ARTS 4320
Advanced Ceramics
University of Houston – Clear Lake
Course Syllabus, Spring 2017
TTh 1:00 – 3:50pm
Arbor N. Building - Ceramics Studio 1200.08
Prerequisites: ARTS 3320 Ceramics

This course Emphasizes:
Communication, Connections, Curiosity, Creativity

APPLIED CRITICAL THINKING STATEMENT
This course has been authorized by UHCL as an Applied Critical Thinking (ACT) Course which means that in addition to learning about the specified course content, students will be engaged with some or all of the Elements of Thought and Universal Intellectual Standards of critical thinking. The objective of an ACT course is to develop the student’s ability to become skilled at analysis and evaluation by applying a set of intellectual tools that may be effectively used across all disciplines (as well as to the student's personal life). Based on the Foundation for Critical Thinking model (http://www.criticalthinking.org/), critical thinking involves thinking for a purpose, asking questions, using information, applying concepts, drawing inferences and conclusions, identifying assumptions, anticipating implications and consequences, and recognizing points of view. The Universal Intellectual Standards that are applied to these Elements of Thought of critical thinking in order to develop Intellectual Traits include clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logic, significance, and fairness.

CRITICAL THINKING and CERAMICS; Course Description
The oldest known ceramics object is approximately 26,000 years old from modern day Czech Republic. It is a small figurative sculpture known as the Venus of Dolni Vestonice. Since then cultures, including our own, have utilized ceramics for use, for decoration, as ritual, as protection, and for expression. We understand eras and peoples better through the studying of their artworks. Today you can even find ceramics in space shuttle insulation, in teeth as porcelain veneers, in bathroom tiles and toilets, in most cupboards as morning coffee mugs or cereal bowls. Ceramics as a material has represented many different purposes and points of view over the last 26,000 years. Through the critical analyzing of historical and contemporary expressions in art we can better understand important concepts, points of view, and even assumptions of peoples, eras, and cultures.

For an artist to accurately and effectively communicate creative ideas they must be able to critically think through problems and find multiple original solutions. By looking at diverse approaches to making work and examining historical and contemporary artist and artwork critically, we will identify how these artists use problem solving to effectively communicate these ideas through a visual medium.

In this course students will continue to develop and articulate their own ideas and work, as well as be fully involved with every aspect of the ceramic process, and investigate what it takes to be a successful artist.

*Syllabus is subject to change at the instructor’s discretion, at anytime.
CENTRAL QUESTIONS

- What makes an artist/artwork successful?
- How do hand-made ceramic objects have relevance in today’s culture?

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES (SLO)

In this course, students will learn to:

1. Develop a creative body of work in ceramics that demonstrates a clear point of view.
2. Highlight the purpose of your body of work by developing an artist statement that accurately reflects the created ceramic work.
3. Analyze artworks and be able to articulate relevant concepts.

FUNDAMENTAL AND POWERFUL CONCEPTS

Throughout the course we will explore essential concepts that serve as a foundation for our understanding of the ceramic arts and course objectives.

The Fundamental and Powerful Concepts for this course are:
- Creativity
- Context
- Process

GRADING AND REQUIREMENTS

Ceramics is a very process-intensive medium; it is essential that you learn proper technique while developing your aesthetic and conceptual decision making skills. I expect you to devote yourself to working hard in the ceramics studio. The studio is accessible 24 hours a day (with a proxy card, notify instructor if interested), be in the studio at night, on the weekend, and whenever else you can. Working only during class time is not sufficient to pass this class. Plan to spend a minimum of 5 hours a week in the studio to be successful in the course.

In this class, you will be graded both on your overall progress, commitment, studio responsibilities, and on individual pieces. As advanced students, you are expected to actively pursue your own artistic growth. This means doing more than just completing assigned projects; I expect you to challenge yourself to grow and develop artistically.

Completing all of the assigned projects on time with a reasonable degree of craftsmanship and care, participation in class, and regular attendance including working outside class time are the minimum expectations. Higher grades will be awarded for creative excellence and exceptional dedication.

For every project, you will submit a brief proposal that will include sketches. This will be factored in as part of your grade for that assignment. Assignments are to be completely finished on the due date.

