

# **Mercer County Community College**

## **Arts and Communication Division**

### **ART 145**

### **BEGINNING CERAMICS – HANDBUILDING**

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Introduction to basic clay experience through clay hand-building techniques: pinch, drape, press, slab, and coil. The technical aspects of color slips and glazing are introduced, and development of a personal appreciation of form is stressed.

Text (s):       **Reference Division Booklist**

Prerequisites: **None**

Co-requisites:

**Credits: 3**

**Lecture Hours: 1**

**Studio/Lab Hours: 4**

**Food and Drink are Strictly Prohibited in Classrooms as per Health and Safety Laws. Students may not bring in chemicals or cleaning fluids without the appropriate MSD sheets.**

**Course Coordinator: Michael Welliver**

**Latest Review: Spring 2005**

## **I. RATIONALE**

Ceramics may fulfill a need for self-expression. In a language that is universally understood, it carries on age-old traditions and begins new ones.

Clay has an implied life. Hold it in your hands; it feels soft and pliable as you poke and pinch. It begins to take on form as bowl, human figure, or animal. You are doing what people have done naturally for thousands of years.

Because clay becomes permanent when fired, it leaves a record or history about the individual and the time in which it was created. Its impact in daily lives is far-reaching.

Designed for the beginning student, this is a hand-building course exploring functional as well as sculptural approaches. With guidance from the instructor, the student will develop a personal style and approach.

## **II. GENERAL COURSE GOALS**

- A. Formulation of a basis for future style and personalized vocabulary in the ceramic medium.
- B. Working knowledge of the clay, glazes, and firing procedures from start to finish in producing a ceramic object.
- C. Ability to analyze verbally the student's own work and the work of others.
- D. Training in decisions, with suggestions from the instructor, toward best approach in future endeavors.
- E. Completion of all assigned class projects.

## **III. EVALUATION PROCEDURES**

### **Attendance**

Lectures, demonstrations, and one-to-one discussions are central to the course. It is strongly urged that students attend all classes. After three unexcused absences the student's final grade may be dropped one letter grade.

### **Grades**

A student's classroom participation is taken into consideration by the award of 0 - 5 points along with the following standards of craftsmanship:

**Grade of "D":** Each student is:

1. Responsible for completing all assigned projects.
2. Required to demonstrate esthetic/technical proficiency in the following areas: pinch, coil, slab, press mold, engobe and glazing techniques.

**Note:** Students are encouraged to do work outside the class and to use the facility at assigned open hours.

**Grade of "C":** Mastery of essential elements of ceramics as well as "D" requirements.

**Grade of "B":** Above average mastery of essential elements of ceramics as well as "D" requirements.

**Grade of "A":** Exceptional mastery of essential elements of ceramics and demonstrated excellence and originality in addition to "D" requirements.

**IV. INSTRUCTIONAL MODES TO BE USED**

- A. Lectures
- B. Demonstrations
- C. Films
- D. One-to-One Instruction
- E. Class Discussions

**V. TEXTS AND MATERIALS**

**Recommended Texts:**

Nelson, Glenn C., Ceramics, A Potters Handbook, Holt, Rinehart, Winston.

Woody, Elsbeth, Handbuilding Ceramic Forms, Farrar, Straus, Giroux.

<b>MATERIALS</b>	<b>TOOLS FOR CLAY</b>	<b>TOOLS FOR GLAZING &amp; ENGOBE DECORATION</b>
Clay (MCCC Bookstore)	Small plastic container with lid	Fine sandpaper
Lock	Small sponge (natural or synthetic)	Variety of brushes
Notebook/sketchbook	Pin tool	Scotch-brite scrubbing pad
Kitchen-size garbage bags	Wire tool	Dipping tongs
Permanent Magic Marker	Smooth wooden tool	Paper dust masks
Spray bottle	Metal rib	Disposable rubber gloves
Plastic bucket	Rubber rib	
Large clean-up sponge	Metal fork	
Wide plastic putty knife	Loop tools	
	Wooden paddle	
	Fettling knife	
	Stanley Sur-form	

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1:

- Session 1 Discuss course objectives, assign materials list, studio tour.
- Session 2 Lecture--properties of clay, demonstration--wedging, pinched forms, begin Project 1: Three Matching Pinched Forms.

### WEEK 2:

- Session 3 Complete Project 1.
- Session 4 Demonstration--Project 2: Combined Pinched Forms, begin Project 2.

### WEEK 3:

- Session 5 Continue Project 2, demonstration--engobe decorating techniques.
- Session 6 Complete Project 2 and engobe decoration.

