

## Ceramics Course Overview, and Syllabus

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This document consists of 2 parts: Course Descriptions & Course Syllabus. We will establish a set of Class Norms together and I will combine those with my own behavioral expectations, and those will be passed out tomorrow, after we've agreed to them as a group. These 3 documents together constitute the course contract.

### Course Descriptions:

This class focuses on teaching art skills, practices, vocabulary, and concepts primarily through the production of functional and sculptural ceramic art. Each class is a stacked level class, meaning that each class will contain students in all levels, beginning, intermediate, and AP, mixed together, which helps to foster collaborative learning and creativity between students. Grading is non-competitive, and each student is graded solely on their fulfillment of project requirements, participation, and improvement from project to project. While we will primarily focus on clay, there will be other art forms that we may tackle from time to time, some of which may be two-dimensional. Additionally, students will be expected to sketch before most projects (a few projects may not require preliminary planning and these will be excluded from the sketch expectation) and should save these sketches as evidence of their individual process.

Each clay method is a unique process that can be brought to an incredibly high level of expertise. Professional artists have developed amazing techniques and written about their accomplishments in all construction and decorating techniques. Innovations continue as each artist learns from the past and desires to impact the present in a unique way. As ceramic students, you will become more innovative and creative with each object you produce, building upon techniques and processes as you create.

Never consider one clay process to be inferior to another. Remember that each process can be **refined**, extended and elaborated on. The possibilities and combinations are only limited to your imagination and perseverance.

**Craftsmanship** and **refinement** will be critical, and in fact will make up a major grade for each project.

All classes will also be learning how to collaborate between artists to create larger, more complex artworks. We will also be focusing on opportunities to practice responsible decision making, in regards to using self-awareness, self-management, and social awareness to help guide mindfulness in choice making and problem solving. And lastly, all students in all levels are expected to consider themselves part of our clay community who shares responsibility for the ceramic studio. We will all do our part cleaning the space, supplies, tools, and doing whatever other tasks are needed to keep the clay studio operating at optimal levels of safety and efficiency. Student safety is of the utmost importance; keeping the studio clean keeps us safe and healthy.

**Class Fee:** Each student will be required to pay a supply supplement of \$70.00, payable online through Skyward. (Please talk to Mrs. Thomas if this payment causes financial difficulty; accommodations can be made.) This fee will cover all **required materials**, as they will be provided in class.

### Art II: Ceramics 1 – Beginning Level

This course is a level 2 art course, even though you are considered a beginner at ceramics. Everyone is expected to have retained lessons from Art I, such as a working knowledge of the basic art elements and principles, color theory, and the basic rules of composition; all of these can aid in your approach to three-dimensional art.

Students will learn about the creative process through the production of functional and sculptural ceramic works as well as through the occasional creation of other forms of art. All the basic construction processes for working in clay will be introduced. Students will be given demonstrations in specific methods and will follow the instructor adding their own elaborative ideas and details. Students will be expected to put a great deal of originality and creativity into their work; each project will have a combination of a technical method as well as a fairly broad conceptual approach but, while there will be enumerated requirements, many specifics will be up to

the students themselves. Almost all projects will require the students to sketch and conceptualize each project prior to production, as they will be expected to add their own originality and creativity to each piece. Students will begin to work more independently than they may have in Art I.

Towards the end of the year, all Art 2 students will be encouraged to begin thinking about one central idea around which they could build a body of 12 art works, in order to prepare them for level 3 and 4 or AP ceramics classes. Additionally, throughout the year students will be expected to actively participate in large group peer critiques, wherein they will be required to speak about their own work as well as contribute meaningful feedback about their classmates' work. And lastly, students are also strongly encouraged to develop works for exhibition and competition on regional, state and national levels.

### **Art III: Ceramics 2 – Advanced (we refer this simply as level 3)**

This course is similar to Ceramics 2 in every way, but with greater expectations. Also, students will be far more independent, expected to conceive of many more ideas on their own and complete them with a greater level of originality, depth of thought, and creativity. The students will be required to work with little supervision during production and are expected to maintain a very high degree of work ethic; failure to do so will affect your grade. During the fall semester, students are expected to be actively investigating topics to pursue in their Concentration, wherein they are creating a body of work that represents a sustained and in-depth investigation into one central concept; a concept for their Concentration should be decided upon by the end of the first semester. Projects are only loosely conceptually defined so that students can be investigating their own topics. The second semester should see students being largely self-directed as they work on creating pieces for their Concentration. Almost all projects will require the students to sketch and conceptualize each project prior to production, as they will be expected to be able to represent their concept visually and have a visual plan that to which they can adhere. Additionally, students will be expected to actively participate in large group peer critiques, wherein they will be required to speak about their own work as well as contribute meaningful feedback about their classmates' work. Students at this level are also strongly encouraged to develop works for exhibition and competition on regional, state and national levels.

