Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Michal Niv
Office Location: IS 124A
Telephone: Email only please
Email: Michal.niv@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: Mon, 11 –noon, or by appointment.
Class Days/Time: Mon, Wed 12 pm – 2:50 pm
Classroom: IS 165

Course Description

This course is designed for beginning students in ceramics. Through demonstrations, discussions, and lectures, you will be provided a general introduction to a wide range of ceramic techniques and concepts, including studio practice in handbuilding, introductory wheel throwing, slip casting/press molding, low and high-fire surfaces and glazes, and firing procedures. PowerPoint presentations will provide an overview of both historical and contemporary ceramics. Studio assignments will vary in length and involvement and will be followed by group critiques. Engaged participation in critiques is mandatory and essential for your progress. Additionally, there will be a quiz on ceramics terminology and a short reading response/written assignment. Basic studio maintenance and cooperative kiln loading/unloading is considered part of the class. In addition to studio work, students might occasionally be asked to visit on-campus galleries.

Three units.

Other Requirements: Ceramics is a medium that demands long hours and constant attention so expect to spend significant additional time outside of class working on your projects (3-6 hours per week is baseline, will vary from week to week).

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

*Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:*

CLO1 - Practice hand building, wheel throwing, and slip casting/press molding ceramic fabrication processes to complete a variety of studio assignments
CLO2 - Select and apply appropriate surface treatments (glazing)
CLO3 - Demonstrate an understanding of some physical characteristics of clay and the firing process
CLO4 - Safely use ceramics lab equipment and observe general lab policies
CLO5 - Apply a general knowledge of historical and contemporary ceramic art to class assignments (studio and written)
CLO6 - Practice and develop critical skills (critiques, class discussions)

Tools and Materials:

Clay available as needed through the Ceramics Guild for $10 a bag. Start with two bags. Check with me if you’re interested in bringing in any other type of clay, to ensure that it is compatible with our studio.

Basic Tool Kit (Available for $15 through the Ceramic Guild):
- Needle tool
- Small sponge
- Cutting wire
- Smooth metal rib
- Fettling knife or small old kitchen knife
- Small kidney shaped wooden rib
- 2 trimming tools

Not included:
- Aprofiwork shirt (don’t wear nice clothes to class to class, since you will be getting dirty)
- Sketchbook (bring this every class to take notes on lectures and glazes, and sketching ideas)
- Spray bottle
- Fork
- Paint brushes
- Towel
- Plastic for wrapping work (kitchen trash bags are ok, dry cleaner plastic is best)
- Plastic containers with lids (No food containers)

- Additional tools can be purchased online or at the local supplier, Clay Planet, located at 1774 Russell Ave., Santa Clara. Hours are M-F 9-5 and Sat 10-3. 408-295-3352, clay-planet.com).

- In addition, you will need to immediately provide a lock for your locker.

Estimated cost: $75

Unless you have outside supplies, most of you should bring in a total of $35 to our next class. Bring cash, or two separate checks ($15 for tool kit, $20 for two bags of clay).

Required Texts/Readings/Material: Articles will be posted on Canvas.

Recommended Reading: (available in the King library)

Periodicals: Ceramics Monthly, Ceramics: Art and Perception

Books:
Contemporary Ceramics Peterson, Susan
Craft and Art of Clay Peterson, Susan
Hands in Clay Speight, Charlotte
Images in Clay Sculpture Speight, Charlotte
History of American Ceramics Levin, Elaine
Postmodern Ceramics Del Vecchio, Mark
Sculptural Ceramics Gregory, Ian
Contemporary Ceramic Techniques Conrad, John
The Potter’s Dictionary Hamer, Frank

500 Animals In Clay, Lark


Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in University Policy S12-3 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf.

Studio assignments (totals 80% of grade):

1. “Bionic Stuffed Animal” (20%): Using reference materials, learn to use pinching technique along with other handbuilding techniques to build several separate forms and assemble them together to a singular sculpture. Learn to control form of at least 12” on one dimension, apply textures, observe and model high levels of detail. Develop a concept or narrative; observe transition areas and visual expression of a conceptual idea. Learn low fire surface treatments. (CLO 1,2,3,4,5,6) Due 9/30

2. “Half of… A Public Art Miniature” / Slab Project (20%): Using mainly slab construction techniques, handbuild mini version of a public Sculpture to a size of at least 12” on one dimension. Iron oxide stains and low fire glazes as surface treatment. (CLO 1,2,3,4,5,6) Due 10/26

