Art 223: Utilitarian Ceramics

# Block 2, Fall 2018

Instructor: Susannah Biondo-Gemmell

Office Location and Hours: McWethy 118-Please make appointment with professor prior to meeting

Instructor Email: SBiondogemmell@cornellcollege.edu

Instructor Phone: 319-895-4827

Monday-Friday 9am-3:00pm (We meet M-F 9-11am & 1-3pm)

McWethy Hall, Room 128

# Course Description:

In Utilitarian Ceramics, students will explore clay as a functional medium, while gaining an understanding of clay’s role as both a craft and fine art material. Students will learn both wheel-throwing and hand-building techniques in order to create pottery, while gaining experience with various ceramic surface treatments, including glazes, underglazes, and oxides. This course starts with basic principles of functional pottery (cylinders), proceeds by covering intermediate forms (cups, mugs, bowls, etc.), and finishes with more complex processes (wheel thrown plates, drape molds), Students will demonstrate a working knowledge of loading and firing both gas and electric kilns. Each student will be required to install at least one piece in a class exhibition on the last day of the block. Students will also develop skills in evaluating other student artwork through critiques.

# Prerequisite:

Any 100-level studio art course

This course fulfills a Fine Arts requirement.

# Course Learning Objectives:

Students will:

* Demonstrate a working knowledge of various ceramic wheel-throwing and hand-building techniques in order to create functional forms. *(Knowledge)*
* Demonstrate a technical understanding and working knowledge of ceramic materials, processes, and firing techniques including both electric oxidation and gas reduction firing. *(Knowledge, Reasoning)*
* Explore and thoughtfully apply a variety of ceramic surface treatments including glaze, underglaze, and oxides. (*Knowledge)*
* Investigate the “language of pottery” and apply these considerations to functional forms. (*Inquiry)*
* Research and orally present art historical materials as it is appropriate to studio projects produced in this course. *(Communication)*
* Consider and integrate various cultural and historical processes and ideas into their studio work. *(Intercultural Literacy)*
* Thoughtfully and thoroughly reflect upon their artistic process through written form using a daily sketchbook. *(Inquiry, Communication)*
* Describe and evaluate through written form professional artistic work after having viewed it in person and researched it formally, historically, and conceptually. *(Inquiry, Communication)*
* Discuss, critique, and evaluate their ceramic work as well as their peers’ work. *(Communication, Reasoning)*
* Begin to develop cohesive artistic voices/positions as demonstrated through their studio projects. *(Inquiry)*
* Create and submit a ceramic art portfolio. *(Vocation)*

**This course supports the Educational Priorities and Outcomes of Cornell College with emphases on knowledge, inquiry, communication, reasoning, intercultural literacy, and vocation.**

# Method of Instruction:

Wheel-throwing and hand-building processes will be demonstrated throughout the block. Students will work continuously on pottery forms, including building, glazing, and firing. This course is organic in nature. Instruction will include hands-on demonstrations, PowerPoint lectures/presentations including pertinent historical and contemporary images, and planned/impromptu critiques of student work. Students will be actively involved with each stage of the ceramic process, including mixing clay, building work, applying surface treatments, and loading/firing kilns. Objectives for the day will be presented at the beginning of each class. Much of this course will be spent in the studio working. Work-in-progress critiques/conversations will occur frequently in which the students will be encouraged to actively participate, while students should also be prepared to discuss individual progress with the instructor one-on-one. Final critiques will be held after glaze firings. Students will be notified of work due. We will also travel to a local museum or gallery to experience artwork first-hand.

# Method of Evaluation:

Each student will be evaluated on pottery forms (see list of minimum required forms), an individual sketchbook, one class presentation of an artist chosen from a provided list, an exhibition response, and class participation. Class critiques will be scheduled throughout the block (see calendar for dates). Students will be reminded of projects/materials to be submitted at that time. Critiques are a vital part of both evaluating you own work and developing you skills in evaluating others. Don’t miss critiques—remember these are a large part of your class participation grade for this course. **Yes, your grade will reflect your involvement in critiques!** Sketchbook assignments are created to facilitate your studio work. Sketchbooks will be collected on the Monday of week 4. Class participation also involves technical processes such as mixing clay/glazes, loading kilns, classroom maintenance—all of which are particularly important to the success of a ceramics studio. Your grade will reflect your participation in these activities.

**Think of this class as a full-time job. You are expected to work a 40 hour week in the studio including class time, during the evenings, and on the weekends—this time spent in the studio will be apparent in the work.**

# Distribution of Weight:

Pottery (see list) 70%

Ceramic Artist Presentation 10%

Exhibition Response/Museum Visit 5%

Sketchbook 7.5%

Class Participation 7.5%

(Including Attendance, All Class Critiques, Individual Readiness, Mixing Clay and Glaze, Loading/Unloading Kilns, Classroom Maintenance, Exhibition Attendance, Etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

100 % total

\*Note: Work in this class will be evaluated per student as a whole considering **improvement, craftsmanship, adherence to the project assignment, creativity/conceptual development, sophistication of ideas and process, and work ethic—**therefore individual project grades will not be given. Final grades will be determined at the end of the course. Feel free to ask for an approximate evaluation and feedback at any point!

\*\*Note: Since students enter this class at various skill levels, grades will be based on personal improvement, skill development, quality of execution, craftsmanship, and overall involvement.

\*\*\*Note: You are not entitled to a good grade because this is an art class. Art class does not equal easy. You must **earn** a good or excellent grade in this class.

