SFA School of Art  
Ceramics I - ARTS 2346 001

Spring 2024  
Instructor: Erik Ordaz (he/his)  
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Office: Ceramics studio  
Office Hours: M/W 11:00 am – 1:00 pm @ Ceramics studio (by appointment)  
Class meeting time and place: T/R 11:00 – 1:40. Upper Art Building 150A Credits: 3

I. Course Description:

ARTS 2346. 3 semester hours, 6 hours studio, 6 hours independent study per week. Introductory study of clay as an artistic medium with emphasis on the potter’s wheel. A thorough study and understanding of throwing techniques to create and design well crafted, thoughtful vessels. **No prerequisites.**

This course introduces students to the fundamental techniques of wheel throwing in ceramics. Through a series of hands-on projects and demonstrations, students will develop essential skills in centering clay, creating basic forms, trimming, and glazing. The course emphasizes creativity, craftsmanship, and problem-solving in the context of functional and sculptural pottery.

You will not only learn how to manipulate clay using the potter’s wheel, but you will also gain basic understanding of clay body formulation, slip and glaze uses, glazing and kiln firing so that you can apply and use this knowledge in your own work. We will continue our visiting artist program where a well-known ceramist will visit for two days to lecture, demonstrate, and discuss ceramic issues with you.

II. Program Learning Outcomes:

1. Undergraduate students will demonstrate proficiency in studio foundation skills as they relate to the elements and principles of design.  
2. Undergraduate students will exhibit a high level of proficiency in the use of materials, techniques and media.  
3. Undergraduate students will demonstrate understanding of contemporary art issues through exploration of synthesis of content, problem solving and creativity.  
4. Undergraduate students will define and state knowledge of Art Historical precedents.

III. Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will demonstrate proficiency in wheel throwing techniques, including centering, pulling, shaping, and trimming.  
2. Students will be able to create various basic forms on the potter's wheel, such as cylinders, bowls, and plates and employ different surface decoration and glazing techniques to enhance the aesthetic appeal of their work.  
3. Students will demonstrate the ability to construct functional and sculptural work using the potter's wheel.  
4. Students will be able to understand the basic properties of clay, glazes, and firing processes.  
5. Students will demonstrate the capacity to apply critical thinking skills to analyze and critique their own and their peers' ceramic works.  
6. Students will develop an understanding of the historical and cultural context of ceramics.

*Updated: January 2024*
IV. Text and Materials (All books are suggested, not required)

- Clay and Glazes for the Potter, Daniel Rhodes
- The Potter’s Dictionary of Materials and Techniques, Frank and Janet Hamer
- Mastering the Potter's Wheel: Techniques, Tips, and Tricks for Potters, Ben Carter
- Simon Leach’s Pottery Handbook, Simon Leach
- Rocks and Minerals, Charles Sorrell
- The Potter’s Palette, Christine Constant and Steve Ogden

V. Course Assignments:

See projects sheet on D2L

Note: the projects may shift gears a bit to accommodate the individual personality of the class

VI. Evaluation and Assessments (Grading):

Your grade will reflect your professional attitude in the studio, attendance, research, assignments, participation in class discussions, and finished work graded during critiques.

Participation. You are responsible for your own success, and you will play a pivotal role in the group dynamic of the class. Therefore, attendance, a strong work ethic, and active participation in all aspects of this course are essential.

Assignments. All work must be completed on time and ready for critique. Preparatory work will be taken into consideration when evaluating your comprehension and effort. The assignments should be completed according to the structures of the project and presented in a professional manner. Don’t expect a full grade for unfinished work. Sketchbooks will be kept for specific assignments, preliminary work, and thumbnail sketches.

Workdays. Come to class prepared and ready to work. Be present and focused on your work during class time (your behavior is also considered part of your grade). Critiques will occur at the beginning of the class as marked on the studio calendar. It is your responsibility to show on time and prepared.

Plan on at least 6 hours of out of class work each week.

Studio Habits. Good studio habits are necessary to maintain a clean, safe, and healthy working environment. The last 20 minutes of class will be reserved for cleanup. The tools should be cleaned and cared for in a professional manner. Cell phones must be turned off during class. Headphones are not allowed during class.

Grading

Grades will be given on a standard scale:

- A 90-100 = Requirements met with excellent achievement, extra time and effort
- B 80-89.9 = Requirements met with good achievement and clear understanding of objectives
- C 70-79.9 = Requirements met with average effort and work
- D 60-69.9 = Requirements met with minimum effort and careless work
- F < 60 = Minimum requirements not met, inadequate understanding of course material

Projects Grades:

60% of your grade will be divided amongst all class projects

Participation* = 20%
Cleanup/good studio practices = 20%
Total = 100%

*This includes and is not limited to research, reports, short presentations or essays, being present and engaged during visiting artists demos and talks, taking part in wood-firing activities, sketchbook, etc.
Attendance:
The school of Art policy states that attendance is required. If a justifiable absence should occur, it is the responsibility of the student to make up all the work missed. More than two unexcused absences will cost the student a letter grade. Four absences and your grade will drop two letter grades. Three late arrivals (20 minutes) or leaving 20 minutes early will count as one unexcused absence. A student with 5 or more absences will fail the class. If a student misses a critique, it is the equivalent of failing an exam and won't be able to recover those points.

Studio Hours:
The studio is open 24/7 so take advantage of this open schedule. Students are required to work outside of class time to complete the assigned projects. A minimum of SIX HOURS of outside work is expected.

Health and Safety
The use of raw materials such as clay and glazes can be hazardous to your health. Proper use of the materials will be taught, but it will be up to you to follow the training in your daily practice. If you are pregnant or should become pregnant while taking this course or have a medical condition that could increase your sensitivity to chemical exposure, it is important for you to take all precautions concerning your own personal safety. While reasonable measures have been taken to ensure your good health, there is a risk in the class of exposure to materials that could prove harmful to persons at risk. Please contact the professor should you have questions or concerns. Closed toe shoes are required to work in the studio. No headphones are allowed during class.

Student Syllabus Resources
Visit this URL for additional policies and information: https://www.sfasu.edu/student-syllabus-resources

Information on the following is available at Student Syllabus Resources:
• Institution Absences (HOP 04-110)
• Academic Integrity (HOP 04-106)
• Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (HOP policy 02-206)
• Students with Disabilities and Disability Services
• Student Wellness and Well-Being
• Additional Campus Resources
• Crisis Resources

VIII. Tentative Course Calendar:
See annex.

Materials:
The material’s fee you paid at the beginning of school covers the clay, glazes, and kiln firings costs. The cost of tools will be reasonable. This is a list of the basic things you will need:

• Sketchbook
• Towel(s)
• Work Clothes (including closed toe shoes)

You will be informed in advance about exact calendar dates and deadlines. Remember, the clay studio is a communal workspace. The last 20 minutes of every class will be reserved for clean-up. We will also have a mandatory clean up before each critique and a final clean up at the end of the semester. The instructor reserves the right to change, delete, or add to the course requirements and schedule at any time.

Course Evaluations: Near the conclusion of each semester, students in the School of Art electronically evaluate courses taken within the COFA. As you evaluate this course, please be thoughtful, thorough, and accurate in completing the evaluation. Please know that the COFA faculty is committed to excellence in teaching and continued improvement.