

ARTX226/SEM206

CERAMICS: WORLD POTTERY

Tuesday/Thursday 12:30-3:30pm

Winter 2011

Fine Arts Building, Room 202 & Room 20

Instructor: Sarah Lindley

Office: FAB, room 105 & ACSJL 2nd floor

Hours: T/W/Th 4-5 pm (location TBA)

Phone: 337-7004

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Course description

World Pottery is a hands-on studio course with a significant research component. This course is intended as a pre or post study abroad seminar. As a student in this class, you will spend time contemplating the relevance of pottery and ceramics in your own culture and researching the role of pottery and ceramics in the culture of your study abroad site. Lectures, critiques and discussions will focus on individual and societal assumptions about pottery. Class time will be used to introduce a variety of clay bodies and clay-forming techniques from historical and regional perspectives. An examination of these perspectives reveals many parallel and common approaches– what does this mean about who we are as makers and users of pottery? Yet, one cannot assume that similarities simply equate universality– artists have borrowed and stolen images, ideas, and techniques (both intentionally and unknowingly) from the moment the very first trade routes were established and on through to the present day. Too often artists, hobbyists and consumers disregard the significance of appropriating or referencing historical or “exotic” works. In this class, a series of hands-on assignments (approximately four) will ask you to consider and critique the role of cultural exchange and image appropriation within historical ceramics and in your own creative work. Projects will also investigate the roles of different types of pottery within contemporary American society, as a point of reference and departure. For the research portion of the course, you will propose, execute and present a research project related to your study abroad site. The research project will culminate in a fifteen minute “slide” presentation, annotated bibliography and outline with citations.

Prior experience in ceramics is helpful, but not required. You will use white earthenware, terra cotta, stoneware and porcelain clay bodies at least once during the term. Students with significant prior experience on the potter’s wheel may use the wheel to complete some, but not all, of the work for this course. Wheel throwing techniques will not be demonstrated, so only students with proficiency on the wheel may use it for the completion of assignments. Technical demonstrations will focus on hand forming techniques, including pinch, coil, press molds and clay, glaze and firing technology.

This course counts as a Shared Passages Sophomore Seminar and as an elective for any of the Art and Art History majors and minors.

Course goals

In addition to learning about ceramics and art, this course is meant to help you integrate study abroad with your coursework on campus. Rather than attempt a comprehensive overview of ceramic history or ceramics of other cultures, this course takes an in depth look at a few universal elements and key developments in global ceramics. One primary goal for this course is to develop your ability to think analytically about an integral aspect of your *own* culture in a way that helps you learn from and reflect upon your experience in *another* culture. As a class, we will work to ask meaningful questions about our experiences making and using pottery. As the instructor, I plan to mentor you as individual students, while you investigate the pottery of your study abroad site. Through a critical evaluation of ceramics and

pottery, you can recognize and question your assumptions about one of the most prevalent materials in most cultures.

The practice of recognizing and challenging your assumptions is a fundamental element of structured reflection. If you have already been on study abroad, you can use your knowledge and experiences as a foundation for comparison and reflection. You will also serve as mentors for the other students as they prepare for their time abroad. If you are preparing to go on study abroad next year you can use this research as preparation for an ICRP (Intercultural Research Project) in addition to getting to know more about the place you are going to.

When selecting a focus for your research, you are encouraged to bridge other disciplines and/or topics that interest you, so that you might further integrate the various components of your “K” experience. It is possible to connect ceramics to a wide range of disciplines. Consider the role of food, alchemy, religion, domesticity, gender, class, trade and aesthetics in its creation, use and development, and you will see that the options for an interdisciplinary approach are limitless.

WORKLOAD

The workload for this course includes both research and creative work. Assignments will include:

- Assigned readings with follow-up discussion, presentation and/or in-class exercises
- Approximately four hands-on thematic assignments that range in length from one to three weeks for wet work
- Research project/presentation that spans about half of the term
- Written responses to the presentations of your peers.

The majority of class time will be spent on lectures, demonstrations and presentations (yours, mine and some guests).

IMPORTANT DATES

You will have a reading deadline, critique or in-process due date nearly every class period- the following dates are just FYI:

Week 3: Reading presentations

Week 4: Field Trip to Ann Arbor date TBA

Weeks 9 & 10: Research presentations

Finals: exam is mandatory Wednesday, March 16, 1-4 pm

EXPECTATIONS

- **Remember to experiment and take risks.** Learning comes with trial and error. It is important to challenge yourself and go well beyond what is familiar and safe. Investigation and experimentation are essential for successful and interesting problem solving.
- **Start early and plan ahead.** Starting to work early allows you to take risks and solve technical problems in time.
- **Be a participant in all of the technical demonstrations.** It is critical for your success in the course.
- **Be prepared to work during every class-**do not come to class with the intent of leaving to purchase or collect materials.

- **Homework and projects that are not completed by the due date will receive reduced credit.**
- **You must be present on time** with your work finished to receive credit for completion of the work. If you are tardy, you receive no credit for whatever assignment was due that day, including in progress projects, homework assignments and major projects.
- Projects not finished before the critique will not be discussed. Contact me immediately if you need an extension based on documented illness or extreme family emergency.
- **Critiques are mandatory; you should have your work finished and set up before class time.** Critiques are an extremely important aspect of studio courses and should not be missed except in absolute extreme cases. Your verbal and mental efforts in critiques are as critical as your physical presence, plan on being a present and active member of the group.

GRADING

This class may not be taken pass/fail.

Letter grades are assigned as follows. Completion of all assignments on time and regular participation *usually* means that you are able to earn at least a “C”. **Work that is thrown together at the last minute, is not complete or does not follow the project parameters usually earns a “D” or “F”.** A “B” is an above average grade and denotes a solid work effort, innovative problem solving, good craftsmanship and enthusiastic participation. An “A” is an exceptional grade that is reserved for exceptional exploration, in-depth research and problem-solving and constant and intense participation.

