

# MERCER COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## Arts and Communication Division

### ART 240

### RAKU WORKSHOP

#### COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to the Raku process. Students will spend an intensive six-week period creating, glazing, and firing functional and sculptural ceramic objects.

Text(s):       None

Prerequisites: **Previous ceramics experience**

Corequisites: **None**

Credits: **3**

Lecture Hours:

Studio/Lab Hours:

<p><b>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.</b></p>
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Coordinator: **Michael Welliver**

Latest Review: **Summer 2005**

## **I. RATIONALE**

Raku is a low-temperature firing technique derived from the classical procedures developed by the 16th Century Japanese potters. Most of the ware was created by the Japanese to be used during the Tea Ceremony and consisted primarily of tea bowls, incense boxes, and small dishes.

The rapid firing and cooling of Raku ware brings immediacy and spontaneity to the process.

\* **Designed for the student with previous ceramic experience** – the course will further enhance the student's aesthetic as well as technique awareness.

## **II. GENERAL COURSE GOALS**

- A. Formulation of a basis for future style and personalized vocabulary in the Raku process.
- B. Working knowledge of the clay, glazes and firing procedures in the Raku process.
- 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 discussion are central to the course. It is strongly urged that students attend all classes. After three unexcused absences, the student's 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 standard of craftsmanship:

#### **Grade of "D":**

Each student is:

1. Responsible for a minimum of four completed works, fired by the student.
2. Required to demonstrate aesthetic/technical proficiency in the following areas: form, glazing and firing procedures.

**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 in the Raku process, as well as "D" requirements.

#### **Grade of "B":**

Above average mastery of essential elements of the Raku process as well as "D" requirements.

#### **Grade of "A":**

Exceptional mastery of essential elements of Raku and demonstrated excellence and originality, in addition to "D" requirements.

#### IV. **INSTRUCTIONAL MODES TO BE USED**

1. Lectures
2. Demonstrations
3. Slides
4. One-to-one Instruction
5. Class Discussion

#### V. **TEXT AND MATERIALS**

##### **Recommended Texts:**

Pipenberg, John Dickerson - Raku Handbook, Van Nostrand/Reinhold

Handbuilding Ceramic Forms, Elsbeth Woody, Farrar, Straus, Groux

##### **Required Materials:**

clay (MCCC Bookstore)  
lock  
notebook/sketchbook  
kitchen-size garbage bags  
permanent magic marker  
spray bottle  
plastic bucket  
large clean-up sponge  
wide plastic putty knife

##### **Tools for clay:**

small plastic container with lid  
small sponge (natural or synthetic)  
pin tool  
wire tool  
smooth wooden tool  
metal rib  
rubber rib  
metal fork  
loop tools  
wooden paddle  
fettling knife  
Stanley Sur-form

##### **Tools for glazing and engobe decoration:**

fine sandpaper  
variety of brushes  
Scotch-brite scrubbing pad  
dipping tongs  
paper dust mask  
disposable rubber gloves

## VI. COURSE OUTLINE

### WEEK 1:

- Session 1: Introduction, review course outline, course requirements and materials; studio tour and procedures; Slide Lecture: the Raku Process; introduce Project 1, assign homework sketches.
- Session 2: Review homework sketches, begin Project 1.
- Session 3: Complete Project 1.

### WEEK 2:

- Session 4: Introduce Project 2; in-class sketching assignment; begin Project 2.
- Session 5: Continue Project 2.
- Session 6: Complete Project 2; introduce Project 3; assign homework sketches.

### WEEK 3:

- Session 7: Review homework sketches; begin Project 3.
- Session 8: Continue Project 3.
- Session 9: Complete Project 3; introduce Project 4; assign homework sketches.

### WEEK 4:

- Session 10: Review homework sketches; begin Project 4; Lecture and Demonstration: Sawdust Firing.
- Session 11: Continue Project 4.
- Session 12: Complete Project 4.

### WEEK 5:

- Session 13: Lecture and Demonstration: Glazing and Raku Firing.
- Session 14: Continue glazing and firing.
- Session 15: Continue glazing and firing.

### WEEK 6:

- Session 16: Continue glazing and firing.
- Session 17: Complete glazing and firing.
- Session 18: **Final Critique.**