



Course Syllabus: Ceramics I

College of Art

Art 2613

Spring 2026

Contact Information

Steve Hilton

9:30 to 12:20 Tuesday/Thursday Ceramics

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Studio/C119

Course Description

An introduction to ceramic materials and techniques of hand building, decorating, glazing, loading and firing of kilns.

Course Objectives

1. Demonstrate a basic understanding of equipment safety and possible health hazards associated with ceramics, while maintaining a clean working environment
2. Describe, recognize, and utilize ceramic tools
3. Demonstrate rudimentary knowledge of kiln firings to include oxidation and reduction methods
4. Demonstrate basic skill with select hand building techniques
5. Demonstrate the procedure for loading kilns: glaze and bisque
6. Demonstrate basic wheel techniques
7. Demonstrate basic glazing and surface decorating methods

Textbook & Instructional Materials

***The Craft and Art of Clay* (Fourth Edition), by Susan Peterson (this book is a great book for ceramics majors. If you are not a major, you do not need to buy this book. You may use a book in the reference section of the library or I have a copy in my office.**

Student Handbook

Refer to: [Student Handbook](#)

Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedures

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual's to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Office of Student Conduct.

[Office of Student Conduct](#)

Moffett Library

Moffett Library provides resources and services to support student's studies and assignments, including books, peer-reviewed journals, databases, and multimedia materials accessible both on campus and remotely. The library offers media equipment checkout, reservable study rooms, and research assistance from librarians to help students effectively find, evaluate, and use information. Get started on this [Moffett Library webpage](#) to explore these resources and learn how to best utilize the library.

Grading

Each assignment should be evaluated and graded as it is completed. It is your responsibility to make sure I know your work is ready to be graded.

Since ceramic work has two stages of completion, you will be graded on turning your completed green or leather hard work in on time, and you will be graded on your glazed work at the end of the semester. I will be grading your work with rubrics designed for specific assignments.

As art is subjective, I will be grading your assignments with some of the following criteria (depending on the assignment). Again. **It is your responsibility to show me each assignment as it is completed:**

1. Is it **innovative/experimental/ambitious/creative/original**: were you self-motivated?
2. Does it accomplish the assignment?
3. Does it **communicate** your intention/content?
4. Is it aesthetically pleasing . . . and designed well?
5. Did you use excellent Craftpersonship?
6. Did you give adequate attention to detail(s)?
7. Is there evidence of technical proficiency?
8. Is there growth in your work? Is there evidence of progression in your work?
9. Did you challenge yourself?
10. Did you consider historical ceramic imagery and reference images in your work?
11. Is there a sketchbook entry with a written journal, and glaze application for each piece?

Assignments	500
Quizzes	50
Critique	100
Sketchbook	100
Participation (cleaning/clay processing)	100
Wood Fire Participation	50
Total Points	900

Homework

You will have homework in this class . . . except you will be doing most of it in the studio. You should spend a minimum of 6 hours in the studio outside class time to be successful. Most will spend more. The more time you spend in the studio the more successful you will be. If you make more . . . You will learn more!

If you can make the time spent outside of class part of your social culture, this class will be a more memorable experience.

Extra Credit

There is no extra credit

Late Work

Assignments are due at the **start** of the class period on the due date. Any assignment submitted after that time will receive a penalty of 10% per day, with the total penalty not to exceed 50% of the points available for the assignment. The only accepted excuses for late work or missing a test/quiz/critique/class are requests from an academic dean, or a documented medical situation. There will be no exceptions, so please do not ask.

Important Dates

- Last day for term schedule changes: January 23, 2026
- Deadline to file for graduation: February 16, 2026
- Last Day to drop with a grade of "W:" March 4, 2026
- Refer to: [Drops, Withdrawals & Void](#)

Desire-to-Learn (D2L)

We will not use D2L in Ceramics

Attendance

Students enrolled in the Juanita and Ralph Harvey School of Visual Arts must comply with the following department-wide Attendance and Lateness Policy:

- **If you are sick . . . Please don't come to class!! We can Zoom/Facetime you in if appropriate**
- Students arriving after class begins will be considered late. Students arriving 10 minutes after class begins will be counted absent.
- THREE late arrivals count as an absence.
- Students may be absent from class THREE times without penalty and without providing any documentation regarding the absence.
- If students incur a FOURTH absence, their final course evaluation will be reduced by a full letter grade.
- If students are absent or late FIVE times, whatever the reason, they will receive a FAILING GRADE, be dropped from the class roll, and be asked to stop attending class.
- Example: after your 4th absence, a 90% (A) will become an 80% (B)
- Example: after your 4th absence and 3rd tardy, an 80% will become an F and you will be dropped
- *Faculty members have the discretion to make exceptions to this policy based on individual circumstances.*
- **When you are absent, it is YOUR responsibility to contact class members and learn what you missed.**

Online Computer Requirements

None

Instructor Class Policies

If you have a question/problem with the material or a technique, please see me as soon as possible. If you wait until the last week of the semester, I might not be able to help you.