### **Art IV: Ceramics 3 – Advanced (level 4)**

**This course is for that student who has moved through all the other levels and doesn't want to pursue the rigor of AP ceramics, yet wants to continue their exploration of ceramic art.**

While students at this level won't be submitting their body of work to the College Board for AP credit, they will still spend their year creating a body of work that constitutes an in-depth investigation of one central concept, topic, theme, or idea. Student work can deviate from this upon occasion so as not to get stuck in a creative rut, but only on occasion. Students are expected to be independent workers who conceive of their projects on their own and complete them with a greater level of originality, depth of thought, and creativity. The students will be required to work with little supervision during production and are expected to maintain a very high degree of work ethic; failure to do so will affect your grade. Almost all projects will require the students to sketch and conceptualize each project prior to production, as they will be expected to be able to represent their concept visually and have a visual plan that to which they can adhere. Additionally, students will be expected to actively participate in large group peer critiques, wherein they will be required to speak about their own work as well as contribute meaningful feedback about their classmates' work. Students at this level are also strongly encouraged to develop works for exhibition and competition on regional, state and national levels.

### **Art Level IV AP: 3-D Design in Ceramics (AP)**

**Teacher Approval is required for admittance to this level.** This class is designed for the student who is seriously interested in the practical experience of art. Students are expected to be independent workers who conceive of their projects independently. Advanced Placement 3D Design requires a student portfolio be submitted at the end of the year for a significant final grade. The 3D Portfolio is inclusive of works in a wide and diversified range of techniques used in ceramics and sculpture. The AP Studio Art Portfolios, whether 3D, 2D or Drawing, all share a basic structure, which ask the student to demonstrate a sustained and in-depth investigation and process of discovery through the Concentration section while the Breadth section will show the student's understanding of basic art elements and principles through exemplary usage in their pieces. The Concentration and Breadth section of the portfolio are independent of each other, meaning that an artwork that appears in the

Concentration section cannot also appear in the Breadth section. The final section, the Quality Section, permits the student to select works that best exhibit a synthesis of form, technique, and content; works in this section can come from either the Concentration or the Breadth section. Students will be required to put additional time into projects outside of the classroom. In conjunction with the portfolio work, students will develop works for exhibition and competition at regional, state and national levels. Additionally, students will be expected to actively participate in large group peer critiques, wherein they will be required to speak about their own work as well as contribute meaningful feedback about their classmates' work.

**I have read and understand the expectations of this course.**

**Student Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

## Art - Ceramics

### Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced and Advanced Placement Course Syllabus

*Students will work on the development of conceptualization skills, developing a better understanding of the creative process, and problem solving throughout the process of creating art. Students will also develop and strengthen collaborative skills, both in the learning process of techniques as well as in the production of some projects. Since this course is both a ceramics specific class as well as a studio art class, there will occasionally be other forms of art that will be made in class, such as drawing and painting, other forms of sculpture, and mixed media, skills that will be covered and worked on throughout this course. Students are responsible for their participation in all projects, regardless of media. Responsibilities for the production of glazes, and other preparations of decorative materials, will increase with each level. This course is a non-required elective and should not be considered a study hall or a blow-off class. Other schoolwork will not be permitted at any time because of the high demand for maintenance of this lab.*

#### **Course Description**

The objective of the ceramics courses is to develop in each student an appreciation for and competency in the creative process. Ceramics has a lengthy history, dating back to prehistory; this history is introduced with projects as it fits into our year. Students are responsible for the art historical data presented as well as the production methods and techniques. Students create clay sculptures and pottery from a mid-fire porcelain clay body and use a variety of decorative techniques. As well, they examine and identify how various ceramic objects are created. In addition, historical and contemporary ceramicist's attitudes and cultures are studied.

**Modeling techniques** include: pinch, coil, slab, drape mold, pressed mold, extruded forms, hollowing out, wheel thrown, and other sculptural techniques.

**Decorative techniques** include: mid-fire firing techniques, decorative and actual texturing, glass entrapment, and historical methods such as slip trailing, mishima, sgraffito, burnishing, etc.

**Firing techniques** include: work in and study of oxidation, reduction, kiln types, etc.

**Career ramifications** include: marketing, juried shows, gallery work, motivations (monetary and aesthetic).

**Culture and history** include: history of pottery and clay sculpture, cultural influences and contemporary potters and methods.