Students will have the opportunity to address specific challenges or problems with the instructor. This may include discussions of technical, formal, logistical or aesthetic concerns or whatever is relevant to the student at that time. Group critiques will also help the student understand how they are doing and how they may improve.

The course grading breaks down as following:
MAJOR ACTIVITIES:

- **Midterm/ Final Critiques** are worth 75% of your grade
- **Final Individual Critique** is worth 10% of your grade
- **Studio Citizenship, Participation, and End of Semester Clean-up** is worth 10% of your grade.
- **Sketchbook** is worth 5% of your final grade.

Midterm and Final Critique

For Midterm and Final Critique, you will be responsible for demonstrating your progression throughout the semester, through the presentation of final resolved (glazed) and in progress work (anything prior to glazed) work. This work will showcase your ideas and content/research with clarity. Your installation/presentation of the work will be equally weighted as the finished objects. Both should represent professionalism, thought, and intent.

For each critique you will also need to do the following:

- Make print outs of your one-paragraph artist statement to hand out during critique
- Make individual copies of these statements to provide to each student during critique
- Your work needs to be purposefully displayed and set up by the start of class
- Prepare a succinct introduction to your work and focus the direction of your critique

ASSESSMENT for Midterm and Final Critiques [SLO 1, SLO 2, SLO 3]

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Student presents a creative body of work consisting of multiple/large amount of mostly finished work with some in progress artworks. Work demonstrates clarity in point of view and ideas. Student provides artist statement highlighting the purpose of their work that accurately reflects the work shown. During critique student is engaged and actively participates through discussion, listening to other perspectives and offering relevant comments to peers. Student articulates relevant concepts about the work of their peers or their own work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acceptable</td>
<td>Student presents multiple/large amount of finished and in progress artworks. Work demonstrates some clarity in point of view and ideas. Student provides artist statement that starts to highlight the purpose of their work. The statement has some accuracy to the work shown. During critique student is engaged and participates through discussion and listening, offering comments with some relevance to peers. Student articulates some relevant concepts about the work of their peers or their own work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
<td>Student presents some/medium amount of in progress artworks. Work begins to demonstrate clarity in either point of view or ideas. Student provides artist statement that does not highlight the purpose of their work and with no accuracy to the work shown or provides no artist statement. During critique student occasionally participates, but articulates no relevant concepts about any work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incomplete</td>
<td>Student presents a few/small amount of in progress artworks. Work demonstrates no clarity in ideas and intention. No artist statement provided. During critique student is not engaged and does not participate.</td>
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FINAL INDIVIDUAL CRITIQUE

During the last regularly scheduled class of the semester you will sign up for an individual critique with me. During this time we analyze how you articulate relevant concepts in your work as well as the accuracy of these concepts to the visual artwork and images.

During this session you will need to present the following materials:

- Image Portfolio on CD – containing 5-10 images of work (mostly from this semester)
- Image List – corresponding to image portfolio including, title, dimensions, materials, date
- Half page artist statement addressing current work and ideas
- Questions, comments, or anything else you would like to discuss about your work/progress/future
- Being late or missing the scheduled meeting time will result in our session being cancelled and a failing portfolio score.

STUDIO CITIZENSHIP, PARTICIPATION, END of the SEMESTER CLEAN-UP

Active participation in classroom discussions, critiques, and kiln firings are a required part of the course and will consist of 10% of your course grade.

You will be required to take part in 1 kiln loading, unloading, or firing shift. This also includes being in class on time and prepared for that class period with necessary plans and materials.

During class at the end of the semester, time will be dedicated to cleaning the communal studio, equipment, materials, etc. You will be assigned various tasks to complete to get the studio back to the condition it was at the beginning of the term. In addition, you will be responsible for removing all of your work, tools, and materials after our last meeting during Finals Week. Failure to do so will result in your items being discarded and a loss of points for the course.

SKETCHBOOK

A sketchbook is essential to an artist’s process and for this class. It should be utilized to continue to analyze artwork for significant concepts and as a way to continue to articulate with depth and breadth your own ideas.

