Art 295: CORE CERAMICS

Class: Monday/Wednesday 9:05-11:35 AM  
Location: Studio Arts Building RM 107  
Professor: Abby Donovan  
   office hours by appointment  
   email: adonovan@udel.edu  
   phone: 831-2706

Pay Course Fees: http://www.udel.edu/artconsumables

Overview

The goal of the clay/ceramics area is to present students with a question: what does it mean to investigate ideas through and with a material? Students at all levels will be encouraged to see how far and wide the possibilities are—with and for—their creativity and the material of clay.

This beginning level course is designed to introduce students to both the fundamentals of working with clay, and the fundamentals of an artistic practice. Process and engaged investigation will be emphasized, with strong encouragement for experimentation and creativity. What does it mean to live and do art? What does it mean to form a three-dimensional object or structure out of dust/dirt/okay let’s call it clay?

Objectives

• Recognize the expressive possibilities of clay and the ceramic process
• Independently and collaboratively construct three-dimensional objects using a variety of ceramic techniques
• Find, compare, and discuss a wide range of art through written art appreciations
• Interpret space, scale, and materiality through individual studio work
• Describe, evaluate, and speak articulately and critically about one’s own work and the work of others in group critiques

Attendance

As someone kind of funny once said, “Half of life is just showing up,” and you’ll be amazed at how much better you will do in class by simply attending it. Excessive unexcused absences (two is excessive) will have a terrible impact on your grade. *****In other words, two unexcused absences will result in your grade dropping by one letter grade, with a half grade drop for each subsequent absence. And yes, those times coming late/leaving early magically and quickly turn into an absence!

If you have to be absent please try and tell me in advance—or find me the next day/early next week so that your make-up work can be assigned.
**Class Requirements**

1. Attendance is essential and mandatory. This is not a lecture class so information cannot be found from other sources. Instruction, practice, and peer interaction are the best ways to succeed and progress. Often interaction is a great source of inspiration, as well. Final review and studio clean up are absolutely mandatory.

2. Assignments are due on the date given. Flexibility is at the instructor’s discretion, and must be discussed in advance. All assignments must be completed by final review.

3. Class participation is required. In reviews, you will not only be expected to talk about your own work, but the work of your peers.

4. Cell phones are not allowed to be used during class. If you text during class, I will confiscate your phone.

Studio classes are 2 and a half hours long. This means you must expect to spend, on average, 4-5 hours a week outside of class time in the studio. At least! But hey, it’s your favorite place to be anyway, right?

**Grading Guidelines:**

If you turn in all your work on time (and if it is satisfactorily completed), attend class and participate, you are ensured a C. A’s and B’s are based on my evaluation of your effort and reserved for students who excel beyond average and competent work. Grading is based 100% on the effort you exhibit in class and on your projects.

*Or to put it another way:*

‘A’ is reserved for students who exhibit a high level of intellectual investigation, and exceptional performance within the structure of the class. ‘A’ students use all of their resources, their creativity, curiosity and energy for their work. They are attentive participants in all aspects of studio practice and discussion. They come to class prepared with their tools, reference materials, readings completed, and they meet project deadlines.

‘B’ students perform at a level of involvement beyond basic course requirements.

If you are worried about your grade at any point during the semester, ask to meet with me. If you *should* be worried about your grade I will send you a friendly but focused warning email with advice on how to improve it and/or I will ask to meet with you.

**FAQ**

Any student enrolled in this class will have the opportunity to access the studio during open studio hours, which will be posted outside the door by the 2nd week of class.
Class Projects and Schedule

Everyone is expected to be prepared to share and make presentations at our “observations & knowledge pool sessions (O&K)” when they appear on the class schedule. I will call on 3-4 people at random per class. The definition of O&K pool sessions to be presented the first day of class.

Experimentation: OCCASIONALLY ON Monday we will try and spend 30-45 minutes conducting “what happens if…” material experimentations. You will help to run these!

Written art appreciations: a total of three art appreciations will be required, see calendar for due dates below. A description of requirements will be distributed and gone over in class.

Last but not least, those projects and timeline. Details are subject to change and actual order of events and due dates may vary depending on how quickly or thoroughly the class works as a whole. In addition to in-class demonstrations and workshops, I will present at least 2 lectures at different points throughout the semester, showing you various forms of ceramic artworks. Throwing pottery is not a component of this class.

LIST OF POTENTIAL PROJECTS (we will probably do some combination of at least 4 of these)

1. Diminutive Sketches: introduction to the studios with extended and heightened jam of experimentation, demonstrations of basic techniques, observation, and articulation.
2. How To Make an Impression: basic press and hump mold experiments.
3. Event Horizons: What does it mean to pull something out or push something in/pull something in or push something out? = also learn how to use the extruder
4. Feet of Clay: in groups or individually, build a clay fort/domicile/suit of armor (something that a person can fit inside). This project will not be fired.
5. Matryoshka: how many things does or can one thing contain? What is mass versus weight, how can you tell if something is full?
6. DO SOMETHING: create a piece or installation involving clay or ceramic objects and video, performance, sound……
6. TBA is Time-Based Approach (or how to define claymation): interpretations of malleability, movement, time.

Key Calendar Dates

2/5 1st day of classes; discussion of studio, go over syllabus, take an observational hike.
2/7 SCAVENGER HUNT! See handout. We will meet in the ceramics studio to start.
2/12 “It’s all about the ions...”. Everything commences with mad experimentation, observation, and articulations. Bring in what you collected on the scavenger hunt. Demonstrations of basic techniques.
2/14 Demonstrations of basic techniques. Beginning of 1st project “diminutive sketches.”
2/22 NYC trip Metropolitan Museum
2/26 1st projects due (wet stage only!) at start of class for review, plan next steps.
2/28 2nd project begins
3/5 O&K POOL SESSION! Handout about written art appreciation assignment.
3/12 2nd projects due
3/14 begin 3rd project
3/21 in-class self evaluations
Key Calendar Dates (cont.)

3/21  3rd project due completed at start of class for review and discussion.
3/26-4/1  SPRING BREAK
4/2  Beginning of 4th project.
4/4  Hand in written art appreciation #1.
4/6  O&K POOL SESSION!
4/16  4th projects due at start of class (completed in wet stage) for review and discussion.
4/21  O&K POOL SESSION!  Hand in written art appreciation #2, work on how to shoot portfolios.
4/30  Hand in written art appreciation #3, 5th project due at start of class.
5/1  Begin 6th project, begin completion of all things.
5/7  6th project due
5/14  LAST DAY OF CLASS

Semester Supply List
Mandatory
   1. Sketchbook
   2. Ceramics tool kit from bookstore
   3. Plastic container with lid

Optional:
   1. Apron
   2. Hair dryer
   3. Rolling pin
   4. Anything with an interesting texture
   5. plastic bags, FOAM RUBBER
   6. newspapers

the fine print:

This course has a consumable fee attached. Course fees are optional, but they cover essential studio materials that would be much more expensive if you were required to provide them yourself. In Ceramics these communal studio materials include (among other things): all dry clay and glaze materials, pre-mixed glazes, class clay, propane and cones for kilns, plaster, pre-mixed slip, modeling clay for claymations, dust masks.

*No open-toed shoes or flip-flops are allowed in the studio. SERIOUSLY.*