Studio Etiquette:

It is everyone's responsibility to help keep the studio clean. Do not leave without making sure all materials, tools, and artwork are properly stored. Your grade will be lowered if you do not clean up after yourself.

- The last 12.498 minutes of class is devoted to cleaning up, with **everyone** assisting.
- The floors need to be mopped **every** class period and **every** time you throw on the wheel
- There will be one mandatory all studio clean-up in the middle of the semester and the final clean-up on **Tuesday, December 9 at 9:30 AM . . . this is the final cleanup, if you miss the cleanup, you will lose one letter grade from your final grade!**
- During the semester, everyone will be asked to help maintain the studio
- **Please turn all cell phones to silent while in the ceramic studio . . . this includes texting ******
- **Music:** Please respect everyone in the studio when playing your music on the Ion Speaker. If someone asks you to turn it down or change the music, please do so.

If you are sick . . . stay home. But try to Zoom/Facetime the class. You have to do this in a timely manner. Do not ask to Zoom unless you give me at least 30 minutes notice.

The instructor reserves the right to initiate an instructor drop with a grade of W, WF, or F, as specified in the Student Handbook (see link above) for reasons to include attendance issues, academic performance in the class, indifferent attitude, or disruptive conduct.

Enrollment in this class constitutes an acceptance to adhere to the Student Honor Creed and all other student conduct policies outlined in the university Student Handbook.

Safety:

1. **Some materials in the studio are toxic. If you are uncertain of the nature of a material, PLEASE SEE ME and/or see the Material Safety Data Sheets in the folder by the front door.**
2. Students are expected to take the utmost care in working with kilns and all power equipment. **Do not use any equipment, including kilns, without being properly trained and signing a training document.**
3. **Always** wear a respirator and rubber gloves when working with any toxic materials.
4. **Always** wear a respirator when sanding ceramic material and spraying glaze.
5. **Always** sand ceramic material outside
6. A list of all materials used in this studio is available in the yellow folder next to the front door.
7. **TAKING THIS COURSE IN THE ART DEPARTMENT AT MSU MEANS THAT YOU ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY to use all equipment, tools, and materials related to the course in a safe and responsible manner. If you have any health-related problems that would be adversely affected by taking the course, you should consult with me at the end of the first day of the class.**
8. Please tell me about any accidents, no matter how small.
9. **Respirator:** It is recommended that you buy a respirator. This is not mandatory. These are available at Lowes, Home Depot, or Granger – make sure it is good for dust (they usually have a magenta (pink) color on the filter and are generally labeled P100 filters): Approximately \$30. A N95 dust mask is the other option. **You must have an N95 dust mask OR respirator for this class!!**

Return and Retention of Student Work

If work or tools are left in the studio longer than (1) one week after the end of the semester, the department has the right to dispose of or use the unclaimed work for any purpose.

Please buy these tools now so you have them for the beginning of the class!!
Materials/Tools

Numbers 1 through 4 below can be found (with a MSU discount) online at <http://www.brackers.com>. But you **do not** have to purchase from Brackers if you can find a better deal elsewhere.

- If you do use Brackers . . . **Use Steve Hilton as the discount code.**
- All of the letters/numbers below are from Brackers as are the links
- If you know one of your classmates, **order together to save shipping cost**
- Most of these tools you **will not** be able to share
- KT means Kemper Tool

1. [pottery tool kit](#) (KTPTK – Economy Kemper Pottery Tool Kit) (wire, needle tool, wooden rib, metal rib, trimming tool, sponge)
2. [rubber rib](#) (buy the yellow Sherrill Mudtool, **soft yellow, shape number 4** (the only one in stock) **Do not buy a “cheaper alternative”**. They are typically a waste of money
3. [Mini Ribbon Set](#) (KTMRs Kemper - Mini Ribbon Set) **Do not buy another loop tool kit, you will need this kit specifically**
4. [metal scraper](#) (KT S10 – steel scraper with serrations) Again . . . **please do not buy another “option”**
5. small bucket: a gallon or less at the dollar store . . . **Do not buy anything larger than a gallon**
6. combination lock (if you would like to use a locker)
7. assortment of inexpensive brushes (1/4-inch, 1/2-inch, 1 inch). You can share these!
8. sketchbook

Building Use Hours:

- Art building access will be discussed the first day of class
- The use of this and all art studios is considered a privilege, if this is abused, it will be revoked.
- The studio door code is **314**. Please do not share it with anyone outside this class.