3. “A Fairytale on a Vessel” (30%): Using coil construction, you will design and construct a functional sculptural vase of approximately 12”-15”, which holds water. Applying a 2 dimensional image/s on the vessels’
surface, using Sgraffito technique, will follow the form building. High fire glazes introduced. (CLO 1,2,3,4,5,6) Due 12/7

4. “Wheel Throwing” (10%): An introduction to technique of wheel throwing, focus on control of form. High fire glazes and Raku. (CLO 1,2,3,4,5) Due 12/7

Written Assignment (5%): Write an art statement for your sculptural vessel’s assignment. Explain your conceptual approach, your decision making process and the relations between the form and the applied image. (CLO 6) Due 12/2

Quiz (5%): basic ceramic vocabulary (CLO 3) 11/18

Class participation (10%): overall improvement and growth, studio maintenance/kiln loading and unloading, preparedness for assignments, quantity and quality of your effort in studio, engaged and constructive participation in class critiques. Includes participation in ceramics area studio cleanup, scheduled for final day of 12/10. (CLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 6).

Grading Policy

I expect a high degree of commitment to this class. Your persistence, imagination, and level of involvement in solving visual problems determine the quality of your work. Be sure to challenge yourself within the parameters of each assignment. The criteria I use in assigning grades for studio assignments are the quality and complexity of the ideas being explored (including preparation, research, and preliminary sketches) and your success in executing these ideas (problem solving, craftsmanship, attention to detail, presentation).

Access to your grades as well as copies of course materials such as the syllabus, major assignment, handouts, notifications etc. will be made available through the SJSU Canvas system (http://sjsu.instructure.com), accessible through your SJSU One account. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU.

I will assign you a numerical grade for each of your projects in this class, as follows (a “C” and above constitutes a passing grade for the course):

- A+ = 100-97%
- A = 96-93%
- A- = 92-90%
- B+ = 89-87%
- B = 86-83%
- B- = 82-80%
- C+ = 79-77%
- C = 76-73%
- C- = 72-70%
- D+ = 69-67%
- D = 66-63%
- D- = 62-60%
- F = 59-0% Unsatisfactory
A= Excellent work  
B = Above average work  
C= Average work  
D= Below average work  
F= Unsatisfactory work

NOTE that University policy F69-24, “Students should attend all meetings of their classes, not only because they are responsible for material discussed therein, but because active participation is frequently essential to insure maximum benefit for all members of the class. Attendance per se shall not be used as a criterion for grading.”

All work must be finished and turned in according to described deadlines and instructions. **I will accept late assignments at any time until the end of the semester, but they will be downgraded by one full letter grade.**

**Classroom Protocol**

You are required to come to class prepared and on time and expected to stay and work for the duration of the class. As a courtesy to all, use of cell phones or any other electronic media is generally prohibited during class meeting times. Please wear appropriate clothing to class, do not wear headphones during lectures / demonstrations. Please mind the fragile nature of clay and be very careful in not handling other people’s work. If you are ill or unable to attend class, I expect you to contact me (e-mail preferable) as soon as possible. Not doing so could negatively affect your grade. Do not schedule work time or other obligations during our class time.

**Clean up:** Clean up begins 15 minutes before class ends. ALL areas that you have used must be cleaned before you leave the studio. For the safety of everyone sharing the studio, take care not to generate excessive dust (no dry sanding) and do not use any toxic materials in the studio. All clean up of dry materials will be done with a wet sponge. An additional and mandatory department wide cleanup will take place on the date scheduled for our final exam.

**University Policies**

**General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student**

As members of the academic community, students accept both the rights and responsibilities incumbent upon all members of the institution. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with SJSU’s policies and practices pertaining to the procedures to follow if and when questions or concerns about a class arises. See University Policy S90–5 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf. More detailed information on a variety of related topics is available in the SJSU catalog, at http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/catalog/rec-12234.12506.html. In general, it is recommended that students begin by seeking clarification or discussing concerns with their instructor. If such conversation is not possible, or if it does not serve to address the issue, it is recommended that the student contact the Department Chair as a next step.
Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester’s Catalog Policies section at http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the Academic Calendars webpage at http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/. The Late Drop Policy is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the Advising Hub at http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

University Policy S12-7, http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf, requires students to obtain instructor’s permission to record the course and the following items to be included in the syllabus:

- “Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor’s permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.”
  - It is suggested that the greensheet include the instructor’s process for granting permission, whether in writing or orally and whether for the whole semester or on a class by class basis.
  - In classes where active participation of students or guests may be on the recording, permission of those students or guests should be obtained as well.
- “Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.”

