California State University, Sacramento
Department of Art
Art 50 Beginning Ceramics, Spring 2010

Instructor: Tom Decker
Class hours and classroom: MW 12:00-2:50 pm, Kadema 131
Office hours & email: MW 11:30 am-12:00 pm or by arrangement, to be conducted in Kadema 131, decker@saclink.csus.edu

Course Syllabus

**Lab fee required:** $13.00. If the student drops the class by Census Day, (September 27), the fee will be reversed. Lab fees can be paid online, in person or by mail. A student will not be dropped from a class due to non-payment of course fees; however, Financial Services will put holds on records after Census Day for any unpaid course fees. The hold will prevent the student from registering for future semesters and getting transcripts and diplomas. When an overdue lab fee is paid, the hold will automatically be removed from the student’s record.

**General description:** This art course will expose you to a unique contact with a material in motion to encourage an exploration of form in space. You will focus your exploration towards creative activity in the production of ceramic objects. You will reflect upon these objects as a result of your activity. This reflection will lead to development of skill for the sake of learning to express yourself through the medium. To get the most out of this course, interpret the subject as a motivation for personal expression in visual art. Conduct historical research, draw upon many sources of inspiration, explore all creative possibilities, and express yourself to the fullest extent.

**Participation:** You must participate in this courses by coming into the studio every class meeting, working during the entire length of the class session, paying attention to lectures, observing demonstrations, and practicing techniques by making objects in order to at least fulfill the technical requirements of the project assignments. Presentation of your artwork to the class during regularly scheduled critiques is mandatory. Usage of cellular telecommunication devices is not allowed in the studio classrooms during class meetings.

**Project Assignments:** You will be assigned three projects and a schedule to follow towards their completion. You are required to work in series, making multiple objects related to the resolution of the formal problems and conceptual issues of each assignment. Through exploration in the medium your technical skill should increase and so too your ability to critically analyze your work in the context of personal and cultural significance.
**Grading:** Grades in these classes will be assigned according to your demonstrated ability to integrate the subject matter in an expressive manner. Expressive development is the objective. In order to earn a grade of “B” in the course, you must fulfill at least the technical requirements of all project assignments and present your work for critique on the scheduled dates for each phase of the projects. To earn a higher grade you must not only achieve the technical standard of each assignment but also exceed the minimum requirements of the assignments through creative attempts at expression. If you miss a critique you should continue to work on the project and submit the objects you’ve made for partial credit. Work submitted for evaluation after the scheduled critique date will be graded one letter grade lower than work submitted on time. But, if you are not satisfied with your results on any one project you may find it is worth your while to make more objects and submit them to demonstrate your development. The work that you undertake to further develop technical skill and expressive content will be evaluated and credited towards the improvement of your grade in the course. If you are absent four consecutive class meetings or have a total of six absences in the semester, you will be withdrawn from the course and assigned a final grade “W”.

**Materials and equipment:** Tools you’ll need include a basic pottery tool kit, a gallon bucket, a towel, and several paintbrushes. You must use only clay that is rated for firing and glazing at Cone 10. The average amount you’ll use is about 150 pounds. You may purchase clay at the student bookstore or in the ceramics studio. To ensure safety, use consideration and respect for other students and their work. Every student is required to participate in the daily cleaning of the studio facility including equipment, floors, counters and tabletops. There is equipment in the studio that requires training to use safely and efficiently; ask for instruction before using any unfamiliar equipment. If you have a disability and require academic accommodation, please provide written verification from SSWD, Lassen 1008, (916)278-6995. Also, please discuss your accommodation needs with the instructor in the first two weeks of class.

**Locker policy:** Lockers are available in the ground-floor breezeways. Priority is given to ceramics students for the first two weeks. Lockers must be signed out through the Art Department (Kadema 185). To sign out a locker, a student must bring a printout of their My Sac State account showing there are no outstanding charges for lab fees. Lockers must be emptied no later than the end of the last week of the semester. Any materials found in lockers after that date will be removed and discarded. Any student unable to empty their locker by the deadline must contact both the instructor and the Art Department office staff in writing prior to the last day of finals week.
Project Assignment Schedule

Assignment One
Formal Problem/Conceptual Object: Sphere/Bowl
Introduction: Monday, August 30
First Greenware Critique: Wednesday, September 15
Second Greenware Critique: Wednesday, September 22
Bisqueware Critique: Wednesday, October 6
Glazeware Critique: Wednesday, October 20

Assignment Two
Formal Problem/Conceptual Object: Cylinder/Cup
Introduction: Monday, September 27
First Greenware Critique: Monday, October 11
Second Greenware Critique: Monday, October 25
Bisqueware Critique: Monday, November 8
Glazeware Critique: Wednesday, November 24

Assignment Three
Formal Problem/Conceptual Object: Spatial Composition/Vessel
Introduction: Wednesday, October 27
First Greenware Critique: Wednesday, November 10
Second Greenware Critique: Wednesday, November 17
Final Glazeware Critique: Wednesday, December 8

Important Dates to Note:
Last day to begin working on pieces in wet clay: Monday, November 22
Last day to work on greenware (All greenware must be taken out of damproom): Wednesday, November 24

Thanksgiving vacation, campus closed: Thursday, Nov. 25 – Sunday, Nov. 28

Last day to glaze bisqueware: Wednesday, December 1
Final glazeware critique: Wednesday, December 8