Important Dates:

Final Clean Up – **Tuesday May 11**

NCECA – March 25 to March 28, 2026 (Detroit) Ask me about it!!

This syllabus may be changed to best meet your needs, or for other reasons as I see fit. This includes the changing or deleting of assignments. If for some reason the assignments administered total something other than 700 points, the method of obtaining the final grade will remain essentially the same: the total points achieved will be divided by the total points possible to obtain a percentage and a grade will be assigned according to the percentage scale outlined above.

By staying enrolled in this course, you are indicating you understand and accept the terms of ART 2613 and this syllabus

Assignments are due at the **start** of the class period on the due date. Any assignment submitted after that time will receive a penalty of 10% per day, with the total penalty not to exceed 50% of the points available for the assignment. The only accepted excuses for late work or missing a test/quiz/critique/class are requests from an academic dean, or a documented medical situation. There will be no exceptions, so please do not ask.

In order to help students keep track of their progress toward course objectives, the instructor for this class will provide a Midterm Progress Report through each student's WebWorld account who is at risk of scoring below a C. Midterm grades will not be reported on the students' transcript; nor will they be calculated in the cumulative GPA. They simply give students an idea of where they stand at the midpoint of the semester. Students earning below a C at the midway point should schedule a meeting with me as soon as possible.

LIST OF REQUIRED ATTENDANCE FOR Fall 2025 – ALL Gallery openings

Departmental Policy for Gallery Openings

- Students enrolled in studio or art history courses must attend every gallery opening.
- If the student cannot attend the gallery opening, they must meet following requirements:
 1. The student must write a paper on the artist exhibited in the Juanita Harvey gallery.
 2. The paper should emphasize the student's reaction to the work.
 3. The paper must be formatted in Times New Roman, 12pt font, and be double-spaced.
 4. The paper must consist of 500 words.
 5. The paper must be submitted to the art office **one week** after the exhibition opening.
 6. If the exhibition extends past the final class day of the semester, the paper will be due one week before the final class day of the semester.
- If a student does not attend the show nor submit a paper, their final grade will be dropped 3.3% per gallery opening.
- If a student misses all of the gallery openings and does not write a paper for each required exhibition, the student's final grade will be dropped by 10%.

Change of Schedule

A student dropping a course (but not withdrawing from the University) within the first 12 class days of a regular semester or the first four class days of a summer semester is eligible for a 100% refund of applicable tuition and fees. Dates are published in the Schedule of Classes each semester.

Refund and Repayment Policy

A student who withdraws or is administratively withdrawn from Midwestern State University (MSU) may be eligible to receive a refund for all or a portion of the tuition, fees and room/board charges that were paid to MSU for the semester. HOWEVER, if the student received financial aid (federal/state/institutional grants, loans and/or scholarships), all or a portion of the refund may be returned to the financial aid programs. As described below, two formulas (federal and state) exist in determining the amount of the refund. (Examples of each refund calculation will be made available upon request).

Services for Students with Disabilities

In accordance with Section 504 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Midwestern State University endeavors to make reasonable accommodations to ensure equal opportunity for qualified persons with disabilities to participate in all educational, social, and recreational programs and activities. After notification of acceptance, students requiring accommodations should make application for such assistance through Disability Support Services, located in the Student Wellness Center, (940) 397-4140. Current documentation of a disability will be required in order to provide appropriate services, and each request will be individually reviewed. For more details, please go to [Disability Support Services](#).

College Policies

Campus Carry Rules/Policies

Refer to: [Campus Carry Rules and Policies](#)

Smoking/Tobacco Policy

College policy strictly prohibits the use of tobacco products in any building owned or operated by MSU Texas. Adult students may smoke only in the outside designated-smoking areas at each location.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

To comply with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act of 1989 and subsequent amendments, students and employees of Midwestern State are informed that strictly enforced policies are in place which prohibits the unlawful possession, use or distribution of any illicit drugs, including alcohol, on university property or as part of any university-sponsored activity. Students and employees are also subject to all applicable legal sanctions under local, state and federal law for any offenses involving illicit drugs on University property or at University-sponsored activities.

Campus Carry

Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes has prohibited. The new Constitutional Carry law does not change this process. Concealed carry still requires a License to Carry permit, and openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit [Campus Carry](#).

