office Hours: Posted on office door

Course Description:
This is an introductory class in the fundamentals of traditional and contemporary ceramic making by means of hand building and throwing on the wheel. Students study some of the rich history and traditions of ceramics as well as developing techniques and different firing possibilities.

Prerequisites: None

Goals: Students will have a greater appreciation for the creative process by studying the rich history of Ceramics and the physical activity of designing and making objects from clay.

Outcomes:
1. Appreciate aesthetic and creative activities through the medium of clay and glaze.

Course Objectives:
1. To acquire knowledge and practical skills needed for the basic fundamentals of creating ceramics:
   Making techniques, firing methods, glaze application and decoration.
2. Familiarity with the history of ceramics.

Methodology:
1. Lectures followed by demonstrations and laboratory experiences.
2. Audio-visual aids in the form of presentations, movies, power points, and actual specimens from private collections.

Evaluation Criteria: (See attached grade sheet)
1. Attendance, meeting deadlines, individual progress, attitude, craftsmanship/cleanliness, and participation will be factors in grading.
3. Sketchbook/notebook will be graded based on how well it is utilized as a resource for notes, homework, reference and designing and planning projects.
4. At the end of the semester each student will prepare an exhibit of his or her finished work for critique and grading. Each student will be held responsible for completion of the projects as listed in the Outline of Assignments.
5. Cleaning of studio at end of semester. All students, including Audits, must attend final cleanup day or fail the class. Audits students that miss cleanup day will lose future firing privileges.

Casper College may collect samples of student work demonstrating achievement of the above outcomes. Any personally identifying information will be removed from student work.

Recommended Text(s):
Any comprehensive Ceramic textbook will help supplement in-class learning.
Other sources of information:
At the library you will find a large number of books about the field of ceramics: historical and contemporary pottery and pottery making, biographies, histories, and the science of ceramics. The magazines American Craft, Ceramics Monthly and Ceramic Art and Perception are available in both the current periodical section, and back issues in the bound volumes section of the library.

Tools:
- Small Sponge
- Fettling Knife
- Red Rubber Kidney Rib
- Wood Modeling Tool
- Metal Kidney Rib
- Plastic Ruler
- Trimming Needle
- Cutting Wire
- Bamboo Brush

Sources: Goedicke’s Arts and Crafts (120 W. 2nd St), has assembled a kit of all items above.
Hobby Lobby is also selling some pottery tools.
Make or find your own.

Supplies: A sketchbook, padlock, old towel, several plastic bags and a plastic bucket (about 1 gal size)

Clay: Clay is purchased through the CASHIERS in the Gateway Building, third floor. The instructor, in exchange for the receipt from the college, will issue clay to you. The price of clay includes the cost of glaze, decorating materials, and firing. **DO NOT BRING CLAY FROM ANY OTHER SOURCE INTO THIS DEPARTMENT!**

Class Policies: All students are expected to follow the outlines closely, contacting the instructor for individual help on all projects as needed.
A studio class is designed to allow for time needed for hands on learning, however, some additional outside class work may be required to meet dead lines.
Students are expected to have work completed by due dates, keeping in mind the importance of sound craftsmanship and good design. Each class period a project is late will lower the grade by 10 points.
The Casper College catalogue states: “students are expected to attend all classes for which they are registered, are accountable for all class work during an absence and that excessive absences may result in a lower grade.”
In this class more than three absences is considered excessive. Five absences will result in a grade no higher than D.
Class begins promptly on the hour. Demonstrations and lectures will not be repeated for late students.
Breaks are generally ten minutes on the hour.
End of class cleanup will begin twenty minutes before the final hour. Class is over ten minutes before the end of the final hour.
Tardiness and/or leaving early will affect the final grade.
Social conversation is a distraction. Ceramics is a visual and hands on discipline, not a verbal one. Talking during lab time invariably affects the quality of your study and the study of those around you. Talking will negatively affect your final grade.
Turn cell phones to vibrate mode or off. Take calls outside of class if it is important.
Methods of study will be thoroughly discussed and should be followed to gain the maximum from this course.
Students will be held responsible for their work ethic.
Cracked or poorly jointed pieces will not be fired, nor will pieces not meeting the requirements of the project.
ALL WORK MUST MEET WITH INSTRUCTORS APPROVAL BEFORE BEING FIRED.
Last Date to Change to Audit Status or to Withdraw with a W Grade: (withdrawal deadline; see: “Admission and Registration – Schedule Changes” in the catalog)