**Tools** include: historical, contemporary, decorative and modeling.

While we will primarily focus on clay, students will be expected to develop their drawing abilities through a required preliminary sketch at the outset of each project. These sketches should be retained in a sketchbook that will be provided to each student; the purpose of saving their sketches is to track progress as well as document their process from conception to completion.

## Course Objectives

- Students will create functional and nonfunctional art objects.
- Students will be asked to work abstractly, conceptually, and representationally.
- Students will be expected to learn, retain, and use a wide variety of art and ceramics specific vocabulary.
- Students will create a sketch of their idea before each project and save these sketches, both to track their progress through the year and to document their individual process from conception to completion.
- Students will trace the history of ceramic techniques, motifs and cultures.
- Students will develop an aesthetic awareness through visual discrimination and judgment by creating and evaluating a variety of work.
- Students will participate in self critiques, as well as individual and group conversation-style critiques.
- Students will study the history and function of clay tools and create modeling and decorative tools.
- Students will set up and display work within the community environments.

## Studio Curriculum

This is a Studio curriculum course. Students must understand that one artistic medium doesn't exist in a vacuum; practicing and strengthening skills in their sketching ability only serve to make their 3D work stronger as well. Students will be expected to put time and effort into their preliminary sketches. Students may also be assigned other projects in other media outside of clay as time permits/dictates. Students will not complain or disregard this, claiming it is supposed to be a ceramics only course.

## Grading Policy

**The total 9-week-grade is based on assignments (50%), tests/written reflections/sketches/critique participation (30%) and weekly creative process and production (20%).** Each completed assignment will be given three separate grades (conceptualization, production, and refinement) ranging from 0 to 100. The criteria for each project will be announced before and after the demonstration for each assignment. Students will be given/shown a rubric against which to check themselves. Only projects identified by the students name during construction will be considered theirs. Students may not claim unmarked work. Pieces broken because of mishandling, or missing required elements, will receive a deduction of a minimum of 20 points, from the construction portion of the grade.

## Weekly Creative Process and Production Grade

A student's weekly creative process and production grade is based on the daily work habits of each student. In addition to work habits, the process and production grade also takes into account the fact that students are required to participate daily in the proper set up, procedure, and clean up of each assignment; this is important as these practices allow the student to have necessary tools, a clean work space, and the right environment to enable their own and others' productivity. Students' **respect and involvement** during discussions and demonstrations is also taken into account as part of this grade.

All students will start out with 100% for their weekly class production grade. You are also expected to practice responsible decision-making and self-awareness in the art room. Off task activities and irresponsible choices may affect your daily production, the quality of your artwork, and your ability to meet deadlines. The grade is calculated thusly: students are allotted 20 points per day and lose points in 5-point increments. Each instance of non-production can result in a 5-point deduction.

## Homework/Working in the Studio Outside of Class

Students may need to work on their clay projects outside of class, especially if they run into construction issues or are slow to get started at the outset of the project. I will be open for studio hours during both 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> periods daily (unless I have a meeting), and will host studio hours after school 2-3 days a week; I will announce days in advance that I won't be staying after school for studio hours. If you come in to work outside of class and bring a friend with you, their behavior needs to conform to the same expectations I have for all ceramics students. If they misbehave, I will give their consequence to you. Also, you should not give clay to your friends nor let them use classroom equipment/tools without my express permission.

Due to the messy nature of clay, I am loath to send it home for true homework. However, students may need to do preliminary sketches, or redesign sketches, as well as the occasional written reflection for homework.

### Always on Task

If a student completes a project ahead of schedule, students may choose one of the following tasks to work on. Students may not ask to go to the library, to do homework, or to work on anything other than their ceramic or drawing skills or assist the clay lab.

1. You may do the same project again.
2. You may do a previous project.
3. You may combine any projects already taught.
4. You may design your own project considering good construction parameters.
5. You may create drawings in your sketchbook or on nicer/larger paper that can be provided; these can be completed in any single medium or combination of media, a variety of which I keep stocked in the ceramics room (Prismacolors, acrylic paint, watercolor, etc).
6. You may throw on the wheel, if you have been trained.
7. If time does not allow for any of the previous choices, come up to the teacher and ask, “What can I do to help the studio” – there is always *something* that needs to be done and your help is expected and appreciated since you are a member of our clay community.

### Absences & Late Work & Make-Up Work

If you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out, from your teacher (don't just ask a friend, they could be wrong), what you have missed and how you will address making up the work in a timely manner. **Many major projects are long-term (2 - 4 weeks in length)**. For example, if a student misses 2 or 3 days of a 3-week major project, it is expected that the work missed be addressed immediately after the absences occur by coming in to work during lunch or after school to catch up. Days and production time missed will not be tacked on at the end of the project.

