



ART/ARTH 260 - Introduction to Ceramics Traditions

Course Syllabus
Fall Semester 2022

Instructor: Philippa Stannard, MFA ATR

Credits: 3

Contact Hours: 45

Prerequisites: none

Class Meeting Days & Time:

Office Hours: by appointment after a class

Email:

Course Type: Standard Course

Course Fee:

Course Description

This is a beginning-level ceramics course that will introduce you to the technical and conceptual sensibilities inherent in clay. You will learn about the ceramic traditions in Italy and Umbria as a springboard for learning various hand-building techniques including coil, slab, and pinch methods, as well as the glazing and firing processes. These include learning about prehistoric pottery in central Italy, Etruscan figurative work, and the Maiolica Method from Deruta, as well as the classic terra cotta and black slip glazed urns that are so popular and are often associated with the Mediterranean. We will explore the ceramics of the region of Umbria first hand, taking trips to archeological museums, visiting local ceramics studios, and viewing work made by local ceramicists using the Maiolica method.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

Below are the course's learning outcomes, followed by the methods that will be used to assess students' achievement for each learning outcome. By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- *learn* about the history and traditions of ceramics in Italy and Umbria (Field Trips, Readings, Quizzes);
- *summarize and apply* technical skills, vocabulary, processes and materials related to using clay. (Readings, Quizzes, Assignments)
- *Provide* examples of the historical and sociological role of ceramics in Umbria from Neolithic to the Renaissance. (Readings, Quizzes, Assignments)
- *Integrate* design concepts including form, structure, space surface, color proportion, composition and function into their work. (Assignments).
- *Differentiate* between ceramic traditions or methods in contemporary and historical contexts. (Oral presentation and Written Report)

Course Materials

Readings

Please consult Moodle for links to your readings.

Assessment

Attendance	5%
Ceramic Assignments	75% (three total, 25% each)
Quizzes	5%
Oral Report/ Presentation	5%
Written Report	5%
Class Participation	5%

Grading

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to note the dates of exams and other assignments. No alternative exam dates will be offered and professors are not required to give partial credit for any late work (they do so at their discretion: the Institute's default policy is no extensions and a zero for any work turned in late). Students who book travel when they have an exam or other assessment will have to change their plans or accept a zero. Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

Letter Grade Range	Numerical Score Equivalent	Student Performance
A	93% - 100%	Exceptional
A-	90% - 92%	Excellent
B+	87% - 89%	Superior
B	83% - 86%	
B-	80% - 82%	
C+	77% - 79%	Satisfactory
C	73% - 76%	
C-	70% - 72%	
D+	67% - 69%	Low Pass
D	63% - 66%	
D-	60% - 62%	
F	59% or less	Fail (no credit)

Course Requirements

Grades are based on the following criteria.

Attendance (5%)

Attendance is an important part of this course. You have two "sick days," per Institute policy. As long as you are at all the other meetings, you will receive the full 10% for this part of your grade. There are no make-ups offered for attendance.

Quizzes (5%)

Students will be assigned two short quizzes every week, each of which will be due before class time and will not be reopened. The quiz will be on Moodle and it is not timed. Students can take the quiz as many times as they like, with the recorded grade being the highest grade they receive. There will be a combination of *technical*, *methodological*, and *content questions*. The content questions will help students zoom in on the most important ideas of the readings. The technical questions will help students learn the class' policies and administrative procedures.

The methodological questions will test on skills that will pop up every week, like finding an author's argument and assessing sources.

Ceramic assignments (75%)

Students are requested to finish all assignments given in the assigned time. We will regularly make work that requires drying time between various stages (such as waiting for a pot to be "leather-hard" before applying a handle). This means coming into the studio outside of class to cover or uncover work to control drying and finish work begun earlier. You might even want to consider taking your work home if you will not be coming to the studio for a few days. Your success in developing skills will be directly proportional to the time spent on your work outside of scheduled class times.

You will have three ceramic assignments due during the semester. Each assignment will be graded three times.

1st Grading – LEATHER-HARD/CONSTRUCTION – 50% - 70% of each assignment, depending on the assignment. The date your assignment is due, you will be graded based on the quality, time spent, level of challenge, concept/aesthetics, and craftsmanship of your work. You should be at the proper drying stage: LEATHER-HARD. This way, changes can be made if needed without starting your work again from scratch. Once your work is at the bone-dry stage, additions and corrections are almost impossible to do well.

2nd Grading – BISQUE – 10% - 15% of each assignment, depending on the assignment. Your pieces will be graded again based on how well they fired. Did they dry properly (slowly and evenly, otherwise cracks may appear...)? Did they crack during firing? How sound was your construction?

