

Course Syllabus

Art 371:01

Ceramics

Credit Hours: 3

Spring 2008

Art Building A- Room 102

M&W- 12:00-2:50

Professor: Brian Benfer

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Office hours: M&W; 11:00-12:00 (and by appointment)

Course Description: An introduction into clay, the potential it has as a material and an overview of the basic principles involved in the forming/processing of it. Handbuilding will be the emphasis of the course with students learning the basic techniques of pinch, slab and coil construction. Students will be encouraged to approach the material in a contemporary and academic manner. Vessels will not be a part of the introductory level course.

Course Objectives: To gain an understanding of clay, it's technical handling and utilitarian history, and move forward into conversation involving contemporary clay work. To gain factual knowledge, learn fundamental principles concerning clay, and apply it to the material in this course.

Required Text:

The Craft and Art of Clay Susan Peterson

Supplemental Texts (choose one):

The Book of Tea Kakuzo Okakura

Artists, Critics, Context Paul Fabozzi

Zen Kenneth Kraft

Writer John Cage

Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees Robert Irwin

Continuous Project Altered Daily Robert Morris

Fifty Key Contemporary Thinkers John Lechte

The Transfiguration of the Commonplace Arthur C. Danto

The End of Art Donald Kuspit

Air Guitar Dave Hickey

The Blurring of Art and Life Allan Kaprow

The Birth of Tragedy Nietzsche

A Pattern Language Alexander/Ishikawa/Silverstein

The Poetics of Space Gaston Bachelard

(Supplemental Texts cont.)

A Pattern Language Alexander/Ishikawa/Silverstein

The Poetics of Space Gaston Bachelard
Earthwards Gary Shapiro
Minimalism James Meyer
Richard Serra: Writings/Interviews
Nietzsche's philosophy of art Julian Young
Earthworks Suzaan Boettger
Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life Allan Kaprow
Formless: A User's Guide Yve-Alain Bois and Rosiland E. Krauss
Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings
Experiments in the Everyday Allan Kaprow and Robert Watts
Nothing If Not Critical Robert Hughes
The I Ching James Legge
The Poverty of Philosophy Karl Marx
Fifty Major Philosophers Diane Collinson
The Transcendence of the Ego Jean-Paul Sarte
Dao De Jing Moss Roberts

Tools and Supplies:

Tool Kit	Bucket
Misc. tools (stick, fork, etc.)	Towel
Work clothes	Plastic
Sketchbook	CLAY

Attendance Policy:

It is **REQUIRED** that you be in class. This course can only be successful if the individuals put in the required time. Arriving late to class, as well as absences, will cause grades to drop. After two absences, each additional will drop you one letter grade. Every tardy will also count against you (two will equal one absence). Leaving prior to the end of class will also be taken into consideration with attendance. Those people that miss lectures/demos will have to find the information from fellow students or other sources. Coming late disrupts the class and infringes on other student's ability to learn (see student handbook for grading policy involving absences). As a studio based course, it is essential to make use of the allotted class time. Access to faculty should be utilized during the class period. It is certain that additional time out of class will be necessary to complete assignments (as with any college level course).

Assignments:

There will be a series of four clay assignments during the course of the semester. These assignments are geared towards sculptural concerns dealing with mass, volume, weight, composition, language and conceptual aspects of art. The assignments will be explained thoroughly with

additional visual references when appropriate (slides, etc.). These should be approached more as "visual exercises".

Exams:

Due to the nature of a studio course, there will not be standardized academic exams.

Grading Plan:

The biggest factor in grading will deal with the student's level of involvement in the class. This includes everything from attendance, to finishing assignments **on time**, to participating in class discussions. Each individual will be graded heavily on his/her own progression through the course. All assignments (with the exception of writing assignments) will be graded during class critiques.

Critique-75%

This involves the technical, aesthetic and conceptual strengths of the work.

Participation/Attendance-25%

Your physical presence, as well as your verbal contributions to the class setting (including participation during critiques), is heavily considered.

*Grades are open to discussion prior to the end of the course. At that time, all grades are final.

Academic Dishonesty:

Cheating and plagiarism are not acceptable. Assignments suspected of plagiarism will be taken before the university. Confirmation of such will result in a grade of an "F". The university approaches this as follows: *All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and it's official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.*

Classroom Rules of Conduct:

Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university. Cellular telephones and pagers must be turned off before class begins. Students are prohibited from eating in class, using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers,

sleeping, talking at inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate clothing, or engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in a directive to leave the class. Students who are especially disruptive also may be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with the university policy.

Visitors in the Classroom:

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted in the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

Americans with Disabilities Act:

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that no otherwise qualified disabled individual shall, solely by reason of his/her handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any academic or Student Life program or activity. Disabled students may request assistance with academically related problems stemming from individual disabilities by contacting the Director of the Counseling Center in the Lee Drain Annex or by calling (936) 294-1720.

Religious Holidays:

Students having a conflict with religious holidays must give written notice at the end of the first class meeting.

Sketchbooks:

Sketchbooks should be an ongoing marker/reference to individual ideas and thoughts about projects/assignments. They should include written information (notes) as well as visual imagery. The verbal translation of art is often the crucial factor in determining the intentions of the work. Entries should be done on a daily basis. These are not public information and will be kept confidential. They will be collected, "graded" and then returned. I will collect them the first day of the final critiques and return them during "clean-up".

Papers:

You will be required to write a two-page paper on **one** of the supplemental texts. The first page should explain the book, essentially written in the style of a book report. The second page should be an analysis of the effect/s the book has had on you and your work (if any). We all make daily decisions (i.e. which road to take, what clothes to wear), and there are reasons you chose the specific text [even if it was relevant only due to length].

You will also write a five-page paper [taking the place of one physical assignment (making a total of five major grades for the course)]. This paper will discuss "materiality" and coincide with an article given in class. It will directly relate to **your** relationship with clay in this course.

Gallery Visits:

Each student will be required to visit two exhibitions throughout the duration of the course. The dates will be somewhat flexible, but the visits are not optional. Students will then be responsible for writing a one-page review of each exhibition (including proof of attendance).

Sophomore Gate:

Upon completion of the 6 foundation art classes (Art 161: Basic Design I, Art 163: Drawing, Art 164: Life Drawing I, Art 265: Basic Design II, Art 271: 3D Design, Art 260: Pre-Renaissance Art History), students are required to meet with Pat Lawler, the art advisor, to declare a degree program (BA/BFA) or they will be blocked from registering for upper division art classes.

Students choosing the BA program will be unblocked and continue on with their course work. Students who would like to be in the BFA program will need to apply for it. This application involves filling out paperwork, having a 3.0 GPA, and signing up for a portfolio review upon completion of the first course in their intended concentration. Reviews will be conducted each semester by Art Department faculty. Students passing the review will be invited into the BFA program. Those who do not pass will continue on in the BA program. Students interested in reapplying for the BFA program should meet with faculty to discuss what improvements are necessary before applying for a second review.