Student Rights and Responsibilities: Please refer to the Casper College Student Conduct and Judicial Code for information concerning your rights and responsibilities as a Casper College Student.

Chain of Command: If you have any problems with this class, you should first contact the instructor to attempt to solve the problem. If you are not satisfied with the solution offered by the instructor, you should then take the matter through the appropriate chain of command starting with the Department Head/Program Director, the Dean, and lastly the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Academic Dishonesty: (Cheating & Plagiarism) Casper College demands intellectual honesty. Proven plagiarism or any form of dishonesty associated with the academic process can result in the offender failing the course in which the offense was committed or expulsion from school. See the Casper College Student Code of Conduct for more information on this topic.

Official Means of Communication: Casper College faculty and staff will employ the student's assigned Casper College email account as a primary method of communication. Students are responsible to check their account regularly. This is also, where you will find course evaluation links during course evaluation periods.

ADA Accommodations Policy: If you need academic accommodations because of a disability, please inform me as soon as possible. See me privately after class, or during my office hours. To request academic accommodations, students must first consult with the college’s Disability Services Counselor located in the Gateway Building, Room 344, (307) 268-2557, bheuer@caspercollege.edu. The Disability Services Counselor is responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students requesting accommodations, determining eligibility for accommodations, and helping students request and use appropriate accommodations.

OUTLINE OF CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Clay: All Ceramics I assignments will be made only with High-fire Stoneware.

HANDBUILDING ASSIGNMENTS
   All hand building assignments will be due before mid-term. Specific dates will be assigned during the demonstration.

Skills: Learn by hands-on experience the physical handling characteristics of clay, and some of its limits. Learn the basic skills of hand building by pinching, coiling, and slab methods; basic decorating techniques; the use of various hand tools; and the safe operation of equipment such as slab rollers. Learn to identify and avoid various hazards: materials, equipment. Begin thinking beyond objects made, and how mastery of technique allows expression and communication.

Method: The first weeks of the semester will be devoted exclusively to hand built projects. Demonstrations will be given at the start of each new assignment and group critique will follow assignment completion.

1. PINCH BOWLS/OBJECTS Make three pinch bowls/objects based on personal object. These will be fired in an electric kiln.
   Goals: Become acquainted with clay, and some of its possibilities/limitations.
2. **WOOD FIRED TEABOWLS or SCULPTURES**   Two footed tea bowls or sculptures to be glazed and wood fired. A one hour stoke shift will be required for this assignment. Failure to show for your shift will result in a zero for this assignment.

   Goals: Learn about different cultures and an ancient firing technique.

3. **TILES PROJECTS**   Make two box forms with minimum sides of 4”x 4” x 3/8” thick tiles, and decorate using a before bisque technique.

   Goals: (1) Improve technical skills, and (2) Stimulate interest in decorating.

4. **COIL-BUILT PROJECT**  “HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF” Recreate a Historical Pot. Go to the Library and look through as many books of historical pottery as you can locate. Pick your favorite pot or object that is at least 100 years old or older. It has to be decorated with some type of decoration. Any decoration on the pot is to be adapted to sgraffito method of decoration. (Consult with the instructor if you feel a different method of decoration would be more appropriate for your piece). Write a letter describing any information about the object, (culture of origin, time frame of its creation) and why you are attracted to this specific piece. (A handout will be given at intro of assignment). Make a good quality Xerox of the photo and bring it to class with you. DO NOT BRING THE LIBRARY BOOK INTO THE CLASSROOM. SECURE THE PERMISSION OF THE INSTRUCTOR IN ADVANCE. Build this pot by the coil method as closely to the original as possible. It is to be at least 10 to 12 inches in height.