3rd Grading – GLAZED/FINAL PRODUCT – 15% - 40% of each assignment, depending on the assignment. You will glaze or decorate your work using different techniques such as slip painting, Maiolica painting, waxing, etc. You will be graded on your piece as a finished product. Did you apply the glaze evenly? How much time and effort did you put into painting and/or finishing your work?

Work will be evaluated in individual and group critiques throughout the semester. Grading will be based on the *quality* of your work, achieved through your productivity, specifically:

- *Level of Challenge:* How far did you go beyond the minimum requirements of the assignment to produce more numerous and challenging pieces? How thoroughly did you explore the required techniques? Note: Quantity alone will not raise your grade unless you use the pieces to arrive at a higher quality, such as to work through ideas or improve handling of materials.
- *Concept/Aesthetics:* How original and personal is your solution? How effectively did you use principles of design to communicate your concept? How far did you reach beyond the obvious?
- *Craftsmanship:* Is your construction sound? Did you take time to finish and resolve surfaces, joints, edges, and other details in an appropriate manner for your design?

Assignment 1: Pinch Technique – Prehistoric Ceramics in Central Italy

- *Two pots: one beaker, the other an urn (made by attaching two beakers) pinch technique. Pinch, squeeze, turn. Pinch, squeeze, turn...*

Assignment 2: Sculptural Coil Technique – Black Figure Vase

- *One vase made using the coil technique.*
- *Design your motif and decoration, paint with colored slips while leather hard (not bone dry).*

Assignment 3: Maiolica Technique – Inspired by Deruta

- *We will learn the Maiolica method that includes creating a motif or design, making a stencil, and using carbon to "pounce" the design onto the ceramic work, after it has been glazed. Once our glazed work has been "pounced", we will paint the motifs using the Maiolica technique.*

Oral reports and presentations (5%)

Everyone will research a ceramicist/artist that incorporates ceramics into their work, technique, or style/period and give an oral and written report on their chosen artist/technique/style/period. Make sure that the ceramicist/technique/style/period that you choose has enough information available to write 1500-2000 word paper. **Your paper and your oral report are both due on the day that you sign up to give your presentation.**

The *oral report* will be given to our class as a projected presentation, basically explaining the life and work of your ceramicist, what you think about their work, and should include about 20 examples of their work. If you choose to give a report on a technique/style/period, you should explain the history, influences, and process, etc. The images in your presentation should be of a higher resolution since they will be enlarged on the monitor. (Use Google→ Image search→ tools→ image size→large.) Please talk about your ceramicist's life, artistic style, techniques, etc. We are interested in your creative analysis and interpretation. The oral report should last about 15 minutes.

Be prepared to give your oral presentation at the beginning of class. Your preparation will be included as part of your grade. Be prepared to give your oral presentation at the beginning of class. Your presentation should be uploaded to the appropriate Google Drive folder with appropriate sharing permissions to present it from my Google Drive account. Logging into and out of your personal email during your presentation time will affect your grade.

Written report (5%)

The *written paper* on your chosen artist/technique/style/period should be at least 1500-2000 words, typed, and double-spaced. You may insert images into your paper, if desired. *I am interested to know what YOU think about your chosen artist/technique/style/period.* Tell me why you chose the artist/technique/style/period and describe the process, history, career, etc. I do not want to read a paper that is half quotations. Limit the number of quotes to a minimum (no more than three). If you are doing your report on an artist, how did they get into ceramics? What contributions did they make to the world of ceramics? What is unique about their work? Is there a subject or theme that ties their work together? If you are doing a report on a technique, where and how did it evolve, why? Why are you interested in it? If you are doing a report on a style or period, research pertinent historical information and exemplary work from that period. I am interested in your creative analysis and interpretation. Your bibliography should include at least 5 sources.

Class Participation (5%)

Class participation refers to active participation during class time. This includes studio time, critiques, discussion of readings, keeping the studio clean, and helping during firing and any other activity during class time

Extension & Submitting Late Work

Work submitted after the deadline will receive a grade of zero, not partial credit. Each student is allowed one extension of 24 hours over the entire semester. This can be used for any assignment but the final project. Students need to email the instructor before the deadline and inform the instructor of their use of the extension. Any work submitted after the 24-hour extension will be marked zero. As for all policies, exceptions can be made by the Director for students with special accommodations or in case of medical emergencies, etc.