Active Shooter

The safety and security of our campus is the responsibility of everyone in our community. Each of us has an obligation to be prepared to appropriately respond to threats to our campus, such as an active aggressor. Please review the information provided by MSU Police Department regarding the options and strategies we can all use to stay safe during difficult situations. For more information, visit [MSUReady – Active Shooter](#). Students are encouraged to watch the video entitled “*Run. Hide. Fight.*” which may be electronically accessed via the University police department’s webpage: [“Run. Hide. Fight.”](#)

Grade Appeal Process

Update as needed. Students who wish to appeal a grade should consult the Midwestern State University [MSU Catalog](#)

Course Schedule:

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
TUESDAY WEEK 1	Syllabus/ Introduction Safety Tour/Safety Tour/Quiz Buy Tools if not already purchased Work Day Pinch Pots	Assign: pinch pots and drawings Pinch Pots Demo
THURSDAY WEEK 1	Work Day Pinch Pots Handout: Cylinder Assignment Handout: Throwing a Cylinder	Due: First pinch pot Assign: Cylinders Assign: Ceramic Vocabulary Take Home Quiz
TUESDAY WEEK 2	CRITIQUE Pinch Pots (not glazed) Work Day Cylinders	Due: pinch pots Demo: Throwing and Video Demo: Glaze Pinch Pots Due: Tools Check
THURSDAY WEEK 2	Work Day Cylinders	Due: First Pinch Pot glazed to go in kiln Demo: Trimming
TUESDAY WEEK 3	Work Day: Cylinders ANOTHER THROWING DEMO?	Demo: Trimming
THURSDAY WEEK 3	Work Day: Cylinders	Quiz: Wheelthrowing Due: 5 cylinders (keep 5 best)
TUESDAY WEEK 4	Work Day: Cylinders	Due: 2 nd 5 Cylinders
THURSDAY WEEK 4	Work Day: Cylinders	Assign: Coil Vessel
TUESDAY WEEK 5	CRITIQUE: All Cylinders (not glazed)	Due: 3 rd 5 Cylinders Critique: Cylinders Due: Bisque all Cylinders Demo: Coil Vessel
THURSDAY WEEK 5	Work Day: Coil Vessel	Assign: Glaze Cylinders
WOOD FIRE WEEK	WOOD FIRE WEEK (be available)	WOOD FIRE WEEK
TUESDAY WEEK 6	Work Day: Coil Vessel	Due: Coil Ideas/Drawings Due: All Glazed Cylinders with notes
THURSDAY WEEK 6	Work Day: Coil Vessel	Due: First 12 inches of coil vessel
TUESDAY WEEK 7	Work Day: Coil Vessel	Assign: Surface Decoration
THURSDAY WEEK 7	Work Day: Coil Vessel	Due: 20 inches of coil vessel

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK	SPRING BREAK
TUESDAY WEEK 8	Work Day: Coil Vessel Surface Decoration CRITIQUE Vessel (middle of class)	Surface Decoration Due: 20-inch Coil Vessel with Surface Decoration Assign: Reliquary
THURSDAY WEEK 8	Work Day: Make Slabs for Reliquary Work Day: Throwing/Glazing Cups/Bowls	Assign Ceramic Artist
TUESDAY WEEK 9	Work Day: Reliquary	Due: Slabs at leather hard Assign: 30 Cups/Bowls
THURSDAY WEEK 9	Work Day: Reliquary	Work Day
TUESDAY WEEK 10	CRITIQUE Reliquary Work Day: Throwing/Glazing Cups/Bowls	Due: Reliquary built/not decorated
THURSDAY WEEK 10	Work Day: Throwing/Glazing Cups/Bowls	Due: Take Home Vocab Quiz
TUESDAY WEEK 11	Work Day: Throwing/Glazing Cups/Bowls	Work Day
THURSDAY WEEK 11	Work Day: Throwing/Glazing Cups/Bowls	Work Day
TUESDAY WEEK 12	Work Day: Throwing/Glazing Cups/Bowls	Due: First 10 cups/bowls in Bisque
THURSDAY WEEK 12	Work Day: Throwing/Glazing Cups/Bowls	WORK DAY
TUESDAY WEEK 13	Work Day: Throwing/Glazing Cups/Bowls	Due: 5 Glazed pieces with notes Due: Second 10 cups/bowls in Bisque
THURSDAY WEEK 13	Work Day: Throwing/Glazing Cups/Bowls	Last Day for Handbuilt Wet Clay
TUESDAY WEEK 14	Work Day: Glazing Load all work in Bisque Kiln LAST DAY FOR WET CLAY: April 27	Due: Total of 30 cups/bowls LAST DAY FOR WET CLAY: April 27
THURSDAY WEEK 14	Finishing Work	LAST BISQUE KILN: May 7
TUESDAY WEEK 15	Finishing Work	LAST GLAZE KILN: May 9

Week or Module	Activities/Assignments/Exams	Due Date
THURSDAY WEEK 15	Last day of class: May 9 Finish Glazing and start cleaning	LAST GLAZE KILN: May 9
FINALS WEEK	Final Critique/Cleanup Day: Tuesday, May 12 Work Day: FINAL CLEAN UP	