   Goals: (1) Increase observational skills (2) Improve technical skills (3) Enhance appreciation and knowledge of historical pottery

**WHEEL THROWING ASSIGNMENTS**

   All wheel assignments will be due four weeks before finals week.

**Method:** These assignments are to be made on the potter’s wheel.

**Skills:** To become proficient at the potter’s wheel, each student will need to learn the following steps for the making of wheel-thrown pottery: (1) Wedging or Kneading, (2) Centering, (3) Opening, (4) Pulling Up, (5) Shaping, (6) Finishing rims and lips, (7) Initial Trimming, (8) Removal from the Wheel Head, (9) Decorating techniques, (10) Decorating at the appropriate times, (11) Drying to trimming consistency, (12) Trimming, (13) Drying so as to prevent cracking and warping, (14) Proper handling of green ware so as to prevent damage, (15) Proper handling of bisque-fired ware so as to avoid glazing problems, (16) Glazing and over glaze stain techniques, (17) Dry-footing, (18) Finishing the work after glaze firing. The instructor will give numerous demonstrations. Sketches will be required before beginning any project.

1. **CYLINDERS**

   Cylinders are a very important form for the potter; being the basic form from which many other shapes are derived. Students will practice for the first two weeks after mid-term throwing cylinders with straight walls 4” high and 3-4” in diameter, following carefully the sequence demonstrated. All five practice cylinders are to be cut down the center with the cutting wire and examined for thickness and evenness. None of these practice cylinders are to be saved, but will be graded. Five or more cylinders will be made and decorated with before bisque techniques, glazed and finished for grading.

2. **BOWLS**

   Make six or more bowls with turned feet. Make at least one bowl each of the three basic bowl shapes. Create three more bowls of your own design. Consult the instructor on design of the bowls before proceeding. Make certain that the feet are not too wide or the bowls too uneven in thickness.
REMEMBER!

Keep wedging table clean at all times, as soon as you finish using it.
Clean your wheel and work area thoroughly each day, including cleaning the floor in your area.
Do not leave unfinished work or tools out when not in the lab.
The last day for throwing will be 4 weeks prior to the last class.
There will be a Cleanup Day at the end of semester and attendance is mandatory.

SKETCHBOOK

Your sketchbook is a very important part of your learning experience and your final grade. There will be short homework assignments given throughout the semester to help promote self-discovery and understanding of the subject. Drawing and sketching will also be part of the homework assignments. Each student will be graded on completion of the drawing assignments, not on the quality of the drawings. These are used to improve observation skills and creative thinking only. No student should be worried about what their drawings look like because they are learning tools only. The sketchbook is also where notes from lectures and in-class demonstrations will be kept. Note taking is highly recommended as vast amounts of information must be remembered to accomplish your assignments successfully. Even if you never look at your notes again, by writing down information as you hear it, you will be much more likely to remember what was said. TAKE NOTES DURING CLASS!

PAPER/PRESENTATION (see attached)

A final paper based on the information you harvested in your sketchbook over the semester will be required for the final grade. You will present this paper orally to the class at the end of the semester as a sharing and final discussion of the semester.

ATTENDANCE

This is the largest and most important component of your grade. How can you learn if you don’t come to class? Your job as a student is to come to class prepared and on time, work when you are here and enjoy yourself in the process.

INDIVIDUAL PROGRESS, ATTITUDE AND INTEREST

Ceramics is an amazing material and technology that we could not easily live without. It is also a fantastic learning medium if you let it. Part of your grade depends on how well you handle sitting and experimenting with this magical material. A focused, serious and positive attitude is most helpful when learning any new skill and should be utilized in this class.