Academic integrity

Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The Student Conduct and Ethical Development website is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 at http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Accessible Education Center (AEC) at http://www.sjsu.edu/aec to establish a record of their disability.
This schedule is subject to change with fair notice. Any changes will be shared both in-class and via Canvas.

**Course Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8/24</td>
<td>Introduction to class and first assignment, orientation and facility tour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1    | 8/26 | - Bring in **one or more** options of stuffed animals.  
- Sell tools and clay – Bring $35.  
- Demonstration – working solid, pinch pots. Start wet work on animals. |
| 2    | 8/31 | - Wet work on animals.  
- **Check sketches for animals.**  
- Demonstration – connecting clay parts and creating clay stamps and molds.  
- Bring ‘mechanical parts’ images/ sketches/ examples.  
- PPT lecture – Animals in art.  
- Tomorrow - Last Day to Drop Courses Without an Entry on Student's Permanent Record (D) |
| 2    | 9/2  | - Wet work on animals.  
- Introduce colored slips and undergalzes. |
| 3    | 9/7  | **Labor Day – No Class** |
| 3    | 9/9  | - Finish wet work on animals.  
- **Introduce underglazes and low fire glazes.** |
| 4    | 9/14 | - Painting the animals in slip and start drying process.  
- **Demonstration – Using underglazes and low fire glazes.**  
- **Introduce slab project** (PPT) |
| 4    | 9/16 | - Loading animals for bisque firing – All animals must be finished, painted with slip and dry.  
- Slab project - **check sketches.** Demonstration - rolling and constructing with slabs+ scaling-up techniques. |
<p>| 5    | 9/21 | - <strong>Unloading animals, applying underglazes and glazes.</strong> |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9/23</td>
<td>- Start wet work on slab project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Demonstration – Extruder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Tomorrow</em> - Tuesday lecture – Adam Shiverdecker, 5pm, Art building.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9/28</td>
<td>- Loading animals to glaze firing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Introduce vessel assignment (PPT),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Wet work on slab project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9/30</td>
<td><strong>CRITIQUE – Bionic Stuffed Animal (20%).</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10/5</td>
<td>- check sketches for vessel project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Demonstration - oxide wash.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Last day of wet work for slab project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10/7</td>
<td>- Start wet work on Vessels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Demonstration – Slip casting and push molds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>10/12</td>
<td>- Wet work on Vessels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Loading slab project to bisque kiln.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>10/14</td>
<td>- Wet work on Vessels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Painting Slab project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10/19</td>
<td>- Loading Slab project to the glaze fire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Demonstration – Sgraffito.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10/21</td>
<td>- Introduce last assignment –wheel throwing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Get your vessels to leather-hard stage, for slip application.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10/26</td>
<td><strong>CRITIQUE – Half of… A Public Art Miniature (20%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10/28</td>
<td>- Wheel throwing demo and practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11/2</td>
<td>Wheel throwing demo and practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11/4</td>
<td><strong>ATC – No instruction – work time</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>11/9</td>
<td>- Last day of wet work on sculptural vessel (Curving)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Demonstration – High fire glazes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Practice wheel throwing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>11/11</td>
<td><strong>Veteran’s Day No class</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>11/16</td>
<td>- Loading vessels to bisque kiln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Pass out ceramic terms and review.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Practice wheel throwing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>11/18</td>
<td><strong>QUIZ – Ceramic Terms (5%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Wheel throwing demo and practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>11/23</td>
<td><strong>ABSOLUTE LAST DAY ALL WET WORK</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Glazing vessels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>11/25</td>
<td>- Loading the bisque kiln with work from the wheel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- High-fire for Vessels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>11/30</td>
<td>- Glazing wheel thrown pieces and Vessels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Raku firings (all work must be glazed 24 hours in advance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>12/2</td>
<td>- Raku firings (all work must be glazed 24 hours in advance),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Last glaze high-fire for throwing project and sculptural vessels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Turn in written assignment (5%).</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>12/7</td>
<td><strong>FINAL CRITIQUES- Vessels (30%) and throwing assignment (10%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>12/10</td>
<td>9:45 - Noon - <strong>MANDATORY STUDIO CLEANUP. PART OF 10% PARTICIPATION GRADE.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>