

**Course Syllabus for ART 130**

Beginning Ceramics

Fall 2017

**Instructor** Thomas Müller**Class** Tues/Thurs 2:00-4:50, Watt Hall 107**Office** Tues/Thurs 8:00am-9am, or by appointment, Watt Hall 108**Studio Tech** Farnaz Sabet**Course Description**

Besides offering the basic technical skills that ceramic sculpture requires--handbuilding techniques, glazing and kiln firing--this course will offer a broader, more conceptual understanding of what ceramics is and what it can be.

Clay is an extremely versatile material with a rich history that has been part of human culture and evolution since the beginning of recorded history, from bowls to jugs to bricks to toilets up to space shuttle tiles, at the same time clay has been used by artists as a fundamental sculptural medium.

As you become comfortable with the material, I would encourage you to really stretch your imagination as to what the material can do for *you*.

Each project will have both a technical component as well as a conceptual component. It is essential to fully explore both aspects in order to come to a successful resolution. Just a note--the more interesting your concept or idea the more interesting it will be to resolve your technical issues!

**Projects**

This course will consist of 4-6 major projects, a reading/research assignment, a vocabulary quiz, and in-class exercises. Each project will take approximately 2-4 weeks. Students should not attempt to "cram" for the course; the medium simply won't allow it. If students use their time wisely there should be ample time to complete the projects.

While most class periods will be spent working on projects, you are expected to spend at least 8-10 hours a week outside of class time on your projects. You will have 24 hour access to the studio. Use your time wisely.

Skills you will be expected to have acquired by the end of the semester include:

- coil building
- slab construction
- slip and score
- glaze mixing and application
- vocabulary
- basic electric kiln firing

## Grades

All projects will be presented for the whole class to discuss and critique. All students are expected to participate in critiques. Your participation is considered part of your grade. Students learn as much from their peers as they do from any other aspect of the class. Projects will be graded based on craftsmanship (as it relates to both building and glazing), thoughtfulness to form, creative solutions, *originality* and effort.

In order for grades to be calculated fairly, all projects must be turned in on time, at the beginning of the class period on the day they are due. No exceptions. Critiques will begin promptly at the beginning of class.

Late projects will be penalized 1 full grade. Projects more than 1 class period late will not be accepted. Again, artists learn from one another, it is imperative that everyone sees everyone else's work.

Each project will, most likely, have several *due dates*. ie: finished building, bisque firing, glazing, etc. I will make all the due dates and times clear and you will be responsible for them.

If a project should blow up in the kiln or fall apart due to poor craftsmanship or lack of attention, it is the student's own responsibility. The student can "re-make" the piece, if there is room in the kilns and time. The project will be considered late.

DISTRIBUTION FOR FINAL GRADE	
Projects/Research Assignment	80%
Participation	10%
Studio Etiquette	10%
Attendance	(-)%
Final Grade	<hr/> 100%

*Attendance is mandatory.* You are allowed 3 free absences, no questions asked, but the fourth absence will drop your final grade by one full grade. Every additional 3 absences will drop your grade by an additional full grade level. 4 partial absences equal one absence.

Please arrive to class on time; lectures and discussions will begin at the beginning of class and participation is expected. Arriving to class 15 minutes late will be considered an absence. Leaving class early will also negatively impact your grade. There is no scheduled "lunch break" for this class. Please plan your meals accordingly.

Attendance for the Final is mandatory. Missing the Final will result in loss of 2 full grade levels. *Our Final is scheduled for Thursday, December 7th, 2pm-4pm*

Shelves, lockers and all work must be removed from the classroom by 5 pm on *Wednesday, December 13th at 5 pm.*

### **Studio Etiquette**

A dirty studio is unhealthy and not conducive to work. Each Student is required to *wet sponge* the work area and studio tool he or she has used. This includes the floor.

The class will do a general studio clean-up at least once during the semester.

Never handle someone else's work unless absolutely necessary.

No food in the studio.

Please turn off cell phones during class. Students using devices while the professor is speaking will be asked to leave the class and will be considered absent.

### **Tools**

Required by 2nd class meeting of the term. Initial tools with an engraver or indelible marker.

- Cutting wire
- Synthetic sponge
- Needle tool
- Fettling knife
- Trimming tool
- Metal/rubber rib
- Wooden knife
- set of fine, medium and thick brushes (need not be expensive)
- Fork
- Small plastic bucket for water and tools
- a plastic water mister
- clothes you can get dirty or an apron
- clay

Clay may be purchased through the USC ceramics department. You will have the opportunity to purchase a clay starter kit for \$50 that will include 5 25lb bags of clay that will be delivered to the studio. (details to follow). Additional clay may be purchased as the semester progresses.

Students do have the option to purchase clay off campus, they must receive, not only permission, but technical specifications from faculty. This is, however, discouraged.

