

Ottawa School of Art, Main Campus, Fall 2013

Course Title: Introductory Ceramics, F13D065C

Name of Instructor: Yvon Villarceau

Course Description:

This course introduces students to the fundamental hand-building techniques of pinch, coil and slab construction. Participants will learn about clay's components and properties and will get a feel for controlling the drying process. Basic glazing, kiln firing will also be covered. Emphasis will be placed on the form and function of archetypal vessels, such as the bowl and the cup, from prehistory to today. Assignments will be complemented with lectures and demonstrations, suggested readings and links.

Week 1:

A slide show of the earliest examples clay artifacts. Brief demonstration of wedging, pinching, coiling and attaching. Students will get the opportunity to try these techniques out right away in wedging their own clay and producing a quick sculpture of from life. Students will learn about the drying process, descriptive vocabulary, such as greenware, leather-hard, bone-dry and how to cover their work.

Week 2:

Brief demonstration of making a slab and construction with slabs. Students will create a shelter form based on slabs. Brief demonstration of surface treatments, such as trimming, indenting, carving and burnishing. Students will learn the names of the respective tools, as well as how to modify found objects to use as tools. Students will apply these techniques both to leather-hard work produced in the previous week and their newest greenware. Decorative uses of slip will be demonstrated and students will apply slip onto their slab form.

Week 3:

Brief demonstration of underglazing. Students will apply this technique to the work produced in week 1 and 2, which should be bone-dry and ready to bisque. Students will create glaze sample tiles, using a decorative motif and writing the glaze information on the back.

Week 4:

Students will glaze their tiles and their work from weeks 1-3 so that they are ready to be fired. The teacher will talk about how to pack a kiln and the firing process. Teacher will describe and demonstrate the clay recycling process.

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Week 5:

Brief lecture on the basic vessel form, parts of a pot: foot, belly, shoulders and neck. Slide show of ancient pots from around the world. Students will choose a pot from history that inspires them, to imitate and emulate. Students will work on their historic pot in class, using the coil method.

Week 6:

Students will present the results of their historical research and clay re-creation, so far, to the class and discuss possible revision. Work toward completion of historical pot in class. By this time, work from weeks 1-3 will have been fired. The teacher will set the tone for a constructive class critique of each piece. Students will exchange their views, using their new vocabulary and historical knowledge.

Week 7:

Slide show of contemporary ceramic sculpture and pots. Brief discussion on what is "craft", what is "art", how they overlap. Students get their historical pots ready for the bisque firing. They will also work on a contemporary re-interpretation of their historical pot,

Week 8:

Students work on finishing their assignments for final presentation and assessment. Discussion about and initial planning of a group show at the end of the course.

Week 9:

Time for individual review and evaluation of students' work. Some students may still be completing assignments. Planning completed for final group show. Demonstration of throwing on the wheel, if there is time and interest.

Week 10:

Class review, feedback critique and wrap up. Brief demonstration of how to light and photograph artworks. Students will bring their own camera to document their artwork. Group show and potluck.