You will be responsible to maintain an active and organized sketchbook throughout the semester that will be turned in at Midterm. Your sketchbook should be brought to EVERY class and will compose 5% of your final grade. Your sketchbook should contain and will be graded upon the following criteria:

**Required:**

40 Inspirational images/ sketches:

The 2nd half of the semester will be self-directed, with you being in charge of the direction of your work. To assist in this, your sketchbook should be a collect a large reservoir of source material (drawings, notes, images from the internet/books, text, etc.) to use a starting point for your ideas/interests. Consider artists that you like, cultures that interest you, patterns, fashion patterns or logos, objects, etc. If it interests you, put an image of it in your sketchbook. After midterm we will talk about how these images/interests can inform your creative work.
Recommended:

Notes:
I will cover lots of information that is difficult to remember during demonstrations and lectures, so you will need to write it down and refer back to your notes later as needed. Also include notes about the conceptual development of your work. notes \ reflections on the discussions we had during critiques or during class? (either about your work or others)

Glaze notes:
When you glaze pieces, keep a written record in your sketchbook (including sketches of pieces) showing what glazes you used. Notes on how that glaze turned out will also be helpful. Include details on application method as well (i.e. Orielly White, brushed, 3 coats).

Handouts:
Any handouts (i.e. syllabus, safety document, each individual assignment sheets) given out during class should be kept in a folder with your sketchbook.

ATTENDANCE
You are expected to attend class everyday. Essential demonstrations and informational instructions will be given in class. Demos will not be repeated if you are absent, and it will be your responsibility to get the missed information from another student before the next class. After three absences your grade will drop for each additional absence. Missing six classes throughout the semester will result in an automatic failure regardless of completing all other course requirements.

In case of an emergency where the instructor is unable to attend class and no substitute instructor is available, an email will be sent out, so please frequently check your UHCL email.

It is the student’s responsibility to keep track of their tardy and absences in the course, not the professors. Poor attendance and tardies are the main reason students do poorly in this course.

TIMELINESS
Every three times you come late to class (or leave early) will be considered equal to one absence. If you are more than 1 hour late, or leave more than 1 hour early, it will be considered an absence. If you come to class unprepared to work or without the materials needed, you will also be considered absent.

STUDIO ACCESS
The ceramics studio maintains regular weekday hours, 6:00am – 10:00pm. The studio is closed on the weekend. Students are recommended to acquire a PROXY CARD from the UHCL Police/Locksmith, that will allow them 24 hour access to the Ceramics Studio.

- Fill out an email an Access Request Form that can be found at this link: http://prtl.uhcl.edu/police/online-services

PROFESSIONALISM
During this course I expect you to conduct yourselves in a respectful and professional manner. Attending class everyday prepared and on time, fulfilling requirements and projects on time, and participating in the studio environment is all part of this. Disrespect to fellow students, instructors, or the studio will not be tolerated.
ACADEMIC HONESTY

All UHCL students are responsible for knowing the standards of academic honesty. Please refer to the UHCL catalog and the Student Life Handbook for the University Academic Honesty Policy. Plagiarism, that is, using research without citations, or using a created product without crediting the source, will result in a grade penalty or failure of the course.

COMMUNICATION

I will be available during class for questions, concerns, or complaints. If you need to talk outside of class please talk with me and schedule an appointment or visit during office hours. I am more than happy to help you in any way possible, but it is your responsibility to approach me.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Disabilities: “If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, contact Disability Services at 281-283-2648 or disability@uhcl.edu as soon as possible and complete the registration process. To ensure your accommodations are in place for the entire semester, please request your accommodation letters from Disability Services and provide them to me at the beginning of the semester. The University of Houston System complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students with a disability. In School of Human Sciences and Humanities accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, each University within the System strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them.”

SAFETY

All students must read the “UHCL Ceramics Studio Safety Document” and agree to abide by all safety protocols. Only currently enrolled ceramics students are allowed to use the facilities, no visitors please. MSDS Sheets detail the hazards of materials we use are available in the studio. There is a first-aid kit located about the main sink. Two fire extinguishers are present, one in the main studio and one in the kiln room. Be familiar where these items are and your instructor will demonstrate their use and specific location. For more details see “UHCL Ceramics Studio Safety Document”.

STORAGE

There is limited room and space in the studio. Your shelves are for storing work in progress, not for tools (they should be in a locker), storing old work, or projects from your other classes. Work in progress should not be stored in workspaces (on tables or wheels). If you do not make good use of your space, you may lose some or all of it. Label your locker with your name and semester (i.e. Garith Romer, Spring 2016). Store your tools in your locker, not on shelves in the studio.

