Art 223: Utilitarian Ceramics

# Block 4, Fall 2021

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

We generally meet M-F 9:30-11am & 1-3pm (Please see the course calendar for specifics.)

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 (tentative). 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)*
* Explore and thoughtfully apply a variety of ceramic surface treatments including glaze, underglaze, and oxides. (*Knowledge)*
* Investigate the “language of pottery” and apply this information 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)(tentative)*
* Discuss, critique, and evaluate their ceramic work as well as their peers’ work. *(Communication)*
* 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 emphasis on knowledge, inquiry, communication, 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. Students will need to multi-task as they develop pottery forms using various methods throughout the block. Instruction will include hands-on demonstrations, lectures/presentations including pertinent historical and contemporary images, and planned critiques and in-progress discussions of student work. Students will be actively involved with each stage of the ceramic process, including mixing clay and glazes, 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 professor 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.(tentative)

# Method of Evaluation:

Each student will be evaluated on pottery forms (see list of minimum required forms), an individual sketchbook (including some assigned entries), one class presentation of an artist chosen from a provided list, an exhibition response (tentative), 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 your 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) 65%

Ceramic Artist Presentation 10%

Exhibition Response/Museum Visit (Tentative) 5%

Sketchbook (Including assigned entries) 10%

Class Participation 10%

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

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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.**

# 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 professor’s choice with a response to this show (tentative).

**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 will be assigned in conjunction with a certain assignment. **Each entry should be about 1 full 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 (this fee will be billed to your student account and you can pay on self-service)

Student: Materials, varied

# Attendance and Participation:

This is an unprecedented time. You need to balance excellent attendance with staying healthy. Sleep is very important to stay healthy. **You are required to attend class sessions in person as they are assigned unless you are symptomatic or sick.**

**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 professor, you will be counted tardy. **After one absence, your grade will drop a letter grade from the earned grade (B+ to B) for each additional absence. Two tardies equal an absence.**  If you need to leave class early—you should discuss this with the professor 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 professor and disruptive for other students. Always speak with the professor if you foresee an excused absence, but do not assume it will be excused**. 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.**

Active participation is vital for the success of this course. I have implemented several strategies to encourage active participation. In the end, it will be up to the students to participate. We want to hear different perspectives on the artwork and have a balanced discussion. We are here to help one another become the best creators and artists we can. We need to give each other feedback! We are here to dig deep into the class content. Therefore, a substantial percentage of your grade is based on participation (see grade breakdown).  **I will be tallying participation comments during each presentation day and in-progress discussion/critique session. You should aim for at least 2-3 MEANINGFUL comments per student per discussion**. Most of you will have more than this minimum amount. **Please gauge your own participation and find a balance of being engaged, while not hijacking the conversation.** There are many ways to comment…ask questions, give feedback, refer to other artworks, etc. Please contribute not only for your own grade, but for the greater good!

**Covid Policies:**

*Current Covid Conditions*

The Delta variant of COVID-19, coupled with vaccination rates too low to achieve herd immunity, have resulted in an increase in COVID-19 cases in our area. The following course policies are a response to this fluid, evolving situation, and may be adjusted as needed during the block.

**Masking Requirement (MASKS ARE REQUIRED AT ALL TIMES WHEN IN STUDIO/CLASSROOM):**

Not all members of our community are able to be vaccinated. Masking is an effective way to protect these individuals. In response to CDC and Linn County guidance regarding current regional and local levels of COVID-19 transmission, **masks are required during all in-person instructional time in this class and during any studio time in McWethy for the duration of this course,** regardless of the individual immunity status of members of the class. Appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities will be incorporated into our mask policy and may include the use of microphones or clear face coverings. If you have a health condition that prevents you from wearing a mask, you may wear a face shield if you have documentation from your medical provider on file; you can also make an appointment at the student health center to be approved for a face shield. Non-compliance will result in a conduct report to the Dean of Students, which can result in removal from the course.

*Use of the Common Studios and Studio Spaces:*

Our class immunity rate (vaccination and natural) is not 100%. Because of the nature of the course and our need to use specific equipment/ facilities, we will be working in close quarters. I have done some mitigation by moving furniture in the classroom. But, each person needs to do their best to keep a distance when possible.

Each of you will be assigned a studio space/room in McWethy with assigned groups. You need to abide by these assignments. **NOBODY OTHER THAN THOSE STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THIS COURSE SHOULD BE IN THE STUDIO SPACES OR IN THE BUILDING.** Sorry, no friends for now. I encourage you to wash and sanitize your hands often.

My student workers will be assisting with material preparation. **Please let me know if we are getting low on materials such as clay.**

*Positive Covid Test Policy:*

If you test positive for Covid during the block, you need to inform me directly; the Health Center cannot inform me on your behalf. If someone in the class tests positive, all close contacts in the classroom will be required to take a COVID-19 test at the Health Center. To prepare for this possibility, we will adhere to assigned seating as much as possible. Non-immune close contacts (individuals who are neither vaccinated nor have a documented case of COVID-19 in the immediately preceding 10 months) will need to quarantine. Immune contacts will be exempt from quarantine unless they become symptomatic. If there is a positive COVID-19 case in the class, everyone in the class may take a COVID-19 test at the Health Center if they wish.

*Illness Policy:*

If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, do not attend class. Notify me and contact Director of Student Health Services Lynn O’Brien at [lobrien@cornellcollege.edu](mailto:lobrien@cornellcollege.edu) to arrange a COVID-19 test at the Health Center.

If you need to isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19, or if you become unable to attend class for any other health reason, you will need to meet with me (virtually) as soon as possible to determine if you are able to continue in the class. A Withdrawal for Health Reasons may be required.

*Caregiver Statement:*

I am a caregiver for unvaccinated children. If they must quarantine or isolate during the block, I may need to shift portions of the course online. If this happens, I will communicate with you as soon as possible via email and provide a Zoom link to our next class meeting. We will do our best to make it work.

This course is offered in-person. Because of the nature of the course, it would be incredibly challenging (if not impossible) to complete in quarantine. It will be up to the professor to determine if a quarantining or isolating student can finish this course.

**Disabilities and Accommodations:**

Cornell College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Students should notify the Office 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>.

**Academic Honesty:**

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 acknowledgment 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 Catalogue, under the heading “Academic Honesty."

Though the idea of “cheating” may seem unlikely in a studio art class, I expect that you are making your own work, writing your own journal entries, honestly documenting your contribution to collaborative work, etc.

**Mental Health:**

As a college student, you may sometimes experience stress, anxiety, or other mental health challenges that affect your mood, energy level, concentration, and mental ability.  Cornell recognizes that you may experience these challenges and provides resources to help you take charge of your mental health and overall well-being.  If you, a classmate, or a friend experience mental health challenges at Cornell, please check out the Counseling Center’s website ([www.cornellcollege.edu/counseling](http://www.cornellcollege.edu/counseling)) for many resources on and off campus, and you can call the Counseling Center at 319-895-4292 for more information or to make an appointment.  Visit the Student Gateway (<https://www.cornellcollege.edu/students/index.shtml>) and the Cornell Well-being Network (<https://www.cornellcollege.edu/well-being-network/>) websites for

additional student resources.

# 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.**