### WEEK 4:

- Session 7 Lecture/demonstration Project 3: Coil Pot, assign homework.
- Session 8 Review homework, begin Project 3.

### WEEK 5:

- Session 9 Continue Project 3.
- Session 10 Continue Project 3.

### WEEK 6:

- Session 11 Complete Project 3.
- Session 12 Lecture/demonstration--glazing, begin glazing.

### WEEK 7:

- Session 13 Demonstration--slab roller, Project 4: Slab Construction, assign homework.
- Session 14 Review homework, roll slabs.

### WEEK 8:

- Session 15 Begin Project 4.
- Session 16 Continue Project 4.

### WEEK 9:

- Session 17 Continue Project 4.
- Session 18 Complete Project 4.

### WEEK 10:

- Session 19 Lecture/demonstration--mixing and shaping plaster, begin plaster molds.
- Session 20 Complete plaster molds.

## WEEKLY SCHEDULE (cont'd)

### WEEK 11:

Session 21 Lecture/demonstration--Project 5: Matching Slab Plates, begin Project 5.

Session 22 Continue Project 5

### WEEK 12:

Session 23 Complete Project 5.

Session 24 Lecture/demonstration--Project 6: Pressmolded bowl, begin Project 6.

### WEEK 13:

Session 25 Continue Project 6.

Session 26 Complete Project 6, WET CLAY DEADLINE

### WEEK 14:

Session 27 Continue glazing.

Session 28 Continue glazing.

### WEEK 15:

Session 29 Complete glazing.

Session 30 Complete glazing.

### WEEK 16:

Session 31 FINAL CRITIQUE

## READING LIST

Cardew, Michael - Pioneer Pottery

Hamer, Frank - The Potter's Dictionary of Materials and Techniques

Leach, Bernard - A Potter's Book

Nelson, Glenn - Ceramics: A Potter's Handbook

Nigrosh, Leon - Claywork, Form and Idea in Ceramic Design

Olsen, Frederick - The Kiln Book

Rhodes, Daniel - Clay and Glazes for the Potter

Woody, Elsbeth - Pottery on the Wheel

Counts, Charles - Pottery Workshop

Green, David - Pottery: Materials and Techniques

Rhodes, Daniel - Kilns: Design, Construction and Operation

Sanders, Herbert H. - Glazes for Special Effects

### **Periodicals:**

#### Ceramics Monthly:

PO Box 12448, Columbus, OH 43212

10 issues per year - \$18

#### Studio Potter:

Daniel Clark Fdn,

Box 172, Warner, NH 03045

2 issues per year

## **GLOSSARY OF CERAMIC TERMS**

**BISQUE:** Unglazed ceramic ware that has been fired once.

**BISQUE-FIRING:** A preliminary firing in the kiln to harden the ceramic ware prior to glazing and the subsequent glaze-firing.

**COIL-BUILDING:** The process of forming pottery or sculptural forms using rope-like rolls of clay.

**BAT:** A disc of plaster or wood on which pottery is formed on the potter's wheel. Also a slab of plaster on which clay is dried or wedged.

**CLAY:** Earthy materials formed by the decomposition of granite.

**CLAY BODY:** A blend of clays and non-plastic materials formulated for particular purposes and firing temperature.

**GLAZE:** A liquid suspension of finely ground minerals that is applied by brushing, pouring, or spraying on the surface of a bisque-fired ceramic ware. After drying, the ware is fired to the temperature at which the glaze ingredients will melt together, or fuse, to form a glassy surface coating.

**GREEN-WARE:** Ceramic ware that has been air-dried but not bisque-fired.

**KILN:** Furnace or "oven" usually built of firebrick used to fire ceramic ware to high temperatures (up to 2600°) by use of gas, wood, or electricity.

**LEATHER HARD:** The condition of clay when most of the moisture has evaporated but not yet "bone dry."

**PYROMETRIC CONES:** Small pyramids of ceramic materials which melt at specific temperatures.

**RIB:** A tool of wood, metal, or rubber used in both hand-building and throwing techniques to smooth, compress, and shape the clay.

**SLAB-BUILDING:** A hand-building process using sheets or slabs of clay to construct forms.

**SLIP:** A suspension of clay in water.

**SCORING:** A series of deep scratches in clay along areas to be joined.

**THROWING:** The process of forming pottery on the potter's wheel.

**VITREOUS:** Pertaining to the hard glassy and non-absorbent quality of a body or glaze.

**WEDGING:** The kneading of clay which forces out trapped air pockets and helps develop an even texture by evenly distributing the moisture throughout the clay mass.