### **Course Objectives**

- Students will demonstrate conceptual and technical knowledge of ceramics.
- Students will have the skill and confidence to build most any clay sculptures they can conceive of.
- Students will know and use basic vocabulary and terminology.
- Students will be able to form an opinion and critique finished art works.

**The instructor reserves the right to orally make changes to this syllabus at any time during the course of the session.**

### **Contact Info**

- Office Phone: X12891
- Public Safety: 213-740-6000
- Emergency: 213-740-4321
- tmuller@usc.edu (I will respond within 24 hours)

**“Being an artist is like jumping off a plane and making a parachute on the way down.”**

**jean-pierre laroque**

### **Suppliers**

*AARDVARK CLAY & SUPPLIES*  
1400 E. Pomona St., Santa Ana, CA 92705  
714-541-4157

*LAGUNA CLAY CO. \**  
14400 Lomitas Ave., City of Industry, CA 91746  
626.330.0631

\*orders from Laguna must be pre-ordered, there is no shop and they won't let you order on site

## NOTES on Grading

**C** is considered an average grade. A **C** is given when the project is completed as prompted. Craftsmanship is adequate.

**B** is considered above average. Project goes beyond expectations of the prompt. Craftsmanship is excellent.

**A** is considered excellent well above average work. Project exceeds expectations of the prompt, student brings their own voice to the project and creates something truly original. Craftsmanship is, of course, excellent.

## **Academic Conduct**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” <https://policy.usc.edu/student/scampus/part-b>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, stalking, and harassment are prohibited by the university. You are encouraged to report all incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity/Title IX Office <http://equity.usc.edu> and/or to the Department of Public Safety <http://dps.usc.edu>. This is important for the health and safety of the whole USC community. Faculty and staff must report any information regarding an incident to the Title IX Coordinator who will provide outreach and information to the affected party. The sexual assault resource center webpage <http://sarc.usc.edu> fully describes reporting options. Relationship and Sexual Violence Services <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp> provides 24/7 confidential support.

## **Support Systems**

A number of USC’s schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute <http://ali.usc.edu>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. The Office of Disability Services and Programs <http://dsp.usc.edu> provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information <http://emergency.usc.edu> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

# Ceramics Vocabulary and Study Sheet

**Bisque:** clay which has gone through its first firing. A low firing usually Cone 06-04 to harden clay, but still keep it porous in order to accept glaze.

**Greenware:** unfired clay in any of its states of dryness or wetness.

**Leather Hard:** unfired clay which has stiffened up a bit so that it is still workable but not completely bone dry.

**Bone Dry:** Clay which is completely dry, but has not been fired.

**Slip:** watered down soupy clay. Generally used to attach 2 pieces of leather hard clay or wet clay to leather hard clay.

**Engobe (underglaze):** slip which has stains or oxides in it to create different colors. Engobes are used to paint on the surface of leather hard clay.

**High Firing:** a firing which goes to cone 8 or higher. Cone 10 is a typical high firing.

**Low Firing:** a firing which is between cone 06 (or lower) and cone 1.

*Differences between high and low firing:*

Low temperature clays and glazes:

- Vitrify (become glass and non-porous) before cone 1
- Fired in oxidation, which is when the atmosphere inside the kiln has sufficient oxygen to burn fuel efficiently
- Glazes tend to be brighter, more colorful and more reliable
- The clay body tends to be less durable

High temperature clays and glazes:

- Vitrify at higher temperature-cones 6-10
- Glazes tend to be darker, earthier in tone, considered in terms of textures rather than color
- Glazes are generally fired in reduction
- Glazes generally greater variation than low fire and offer a wider palette

**Reduction Firing:** when the kiln is not allowed sufficient oxygen to burn fuel. This atmosphere allows certain oxides in clay and glazes to change color. For instance, copper turns red when it is reduced and turns green when it is oxidized.

**Majolica:** a decorating technique in which oxides or stains are painted on a raw glaze prior to firing. Majolica is a two temperature technique.

**Oxides:** materials which come from heavy metals and are used as colorants in glazes. Some examples of metal oxides are: copper for greens, blues, and reds, iron for red and blacks, tin or titanium for white and sometimes pink.

*Order of Pyrometric Cones:*

Low temperature: 010, 09, 08, 07, 06, 05, 04, 03, 02, 01, 1

Medium range: Cone 1, 2, 3, 4

High temperature: Cone 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10



### **Introductory Questionnaire**

Fine Art 130

Fall 2017

T. Müller

Name:

1. Local address, phone number, and email:

2. Emergency contact and phone number:

3. Year in school and major course of study:

4. What other commitments do you have in your life (job, family...)?

5. Who are your favorite artists?

6. What is the best place you have ever been, and why?

7. Why are you taking this class?

8. What is your experience with art?

9. What are your favorite movies?

10. What do you think is the difference between written language and visual language?

11. How often do you look at art?

12. What do you hope will happen in this class?

13. Feel free to use this space to tell me anything.