A—Turned in all assignments on-time and achieved excellence in all of the above listed criteria on all of the assignments

B— Turned in all assignments on-time and demonstrated above average work in all/most of the above listed criteria on all of the assignments

C— Turned in all assignments on-time and demonstrated average work in all/most of the above listed criteria on all of the assignments

D— Turned in most of the assignments on-time and demonstrated mediocre/below average in all/most of the above listed criteria on all of the assignments

F— Missing some/many assignments and performed poorly in all of the above listed criteria on all of the assignments

**This information is not meant to scare you—it is simply meant to be transparent about my grading process.**

# Academic Honesty:

**From the Cornell College catalogue:**

*Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College’s requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty. The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in The Compass, our student handbook, under the heading “Academic Policies – Honesty in Academic Work.”*

Though the idea of “cheating” may seem unlikely in a studio art class, I expect that you are making your own work and contributing to class discussions/critiques. You should be in the studio working on projects during class time as well as in the evenings and weekends.

# Outside Assignments:

Assignments will be started during class time, but students will need to continue work and finish projects outside of class. McWethy hours are listed below. It is expected that students will be working either in the art building or at home on assignments outside of class hours. Additionally, students will be required to keep a block-long sketchbook to be completed during and outside of class time. Finally, students will be required to formally present one artist and attend one art exhibition of the instructor’s choice with a response to this show.

**A WARNING…**because development of pottery skills comes with PRACTICE, students must…must…must be proactive and focused. Do not assume the amount of work expected of you by the end of this course can easily be completed unless you are in the studio working EVERYDAY and after class hours. **We will need to move forward at a quick pace in order to get the work built, bisque fired, glazed, and glaze fired in a timely manner.** You must have your work ready for the appropriate deadlines, otherwise your work will not be fired and will be considered incomplete. **I will not hold back a firing, because you are not ready.** You will need to multi-task! A student who loses track of time and focus could easily result in panic toward the end of the course and receive a low grade. You need to come in each day with purpose and work with vigor. STAY ON TASK—both conceptually and technically!

# McWethy Hours:

Sunday-Thursday 5:30am-11pm

Friday-Saturday 5:30am-8pm

You will need to have an after-hours pass and student ID to be in McWethy after the listed times.

# Sketchbook (Required):

Each student will be required to keep a sketchbook. **You should create at least one entry per day in your sketchbook, including weekends. This means you will have 21 entries by the beginning of week 4, when I collect the sketchbooks.** These entries can be a combination of written and sketched responses to the week’s lessons, your artwork, your influences, your life as it pertains to your creative process, etc. Be sure to include entries that pertain to this course or art-making. You may also choose to collect images, objects, etc. and glue them into your sketchbook. Some sketchbook entries may be assigned in conjunction with a certain assignment. Each entry should be about 1 page in length and of college-level substance. Your sketchbook will also be used to take notes in class, so be sure to bring it to each class period. Be sure to separate class notes from you sketchbook entries. Each sketchbook entry must be clearly labeled with the entry # (for example Entry #18). A sketchbook is an invaluable tool for any artist and should facilitate your creative process. Do not wait until the end of the block to complete all/most of the entries—it will be obvious and reflect in your grade! See supplementary sketchbook handout for additional information.

# Supplies and Materials:

Campus Bookstore: Sketchbook

Instructor: Materials, $70 (please pay this to me asap—grades will be withheld for students who do not pay)

Student: Materials, varied

# Attendance:

Excellent attendance is required in this class—particularly since Cornell works on the block schedule. **Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class—morning and afternoon.** The morning is considered a class and the afternoon is considered a class. Please let the professor know if you would like to make an appointment to discuss your work. If you are late, you must find me during/after class to change it to a tardy and, if you leave early without consulting with the instructor, you will be counted tardy. **After one absence, your grade will drop a letter (A to A-) for each additional absence. Two tardies equal an absence.**  If you need to leave class early—you should discuss this with the instructor prior to class for it to be excused. It is simply too difficult to make up lost class time effectively. Consistently arriving late or leaving early is disrespectful to the instructor and disruptive for other students. Always speak with the instructor if you foresee an excused absence, but do not assume it will be excused. It is the student’s responsibility to inquire about missed assignments from another student, though, due to the method of instruction for this course, it may be impossible to make up. Lecture material, technical demonstrations, and project assignments will not be repeated. No cell phones or texting in class. I-pods/phones can be used during studio time for music, but please leave one earbud out, so you can hear any announcements. If we are listening to a communal podcast, please no individual music.

**It is your responsibility to be aware of college withdrawal policies.**

# Contacting the Instructor:

You may contact me through my school email: sbiondogemmell@cornellcollege.edu

Speak with the instructor to schedule an appointment. I will be happy to meet with you to discuss your work or progress in the course!

Note: Because I have 15 students working in very different ways, sometimes in different areas of the building/campus, it can at times be difficult to find me for help instantly. Please let me know if you need to meet right away.

# Clean-Up and Storage:

**At the end of each day, we will spend 10-15 minutes cleaning up the studio.** Each student is responsible for thorough clean-up of his/her work space and the communal work space, including wiping down the tables, throwing out excess materials, sweeping the floor around your table, etc. Some projects will be messier than others, so in those cases we will spend some extra time cleaning up our studio. Storage space will be provided in drawers in the studio. Be sure to store your supplies in the correct space. **If you skip out on or do not participate in clean up, it will reflect in your participation grade. Additionally, there is a MANDATORY clean up during the last week of class.**

# Students with Disabilities:

**From the Cornell College catalogue:**

*Cornell College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities.  Students should notify the Coordinator of Academic Support and Advising and their course instructor of any disability related accommodations within the first three days of the term for which the accommodations are required, due to the fast pace of the block format.  For more information on the documentation required to establish the need for accommodations and the process of requesting the accommodations, see*[*http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/disabilities/index.shtml*](http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/disabilities/index.shtml)*.*

Any student with a disability should contact Brooke Paulsen or 319-895-4382 the Coordinator of Academic Support and Advising in Cole 309.