

COURSE IDENTIFICATION**Course Title:** Experimental Ceramics**Description and Prerequisites**

The purpose of this course is to provide students with opportunities to deepen their knowledge of artistic practice in ceramics through creative explorations. Students will also engage in action research of their creative practice

Textbooks and Required Materials

Textbook: Watkins & Wandless *Alternative Kilns & Firing Techniques: Raku, Saggar, Pit, Barrel* (2006)

Materials will vary depending on individual projects

COURSE OUTCOMES & OBJECTIVES

Outcomes	Objectives
Knowledge	
Understand the history, current issues, and direction of the artistic discipline	Develop understanding of ceramics within the history of art, design, and culture.
Place works in the historical, cultural, and stylistic contexts of the artistic discipline	
Use the technology and equipment of the artistic discipline	Gain skill and knowledge of special firing methods and other technical aspects of ceramics practice.
Understand roles within collaborative teams	Develop understanding of collaboration and teamwork
Skills	
Use the elements and principles of art to create artworks in the artistic discipline	Utilize knowledge and skill in basic tools, techniques, and processes of ceramics to produce work from concept to finished object.
Create artwork that demonstrates perceptual acuity, conceptual understanding, and technical skill	Create ceramic works exemplifying artistic and technical skill in the application of alternative or experimental materials or processes.
Analyze and evaluate works of art in the artistic discipline	Provide self and peer analysis of artistic works in ceramics and analyze own creative practice within the context of this course.
Employ teamwork to enhance learning	Utilize experiential collaborations to increase knowledge of teamwork in order to deepen learning of key concepts
Synthesis	
Produce artworks demonstrating technical skill and disciplinary knowledge	Complete projects demonstrating skill and knowledge of ceramics, with an emphasis on alternative materials and processes.

Use knowledge of art and disciplinary vocabulary to analyze artworks	Utilize knowledge of art and design and the vocabulary of ceramic in critique.
Participate in collaborative community service learning experience	Engage with peers and community members in collaborative creative project
Participate in critiques of own work and work of others	Provide well-reasoned and articulate critique of peers' work.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topics and Assignments	Assessments
1		Course Introduction Begin investigation for planned projects Document research and creative practice in journal Write Research Paper 1: Alternative Building and Glazing Methods Begin reading course text	Project 1: Building Techniques Alternative Glaze and Materials Assembly of Pieced works Project 2: begin throwing and building work for alternative firing
2		Create new work for Project 1	
3		Continue reading course text	
4		Continue documenting creative practice in journal	
5		Plan and create alternative glazes	
6			
7		Last week to glaze and fire works	
8		Mid-term Critique of Project 1, including Artist's Statement	Building and/or using a wood-fired kiln, raku, barrel and pit firing
9		Submit Research Paper 1 Meet with group to plan project	Project 2: Alternative Firing Methods Action Research Project
10		Build alternative firing method	
11		Fire works using alternative methods	
12			
13			
14		Write Action Research Paper (Research paper 2)	
15		Final critique: presentation of Project 2	Final Critique of Project 2 Final Action Research Paper

ASSIGNMENT & ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Weight
Research Paper 1: Alternative Materials and Processes	20
Action Research Paper (Paper 2)	20
Project 1: Alternative Materials and Processes	30
Project 2: Alternative Firing Methods	20
Participation in Critique	10
Total	100 points

Attachments-1**Written directions for assignments****Project 1, Part A**

- You will conduct your own exploration into carved, pierced, and multiple ceramics designs.
- Document your investigation:
 - Record the websites you visited, books you read, magazines or journals you searched, and images of works you liked (with full citations), and make notes in your journal about how you arrived at your final decision. Keep track of these sources as you go—it's very hard to backtrack and find things again if you decide to use them in your paper later on.
 - Your journal can exist on your computer as a running Word document, or you can use a sketchbook. However, all handwritten entries must be legible. The journal will become an important resource when you're writing your Action Research paper at the end of the course.
 - Date every journal entry. You may also take photos of your creative process to enhance your narrative.

Project 1, Part B

- You will employ the results of your investigation of alternative materials to create glazes for your new carved, pierced, and multiple works.
- These will be fired in the studio kilns prior to mid-term critique.
- Meet with the instructor frequently for ongoing checks of your work and guidance on your investigation.

Project 1, Part C

- Assembly of the final works:
 - If you made a carved or pierced work intended to hold a light source (candle, electric light bulb), install this.
 - If you made a medallion or ornament, install jewelry hardware, hanging wires, or other suspension/display devices.
 - If you made pieces for a sculpture or mobile, finalize the construction of the work.
- All works should be in the finished form for the Week 8 Mid-Term Critique.

