

Syllabus for Ceramics

3100, 3300, 5300

Michael Obranovich

CAPE instructor for SMU

Studio Potter

M.A., M.F.A Ceramics

Obranovichpottery.com

obranom@mac.com

Introduction:

This course is intended for those studying ceramics for the first time, with modifications for advanced students, and is a comprehensive introduction to the craft of clay working. The primary emphasis is on studio work leading to a portfolio of finished pieces by the end of the semester. In addition to demonstrations of technique and technical assignments, you should take a field trip to view historic and contemporary examples of fine ceramic art. Periodically throughout the term, I will show slides or films to help illustrate what you are learning.

The main goal of this course is that you will be able to create as well as appreciate expressive, beautiful three dimensional clay forms. You will have an understanding of other cultures and periods of human expression with clay and finally you will begin to be proficient at forming clay objects yourself.

Topics this semester will include:

Introduction to clay the material... where clay comes from, how clay was formed, how clay is gathered, early methods for forming clay objects, pinching and coiling.

Students will be introduced to the potter's wheel, and learn how to center the clay, and form objects.

How sculpture is made with clay, slab construction, and extrusion..

Texturing and coloring clay, color used in clay and slips, engobes, oxides and under-glazes as well as non traditional decorative techniques including acrylic paint and dye.

Glazing: The function of glazes and how they are made up... simple glaze testing... proper application, health and safety.

Firing... Firing methods used throughout history, including a primitive pit firing and oxidation firing.

The main emphasis will be on your work, your growth in the medium, your ability to create expressive, unified and cohesive three dimensional forms in clay.

Learning Outcomes for this Class:

Technical:

-You will learn about clay and glaze composition and formulation.

-A primary emphasis will be on hand built ceramic forms. You will learn to increase the scale of your work all the while keeping control over the quality, coherence and contour of your work. Throwing on the wheel will also be addressed.

-You will explore a variety of handbuilding methods including extended pinch, slab built and extruded forms.

-You will learn firing and glazing methods for stoneware clay.

Aesthetic:

-To appreciate ceramics from an historical perspective through study of original pieces at the museums and galleries that span from Neolithic times through the present.

-To appreciate how a unified, coherent form that is finely crafted is beautiful in its own right.

-To understand how finishing and decorating contribute or detract from your intention as an artist.

Academic expectations:

Attend all classes, care about the work you are doing in class, see it through, visit the ceramics studio between classes to move your work along, help others in the class to succeed, keep the studio clean. The final grade is based on a portfolio of fifteen vessels showing good progress in the medium. The portfolio may include wheel thrown, slab built, pinched or extended pinch, or extruded pots. Attendance is crucial.

Materials:

Clay and Glazing Material will be furnished. Firing of the work is also included.

Suggested Reading:

Periodicals:

[*Ceramics Monthly*](#). 1609 Northwest Blvd., Columbus , Ohio 43212
"The world's most widely read ceramic arts magazine"

[*Studio Potter*](#). Box 172, Warner, New Hampshire 03278
"Studio Potter is a magazine for the community of potters everywhere. It is written by potters and directed toward fellow-potters who earn their living by making pots..."

[*American Craft*](#). American Craft Council, 44 W. 53rd. St., NY, NY. 10019

[American Craft Council](#) and American Craft Museum, NYC

Recommended Books:

[*Making Marks: Discovering the Ceramic Surface*](#) by Robin Hopper

[*The Craft and Art of Clay*](#) (3rd Edition),by Susan Petersen

[*Centering in Pottery, Poetry and Person*](#). M.C. Richards, Middletown, CT., Wesleyan University Press, 1964, 1989..."CENTERING: that act which precedes all others on the potter's wheel..."

[*A Potter's Book*](#). Bernard Leach, Faber and Faber, London, 1960 This is the definitive "classic" work which set the stage for the revival of clay craft in Europe and America.

[*Clay and Glazes for the Potter*](#). Daniel Rhodes, Radnor, PA.: Chilton, 2000,

Calendar- 31 July—17 August 2012

Week 1- An overview will be given with slides, discussions, and observations of

The formation of clay, and how the differences occur from one location to

another. We will discuss how primitive man began making clay objects, and how

Contemporary artists use the inspiration for their work. Video, Maria Martinez, Pueblo potter.

Hand built techniques will be demonstrated: Coiling, slab, and the pinch method

Students will begin working with clay.

Week 2- Discussions of student work, problems encountered solutions.

Off site visits to Museums, galleries, studios and pueblos will be as work progresses.

Discussions of glazes, firing techniques and firing will begin.

Week 3- Conclusion of work. Firing, and discussion of work, and of the class in general.

General considerations:

This class meets on average 5 Hours per day. The studio area will be available most of the time for students to work.

Trips slides, videos, discussions will be on going through out the class venue and are subject to change.

All field trips, transportation and fees for visits are covered by SMU-in- Taos

Advanced Students will discuss with the instructor a goal to be achieved. An individual path will be charted relative to the student, and the level of study.