

Midwestern State University
ART 4603 – CERAMICS IV
(Fall 2025)

Steve Hilton
9:30 – 12:20 Thursday
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(940) 397-4270 office
Ceramics Studio/C119

Office Hours - C119 or by Appointment:
M/W 1:00 PM to 3:30 PM

Campus police: (940) 397-4239

9-911 (any emergency)

Course Description:

Self-assigned investigation to ceramic materials and techniques of throwing on the potter's wheel, hand building, decorating, glazing, loading and firing of kilns. Developing plans for senior capstone exhibition.

Course Objectives

1. Demonstrate an understanding of equipment safety and possible health hazards associated with ceramics
2. Maintain a clean working environment
3. Utilize ceramic tools proficiently
4. Use intermediate level skill in surface treatment and decoration on ceramic surfaces
5. Demonstrate knowledge of kiln firings to include oxidation and reduction (atmospheric) methods
6. Demonstrate advanced skill on working select hand building or wheel throwing techniques
7. Demonstrate the procedure for loading and firing kilns: glaze and bisque
8. Demonstrate advanced hand-building or wheel throwing skills
9. Demonstrate advanced glazing and surface decorating methods
10. Demonstrate your understanding of glaze mixing by mixing one class glaze
11. Demonstrate the ability to fire own work

Textbook: *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. However, the quiz material is all available in this book. You may use a book in the reference section of the library.

Other Expenses:

1. 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!!**
2. Assorted ceramic tools: Approximately \$75 (See below). There is no charge for clay or glaze!!

Building Use Hours:

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

Locker:

Choose a locker that has nothing in it and put your lock on it. Put your name on the locker sign-up list

Attendance Policy:

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.**

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.

Clay and Glaze Making Fridays

This is a class where we have to work together. Students will be expected to sign up and attend two to three 3-hour clay making sessions with myself, our resident, or a Studio Assistant. Making glaze is a possibility.

Grading Policy:

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?

Your **final grade** will be determined by a formula similar to the one below:

Points earned divided by points possible (approximately 750 pts)

Assignments	500 points
Critique (4 critiques minimum)	100 points
Sketchbooks	100 points
Participation (clean-up, helping out, tools)	25 points
Wood Fire Participation	25 points (if we have a wood firing)

Journal/Sketchbook:

You will be required to keep a journal/sketchbook/notebook for this class. It should just contain your ceramics notes, sketches, reference images, glaze references, hours worked, and **journal entries**. You will be asked to make preliminary sketches for all assignments (except your cylinders!). You will be asked to provide reference imagery for all assignments (except your cylinders!). You will be asked to write down how you glaze every piece made this semester (including your cylinders!). In addition, you will be responsible for a minimum of 30 journal entries which will include:

- written critiques
- notes from lectures
- ideas for projects
- ceramic artists referenced in class
- Empty Bowl entries and reflections

Communication:

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.

Accommodation:

Any student who feels she/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact Disability Support Services at 940.397.4140 in room 168 of the Clark Student Center to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

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 ceramics 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.

Decorum and Academic Dishonesty:

Students will abide by all MSU rules, regulations including the *Student Honor Creed*, and will thereby earn all the student's rights as noted in the MSU Student Handbook. 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) is academic dishonesty.

- *Student Honor Creed*: "As an MSU student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, steal, or help anyone else to do so."
- I reserve the right to drop any student with an F grade, or recommend other sanctions, if a student engages in any form of academic dishonesty.
- Smoking and other uses of tobacco products will not be allowed in accordance with the Student Handbook

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.

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.

Materials/Tools

Numbers 1 through 4 below can be found (with a considerable 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 stevehilton as the discount code.**
- All of the letters/numbers below are from Brackers
- 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 **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

Important Dates:

Final Clean Up – **Tuesday December 9**

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 2000 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.
- At every gallery opening, the student will receive a comment sheet.
- During each opening, the student must fill out and submit the comment sheet.
- 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%.

ASSIGNMENTS Timeline

All deadlines are at 9:30 AM on due date.

TENTATIVE CALENDAR:

DATE	Activity	Demo/ Due
TUESDAY WEEK 1	Syllabus/ Introduction Safety Tour/Safety Tour/Quiz	Self-Assign First Project Bring Proposal to class
THURSDAY WEEK 1	Work Day	
TUESDAY WEEK 2	Work Day	
THURSDAY WEEK 2	Work Day	Due: In Progress Critique
TUESDAY WEEK 3	Work Day	
THURSDAY WEEK 3	Work Day Sketches Due: 2nd assignment	Due: Critique First Project Due: Assign 2nd Assignment Sketches and Proposal
TUESDAY WEEK 4	Work Day	
THURSDAY WEEK4	Work Day	
TUESDAY WEEK 5	Work Day	
THURSDAY WEEK 5	Work Day	Due: In Progress Critique
TUESDAY WEEK 6	Work Day	
THURSDAY WEEK 6	Workday	Due: Critique 2nd Project Due: Sketches 3rd Assignment
TUESDAY WEEK7	Work Day	
THURSDAY WEEK7	Workday	
TUESDAY WEEK 8	Work Day	
THURSDAY WEEK 8	Workday	Due: In Progress Critique
TUESDAY WEEK 9	Work Day	

THURSDAY WEEK 9	Workday	Due: Critique 3rd Assignment Due: Sketches for 4th Assignment
TUESDAY WEEK 10	Work Day	
THURSDAY WEEK 10	Work Day	
TUESDAY WEEK 11	Work Day	
THURSDAY WEEK 11	Work Day	Due: In Progress Critique
TUESDAY WEEK 12	Work Day	
THURSDAY WEEK 12	Work Day Due: Proposal for 5th Assignment	WOOD FIRE WEEKEND (BE AVAILABLE)
TUESDAY WEEK 13	Work Day	Due: Critique 4th Project
THURSDAY WEEK 13	Work Day	
TUESDAY WEEK 14	Work Day LAST BISQUE KILN: NOVEMBER 30 LAST DAY FOR WET CLAY: NOVEMBER 25	Due: Total of 30 cups/bowls LAST DAY FOR WET CLAY: NOVEMBER 25
THURSDAY WEEK 14	THANKSGIVING BREAK	LAST BISQUE KILN: NOVEMBER 30
TUESDAY WEEK 15		LAST GLAZE KILN DECEMBER 4 Due: Critique 5th Project
THURSDAY WEEK 15	Last Glaze Kiln: DECEMBER 4 Last day of class: DECEMBER 4 Finish Glazing and start cleaning	
FINALS WEEK	Final Critique/Cleanup Day: December 9 Work Day: FINAL CLEAN UP	