Attendance & Lateness Policy

Class attendance (in person) is mandatory. Students are allowed two "sick days," which do not need to be justified. However, it is considered common courtesy to inform the instructor of your absence when possible. It is the students' responsibility to keep them in case of real necessity (sickness or any other unforeseen inconvenience that may prevent students from being in class). Each additional absence—even for another illness—will lower the students' grade by half a letter grade (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B). Missing a co-curricular field trip also lowers a student's final grade by half a letter grade. It is the policy of the Institute that any student who has eight or more absences automatically fails the class.

If a student misses a class, it is ultimately their responsibility to find out what has been missed. Ideally, they should find out what they missed from a classmate. Any work missed in class because of an excused absence may be made up within one week of the return to the class. Any work missed that was a quiz or other test must be made up outside of class time and will, in the interest of intellectual honesty, be a slightly different test than the one given in class.

Except in the case of medical emergencies with a doctor's certificate and approved by the Director, absences are not accepted when tests are scheduled; tests cannot be made up. Furthermore, scheduled times and dates indicated for exams, quizzes, oral presentations, and any other graded assignments cannot be changed for

any reason. Even if more sections of the same class are activated, students may only take exams during the scheduled times and dates for the section they are enrolled in.

Consistent lateness (or leaving class early) is a sign of disorganization and lack of respect both for your instructor and for your fellow students. Umbra instructors are empowered to count three late arrivals as the equivalent of an absence.

Academic Integrity

All forms of cheating (i.e., copying during exam either from a fellow student or making unauthorized use of notes) and plagiarism (i.e., presenting the ideas or words of another person for academic evaluation without acknowledging the source) will be handled according to the Institute Academic Policy, which can be found in the Umbra Institute Academic Policies and Conduct Guidelines.

Classroom Policy

Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate respect for the historical premises that the school occupies. Please note that cell phones must be set on silent mode before the beginning of each class. Computers and other electronic devices cannot be used during class lectures and discussions for anything other than note-taking, unless there has been a specific academic accommodation.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

WEEK 1

Clay: Origins, Stages, Processes

Meeting 1 *Course overview, stages of clay*

Meeting 2: *Archeological Museum Visit*

Readings for the week:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cardium_pottery

<https://potterycrafters.com/the-7-stages-of-clay/>

WEEK 2

Prehistoric Pottery: Cardium or Impressed Ware

Meeting 1 *Neolithic Pottery, Pinch pot construction*

Meeting 2: *refining shape and surface*

Resources for the week:

Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*, pages 134-170.

Carney, "African Rice," pages 380–96.

WEEK 3

Assignment 1 Due

Meeting 1 *Terra Decantata and decorative techniques*

Meeting 2: *Assignment 1 Due, Critique*

Resources for the week:

https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/etru/hd_etru.htm

<http://www.mysteriousetruscans.com/art/pottery.html>

WEEK 4

Student Reports, Etruscan Pottery

Meeting 1 *Student Reports*

Meeting 2: *History of form and function in Etruscan Pottery. Choosing a shape, making a guide*

Resources for the week:

<http://www.mysteriousetruscans.com/art/pottery.html>

WEEK 5

Etruscan Pottery: Coil Method

Meeting 1 *Making a base*

Meeting 2: *Building height*

Resources for the week:

https://www.worldhistory.org/Etruscan_Civilization/

WEEK 6

Etruscan Pottery: Painting with colored slips

Meeting 1 *Finishing construction of pot, adding decorative elements*

Meeting 2: *Evaluating design, transferring to vases, decorative slips*

Resources for the week:

https://www.worldhistory.org/Etruscan_Pottery/

Semester Break

WEEK 7

Etruscan Pottery: Assignment Due

Meeting 1 *Finishing up*

Meeting 2: *Assignment due. Critique*

Readings for the week:

Heins, Frances Ingraham *Majolica Pottery has a Long History* Chicago Tribune. October 8, 2000

WEEK 8

Student Reports, Maiolica Method

Meeting 1 *Student Reports*

Meeting 2: *Slab construction for Orto Sole*

WEEK 9

Maiolica: Patterns and Stencils

Meeting 1 *Glazing and painting tiles*

Meeting 2: *Creating stencils, glazing, pouncing, painting plates*

WEEK 10

Maiolica: Glazing, Pouncing, Painting

Meeting 1 *Glazing plates, pouncing, and painting*

Meeting 2: *Student Reports*

WEEK 11

Maiolica: Assignment Due

Meeting 1 *Assignment Due, Critique*

Meeting 2: *Glazing and finishing all work, loading kiln*

WEEK 12

Student Reports, Final Grading

Meeting 1 *Student Reports*

Meeting 2: *Studio Clean Up and Final Grading of allwork*

WEEK 13

Final Exams and Special Academic Events Week

TBA