The instructor will set deadlines for completed work. Late work will receive an “Incomplete” until the work is complete. If a project is not ready on the due date, a 50 will be entered for each of their 3 grades (concept, construction, refinement) for that project and it will be marked as missing and incomplete. This grade will serve as a placeholder until the student turns it in, provided that the student turns it in before the end of the 9 weeks. Once the student turns in their project, it will be graded normally for full (100%) credit. If the student doesn't get it finished before the end of the 9 weeks, they should still turn in for grading what they have because otherwise it may be entered as a 0. If nothing is turned in by the end of the 9 weeks, each placeholder grade of a 50 becomes a 0.

If a student receives a failing grade, they can make it up for full credit, provided that it is made up within the 9 weeks grading period. The only exception to this is the Weekly Creative Process & Production grade, which is dependent upon what the student accomplished within a given period of time. This grade cannot be made up.

### Assigned Seating

All students will sit in assigned seats based on their choice of seat on the first day of school. Large tables may have no more than 2 students; smaller tables are designed for a single student. These designations are non-negotiable so that each student has sufficient room to work well. The instructor may reconfigure the seating chart at her discretion, based on determined student needs. These decisions are made in order to create the most productive working environment for all students.

### Cell Phones

Cell phones, while a part of all of our lives, can be a major distraction. You may need to use them for image reference, or to listen to music during studio work days. However, you absolutely cannot use them when I am teaching or giving instructions, during technique demonstrations, during group critiques, when I'm giving announcements or taking care of class business, or during any other time that I'm talking. Using your phone at inappropriate times will result in 5 point deductions from your daily production grade **each time** I observe you

using your phone. I understand how important a text or other incoming communication can seem, but it can wait. Use this time as a short digital break that's good and healthy for each of us.

### **Tardy Policy**

Tardies will be recorded in accordance with the school tardy policy, which states that on the 4<sup>th</sup> tardy to a class, the teacher is to submit a discipline referral. For every subsequent tardy to a class, the teacher is to submit another discipline referral. If you come in after instruction begins and my back is to you, you must come to me and announce yourself politely, because attendance has already been taken. If you fail to do so, you might be counted absent.

### **Substitutes**

Due to the fact that I have a baby, and babies get sick often, there will be several opportunities for substitute teachers to cover classes. In all cases, please treat the substitute teacher with the utmost respect and remember that they have a very hard job, coming into an unknown environment without knowing the rules or the classroom environment or the basic daily procedures. Even if the guidelines they give you run contrary to what I do in class, please go along with it (unless it would cause damage to your project or equipment or the room). If you have a problem, please contact me via Remind or email and I can talk to the sub on your behalf, if the concerns are legitimate.

**All policies are put in place to ensure that each student has an adequate amount of space, the proper tools and an orderly environment to work in. If any student is hindering another student's progress by not following these rules they will be dealt with on an individual basis. While the environment of the ceramics studio is more relaxed in nature than other academic classes, it must be remembered that students must never consider this environment a social hour. Your purpose here is to learn a valuable skill and the instructor's purpose is to make sure the environment will allow that to take place. If your intentions are not to learn the skills that are taught through the curriculum mandated for this course by TEA and by the district, you should consider other options. This is an elective and you have the choice.**

### **Meetings/Parent Conferences**

I will be available for appointments, during conference period 4 or after school at 4:30 p.m.. Please don't hesitate to email or call if you have any concerns, questions, or just want to talk.

### **Social and Emotional and Academic Resources**

Should your student find themselves in need of extra support, there are a wealth of resources available to them. Of course, students and parents can feel free to reach out to me for help, whether it's talking about a problem, trying to come up with a plan to get caught up, or trying to figure out what resources to utilize. I am available every day outside of class, during 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> periods, or afterschool. There are also 2 social/emotional counselors available to support our students, Katie Bryant ([kbryant@eanesisd.net](mailto:kbryant@eanesisd.net)), and Kristi Waidhofer ([kwaidhofer@eanesisd.net](mailto:kwaidhofer@eanesisd.net)). More information about their services can be found on <http://healthychaps.weebly.com>. Students are also available to talk with their individual counselors, who are assigned based on the students' last names. A complete list of counselors with their alphabetical allotment and contact info can be found on <http://westlakecounseling.weebly.com>. All counselors' office hours are concurrent with the hours of the school day.

I have read and understand the expectations of this course.

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_