Projects (approximately 60-70%)

Projects will be graded on complexity of approach, technical proficiency, concept and form. Grading will also be based on your ability to go beyond simple appropriation, to question assumptions and to exhibit an understanding of the topics being addressed. Each project will be graded individually. Some will receive a “wet” and finished grade, and others will be graded only once. Within each project I will look to see if you are focusing on the primary considerations for that particular assignment, while exhibiting an application of cumulative knowledge from previous assignments/discussions. Missed deadlines for wet work will result in a 10% deduction per class period (Tuesday to Thursday, etc). Work more than three class periods late will not be accepted at all.

Research: Presentation and Response (approximately 30-40%)

Your research project will have several graded components. The final product is an oral presentation using Artstor or Powerpoint (more on this later). You will also turn in an outline with citations and an annotated bibliography. You do not need to write a research paper. To help pace your research, you have several due dates along the way. The total of the grades for your annotated bibliography, outlines (rough and final draft with citations), oral presentation and images will be worth approximately 70% of the research grade. The remaining portion of the research grade will be for written responses to your classmates’ presentations. Missed deadlines for the bibliography, outline and response papers will equal a 5% deduction for each *day* (not class period) they are late.

Participation

Active participation is imperative for your success in the course. Grades for individual assignments will incorporate information gathered during lectures, critiques and discussions. Plan to be ***physically and mentally alert*** and ***active*** in the class. ***You need to have a position, response, belief, question and/or opinion about the ideas and work presented in class.*** Everyone is expected to participate in critiques as well as in other class activities. On workdays I will spend time speaking with you individually about your projects. Class time will also be spent on discussions, demonstrations and videos. Participation in activities outside of class time that benefit the community as well as contribute to your learning, such as kiln loading and/or firing and clay making, may be expected.

Attendance

You are responsible for all information presented in every class both written and verbal. I make periodic announcements about due-dates, materials, techniques, etc. You need to be in-class, even on workdays, in order to receive that information. *If you are extremely ill or contagious, don't come to class, but make sure to follow up on missed work!*

Tardiness and partial attendance is considered an unexcused absence. More than five unexcused absences may result in a no credit for the class. You are allowed one unexcused absence. After the first unexcused absence, your project grade will be affected by one grade step for each additional unexcused absence. It is your responsibility to let me know if you will not be able to attend class. If you are sick, it is your responsibility to give me written confirmation from a doctor or it will be considered an unexcused absence.

In order to pass the course you must complete all major projects and receive a passing grade for the research portion of the class.

***Much of what we do in this course involves using your body to manipulate materials. If you have a disability or medical condition that might affect your performance in this class, make an appointment to speak with me, so that we can find a way to make the class accessible for you.

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STUDIO RULES

COMMUNITY: ceramics is a medium that involves a lot of *grunt work*, everyone will be expected to help out with the day to day responsibilities of maintaining the studio and supplies. This may involve mandatory hours outside of class loading and firing kilns, as well as making and reclaiming clay and glazes.

DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS? DON'T USE IT! Many of the materials used in ceramics are hazardous for your health. Never use a tool, chemical or glaze until you have been taught how to use it, safely, by the instructor.

NO PAINTS, SOLVENTS, OR CHEMICALS MAY BE USED IN THE ROOM WITHOUT EXPLICIT PERMISSION OF THE INSTRUCTOR. This includes things you may want/need to finish your project, such as glues or paints...just make sure to check first.

CLEAN UP AFTER YOURSELF, always leave your work area cleaner than you found it. Clean up your work area (including the floor) every time you use it. Together we can keep this space safe and pleasant to work in.

CLEAN CAREFULLY. Many of the dry materials in this studio (including dried up clay) have free silica, which is bad for your lungs. Clean with water whenever possible, ie. mop instead of sweep; sponge off the table instead of using a counter broom. You will have required reading about health and safety in ceramics. Read it carefully and live by it!

Dress for mess every class. We are using clay that can stain light colored clothing. Wear clothes that are easy to work in... you never know what we might be doing.

CALL SECURITY at 337-7321 if there is an emergency in the studio, with the kilns or if someone is injured.

STUDIO HOURS

The studio is available to you from 7am-1am everyday with two exceptions- 8:30-11:30 T/TH. Use your ID to access the room. If the swipe card does not work, check for a monitor in room 120, then call security for assistance.

MATERIALS

You will be charged a \$70 lab fee for materials that will be provided during the quarter.

There are several texts on electronic and hard copy reserves. I will have a binder with bibliographies from several different sources for you to use as a starting point for your research. The following books are particularly relevant to this course and are recommended reading.

Required texts

1. Vincentelli, Moira. Women Potters. Required (one copy is on closed reserve; you might consider sharing with a classmate).
2. Additional articles on ceramic history and technology on electronic reserve. TBA

Optional texts

3. Speight, Charlotte. Hands In Clay. (recommended for majors or students planning on more clay classes)
4. Peterson, Susan. The Art and Craft of Clay
5. Cardew, Michael. Pioneer Pottery

Tools

(for purchase in the bookstore– some are also available in the classroom)

6. Work clothes and/or apron
7. Sketchbook/journal and a binder or folder
8. needle tool
9. small sponge (natural or synthetic pottery)
10. metal rib
11. rubber rib
12. wire tool
13. fettling knife
14. plastic bags (soft garbage best)

****A proper fitting respirator with dust/mist cartridges is a must for anyone working in ceramics.**

There will be a few good quality respirators available for you to use, but it is not as good as going to a safety supply store and buying your own. If you need help figuring out how to buy one, please ask me and I will help out as best I can.