Paper 1: Alternative Ceramic Materials and Techniques

- Ceramics is among the oldest and most elemental creative practices, but newer technologies such as electric wheels and electronic kilns typify 21st century production. In your course textbook you read about ancient and traditional methods of firing, and we've also investigated projects other than pots, vases, and bowls.
- Using your personal experience and additional exploration, write a 3 to 4-page response paper outlining the alternative ceramic materials and techniques you investigated for this

project. This may include information from your textbook, but it must also utilize at least 3 other sources, which should be listed at the end of your paper. (Note: if you used the textbook as an information source, it should also be included in the source list.)

- **Outline:**
 - Introduction (1/4 page)
 - Materials (1 page)
 - Techniques (1 page)
 - Personal experience (1 page)
 - Conclusion (1/4 page)
- **Due the first day of Week 9**
- **This paper will serve as the Literature Review section of your final Action Research Paper**

Response Paper Requirements

- **Your paper should be**
 - 800 to 1000 words long (3 to 4 pages of text)
 - Times New Roman font—black only
 - double-spaced, with 1-inch margins
 - You must include a running header with your last name and the paper title, and a footer with page numbers
- **Page lengths do NOT including the reference list or images.**
 - All sources of information you use must be listed at the end of the paper using standard MLA or APA format for reference lists/bibliographies.
 - Images must be included as an appendix at the end of the paper, not embedded in the body of the paper.
 - You must include a correct bibliographic citation for every written or artistic work you include.
- **Papers will be submitted to TurnItIn, SafeAssign, or other checking software.**
- **Plagiarism will result in an irrevocable grade of F on the paper.**
- **Do not use Wikipedia as a source. Do not cite Google as a source.**

Project 2: Prep

- **In Project 2 we'll be exploring alternative firing methods.**
- **You'll need to make 8 similar items using identical materials and techniques.**
 - Ex: 8 small bowls, cups, vases... They don't have to be elaborate.
 - Strive to keep these as much alike as possible.
 - These will be your comparison items for the different firing methods.
 - The more similar they are, the more apparent your results will be.
- **You can also create other work to fire, too...but you still need the 8 similar items as well.**
- **The 8 items need to be ready to fire by Week 10. If you wait to make these until Week 9, you might not accomplish this goal and won't have anything to fire for the first of our firing experiments.**

Project 2: Part A

- We will divide the class into four groups.
- Each group will be assigned a firing method. As a group, you will prepare this method for the class to use. (Ex: building and preparing the pit firing area)
- Your group will rotate through the four firing areas, beginning during Week 10.
- You should also prepare new ceramic works for firing. These may be any forms or materials you wish to use.
- Among these objects, you will prepare 8 similar items using identical materials and techniques. (You were informed about this prior to the mid-term critique)
 - Strive to keep these as much alike as possible.
 - These will be your comparison items for the different firing methods.
 - The more similar they are, the more apparent your results will be.

Project 2P Part B

- Your group will work with ceramics students from a local high school or community art center. You will teach them how to use your alternative firing method and help them fire their projects.

Firing Methods

- Group A—Raku
- Group B—Pit Firing
- Group C—Wood-fired kiln
- Group D—Barrel Firing
- Groups must meet and strategize how they will accomplish the preparation of their assigned firing method. The instructor will advise each group about locations and available materials.

Action Research Paper

- Action Research is very compatible with artistic practice, because it documents the artist's work, which is usually not apparent in the final product.
- It makes our creative process visible, allowing others to understand the path from idea to artwork.
- Your paper will build upon your journal entries and will also include a reflective self-assessment and the investigation you conducted for Paper 1.
- The paper should be about 8 to 10 pages long (not including images)

Outline

- Introduction (1/2 page)
- Literature Review: information from Paper 1 (3 pages)
- Detailed report of your creative process in Project 2 from the first investigation to the final products (2 pages)
- Analytical assessment of the 8 objects you fired using the 4 different methods (2 pages)
 - What were the results of each firing?

- Which objects were the most successful? The least successful? Why do you think this was so?
- Reflective analysis of your learning in this course (1 to 2 pages).
 - What was your experience in working as part of a team in order to build and use the alternative firing method assigned to your group?
 - What was your experience in working with community members during this project?
 - How did this investigation inform your creative practice?

- References

- Appendix of images

NOTE 1: page lengths are *minimum* standards. You may certainly write *more*.

NOTE 2: the same formatting requirements apply to the Action Research Paper as for Paper 1, but the final length should be 2000 or more words. Since you already wrote 800 of those words for Paper 1, it's not as much as it might seem.

Bonus Project:

- You may find that you have some spare time during Weeks 11, 12, and 13.
- You may conduct an informal investigation into projects using polymer clay—an alternative ceramics material.
- This material is commonly used by crafters to make beads and other kitschy items. How can you use it in a more artistic or expressive application?
- Polymer items presented at the Final Critique will earn extra credit towards your course grade.