IMPORTANT DATES (*subject to change)

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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Critique/</td>
<td>Thursday, March 9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sketchbooks DUE</td>
<td>Thursday, March 9&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>March 13-19&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Last Day to Drop Course</td>
<td>Tuesday, April 11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wet Clay Cutoff</td>
<td>Friday, April 14&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;    @ 12 Midnight</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glaze Cutoff</td>
<td>Thursday, April 27&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; (in class)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Studio Clean-up</td>
<td>Tuesday, May 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; @ 1:00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam Critique</td>
<td>Thursday, May 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; @ 1:00pm</td>
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SUPPLIES

The course fee covers the cost of the following materials; studio claybodies, glazes, and firing. You are likely to already own all the tools necessary from other ceramics classes you have taken, but the necessary tools typically run approximately $30.

Required Items:

- Particulate Respirator (rated “N95” or better). Disposable particulate masks can be purchased in the studio for $1. You must have this on hand during class and cleanups. Store your respirator in a clean plastic bag.
- If you are taking ceramics (or sculpture) class again, you should invest in a reusable particulate respirator
- Basic pottery tool kit ($8-10 union bookstore, Ben Franklin, or Hobby Lobby)
- Metal Fork
- Felting Knife ($5 for the real deal, $0.25 for a paring knife that will work just fine from dollar store)
- Sketchbook (union bookstore, Ben Franklin, or Hobby Lobby)
- 1 gallon Plastic Bucket
- Plastic bags for covering projects in process (13-gallon trash bags or clear plastic drop cloth)
- A small plastic container with a lid (this can be a yogurt container or an inexpensive Tupperware)
- Folder with pockets to contain all handouts and reference material
- Pencil, Pen, Sharpie
- Cheap brush for wax

Optional Tools (as needed)

- Personal Apron
- Masking Tape/ other tapes
- Good brushes (natural bristle, high “mop” Japanese hake brush or bamboo watercolor brush $3-5 each)
- Metal straight edge/ruler
- Safety glasses (Hardware store, $2-5)
- Latex gloves
- Bat Pins – Sockethead cap screw, stainless, 1/4”-20 x 1.25” and 1/4”-20 wing nut (2 of each) - Available at ACE Hardware (I have some available for check-out)
- Personal Plastic Throwing Bats – Avalable at UHCL Bookstore - The Studio has a select amount of bats, but you may require your own

Recommended Texts:

- Peterson, Susan, Craft and the Art of Clay
- Hopper, Robin, Functional Pottery
- Olsen, Frederick L., The Kiln Book
- Bayles, David and Orland, Ted, Art & Fear

Things To Not Bring/Do: No headphones, NO TEXTING, no exceptions.

CELL PHONE POLICY:

Cell phones should not be seen nor heard. Do NOT leave your phone on the table during class. This is a distraction to you during class and to others. If you must make or receive a phone call, please excuse yourself and take it outside or in the hallway. This is a communal space and respecting the communal environment is essential to maintaining a productive environment.
John Cage: some rules for students and teachers

RULE ONE: Find a place you trust, and then try trusting it for awhile.

RULE TWO: General duties of a student - pull everything out of your teacher; pull everything out of your fellow students.

RULE THREE: General duties of a teacher - pull everything out of your students.

RULE FOUR: Consider everything an experiment.

RULE FIVE: be self-disciplined - this means finding someone wise or smart and choosing to follow them. To be disciplined is to follow in a good way. To be self-disciplined is to follow in a better way.

RULE SIX: Nothing is a mistake. There's no win and no fail, there's only make.

RULE SEVEN: The only rule is work. If you work it will lead to something. It's the people who do all of the work all of the time who eventually catch on to things.

RULE EIGHT: Don't try to create and analyze at the same time. They're different processes.

RULE NINE: Be happy whenever you can manage it. Enjoy yourself. It's lighter than you think.

RULE TEN: "We're breaking all the rules. Even our own rules. And how do we do that? By leaving plenty of room for X quantities." (John Cage)

HINTS:
Always be around. Come or go to everything. Always go to classes. Read anything you can get your hands on. Look at movies carefully, often. Save everything - it might come in handy later.