CLEAN UP

The studio is used by many students and is an open lab. That means you can come work in it any time the building is open. If there is a class in session, please get instructor permission and give students in that class priority to equipment. Cleaning up after yourself is a must. Don’t become known as a pigpen. Everybody knows who is leaving messes for others to clean up before they can start working. Even so, by the end of semester all students will be required to attend the final clean-up day. Failure to attend will result in an automatic flunking of the course.
CERAMICS I FINAL GRADE SHEET

Assignments (100 points each: 50 Timeliness, 25 Craftsmanship, 25 Decoration)

Pinch objects
Wood fire
Coil
Boxes
Practice cylinders
Cylinders
Bowls
Sketchbook/notebook (500 points possible)

Paper/Presentation (200 points possible)
Attendance (30x40=1200 possible: Absent –100, Late –50, Leave early -50)

Individual progress, attitude and interest (500 possible)
Clean-up Day

Total Grade (3100 possible)

Percentage and Final Grade
Based on 90-100% = A; 80-90% = B; etc…
Ceramic Report and Presentation

Using the information you gathered in your sketchbook, write a letter to yourself recording what you learned this semester. You may talk about many things that pertain to class. Choose things you find interesting about ceramics, clay and/or yourself. Sometimes it’s the mistakes we make where the best lessons come from, so including those may be important to you.

The letter should be two to six pages long, double-spaced and twelve-point font. Please save it as a Word document if possible.

You will be reading this letter aloud to your class towards the end of the semester, so make sure to proof read it several times and/or have someone else look it over. The college has a great writing center that is free for all students. You may choose to add some more personal material in a post script (P.S.) for yourself and me if you don’t care to share publically certain thoughts.

This assignment is worth 200 points. Spelling, grammar and how well you present it will be factors in the grade.

Please e-mail (molson@caspercollege.edu) me a copy or bring it on a flash drive for downloading.

You will also need to turn in a hard copy print out for grading and to read during the presentation.

The due date is:
Safety issues in the Casper College Ceramic Studio involve seven main areas:

1. **Inhalation of dust and/or fumes:**

   Clay dust, dry glaze materials, other chemicals and fumes from firing can potentially enter the lungs. All dry materials are properly labeled indicating hazards for inhalation, ingestion and skin contact. Ventilation equipment is installed over mixing areas and kilns. Dust masks and respirators are available for student use. First day lecture includes dust concerns and proper wet wipe cleaning protocols to minimize air contamination.

2. **Corrosive liquids:**

   Liquid glazes contain various amounts of alkali and acidic materials. Glaze tongs and rubber gloves are demonstrated and available for students. A no eating or drinking policy is active in the glaze mixing and working areas. Washing of hands after working with these materials is emphasized.

3. **Heat:**

   Electric kilns are located in far corner of studio and isolated from high traffic areas. Gas kilns are all located outside of main studio. Proper instruction on use of equipment is given. Gas kilns must be fired during business hours with instructor supervision. Fire extinguishers, gloves, face shields and tongs are available for safe use of the kilns. Extensive lectures and demonstrations of firing protocols and proper equipment use are given. Safety systems are installed on all kilns.

4. **Electrical:**

   Cords for electric wheels are protected from water and are wrapped to minimize tripping hazards.

5. **Eyes:**

   Eye protection (safety glasses) from corrosive liquids, dust and fire are present in the studio. Eye wash station is located centrally near sink area.

6. **Hearing:**

   Grinders and pneumatic tools are sometimes used and hearing protection is available for student use.

7. **Hands:**

   Lectures and demonstration concerning proper use of equipment where precautions are warranted will be given. (Ex: Hot articles, corrosive liquids, sharp implements, edges and machinery.) Gloves, tongs and a first aid kit are available and easily accessible.

All equipment and materials and their potential health hazards are properly and thoroughly demonstrated and discussed before any student is allowed to use them.