



Andrea della Robbia, *Putto*, 1425-35, glazed terracotta,
Private Collection
<http://www.alaintruong.com/archives/2017/02/07/34906444.html>

**STA 275T, Studies in Ceramics: Northern and Central Italy,
Studio Art, Spring 2019**

I. COURSE INFORMATION

Instructor: Clarice Zdanski

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091 985 2292 (studio)

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Fridays, 14:30-15:30; Wednesdays 12:00-13:00; by appointment

Class location: Art Studio

Class meeting times: Wednesdays 13:00-15:45

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This introductory ceramics course combines art history and studio work with an intensive travel period in northern and central Italy. Students will be given the

opportunity to understand the complete process of producing objects in clay and terracotta, from the first planning/designing phases, through the basic modeling techniques, to the more complicated processes of firing and glazing. Studio sessions both on and off campus will incorporate lectures on artists and art movements, as well as visits to local venues, major museums and other sites of importance with regard to the use of clay and terracotta in the fine arts. The on-campus lectures aim to provide students with an understanding of the importance of northern and central Italy for the history of ceramics from the age of the Etruscans to the present day. All students will have the opportunity to do in-depth, intensive work in clay modeling, hand-built ceramics and glazing techniques. The first part of the course will focus on the functional aspects of the terracotta object, while the second will introduce terracotta as sculpture.

III. RATIONALE

The course is a 3-credit travel course, and fulfills travel requirements as well as requirements for art-related majors and minors. It could also serve as an elective for other majors.

IV. COURSE GOALS

Upon successfully completing STA275T, students will have acquired knowledge of hand-built pottery techniques, basic glazing and firing techniques, non-fired coloring techniques, as well as the history of ceramics and the use of clay in art, architecture and design. The travel component of the course will introduce them to areas of Italy that are of fundamental importance to this art form, in particular Faenza, Deruta and Marsciano, among Italy's most important ceramics centers. Students will also have the opportunity to experiment with sculptural techniques, and to understand the dual nature of ceramics, both functional and artistic.

V. SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course students will:

1. be able to use and manipulate clay as an art medium through in-class activities and specific assigned studio projects;
2. be able to construct specific forms utilizing basic hand-building techniques: pinch, coil, and slab;
3. understand and be able to use the basic terminology of ceramics in various written assignments and projects;
4. have a general understanding of glazes and kiln firing by finishing specific assigned studio projects;
5. acquire detailed knowledge of the history of ceramics;
6. be able to exhibit, write about and deliver presentations on their art works.

VI. REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS

All required reading and reference material will be posted on the MOODLE site. THE MOODLE SITE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR THIS COURSE AND SHOULD BE CONSULTED FREQUENTLY.

A course fee for all materials and equipment to be used on campus will be billed to the student's account.

VII. ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

Students will be assessed in three areas: 1) Studio Assignments/Art Projects; 2) Art History/Art Terminology; 3) Participation. Assignments in each area will be graded on a 100 point scale. At mid-term and at the end of the semester, averages in each of these areas will be taken, and the three scores will assist in determining an overall grade.

With studio assignments and projects, students should be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of basic ceramics tools and techniques and their ability to use them independently. This knowledge can be assessed by observing working methods (including independent work in the studio outside scheduled class time), evaluating results and class critiques of finished projects. Understanding and use of basic studio language and art historical knowledge are also part of this assessment. **STUDENTS SHOULD BE PREPARED TO DO SEVERAL HOURS' WORK OUTSIDE SCHEDULED CLASS TIME EACH WEEK.**

Integrating acquired knowledge of basic tools, techniques and materials in projects involves scholarly research outside the studio, and this will be demonstrated during the semester in written assignments as well as a record of students' ideas for art works and their reflections upon the history of ceramics, for example a sketchbook or online shared folder. Projects involving written and oral skills and use of resources and terminology are evaluated according the following criteria: depth of content, organization, presentation style, verbal interaction and communication aids. Viewer responses and shorter writing assignments are evaluated as follows: structure, content, mechanics. Rubrics and guides are posted on the Moodle site.

Last but not least, class sessions are a continuous source of feedback between everyone participating in the course, both students and the instructor. Thus, participation is essential for determining the final grade, and will be assessed through attendance, working attitude (respect for work environment, tools, techniques, materials and fellow students), the ability to work with others, completion of assignments by designated dates, independent work in the studio outside class time, the quality of presentation of finished work, and participation in organized events. Please make a note of class sessions for which attendance is mandatory.

VIII. ASSESSMENT DETAILS

STUDIO ASSIGNMENTS/ART PROJECTS:

A. Assignments exploring specific size and function:

- pinch pots
- coils
- slab

B. Assignments exploring non-functional objects:

- pinch, coil and slab techniques
- assigned theme

- possible group project
- C. Assignments exploring surface texture and treatment (watercolor drills, glazing, patina, etc.)
- D. Assignments exploring some or all of the following surface decoration techniques
 - burnishing
 - slip glazes
 - raku
 - luster glazes
 - traditional majolica designs
 - non-fired coloring techniques
- E. Majolica workshop
- F. Theme project (travel)
- G. Final project

RESOURCES/ART HISTORY/ART TERMINOLOGY:

- A. Sketchbook or online folder containing ideas for art works and reflections upon the history of ceramics and clay modeling, and the places visited during travel
- B. Online written assignments
- C. Final presentation of individual work, possibly in class
- D. Oral or written tests and exams on art history and art terms at instructor's discretion
- E. Book produced from travel experience (usually an exhibition of students' works)

PARTICIPATION:

- A. Attendance, working attitude (respect for work environment, tools and techniques)
- B. Following instructions
- C. Completion of assignments by designated dates
- D. Participation in studio work and organized events
- E. Motivation
- F. Doing projects and assignments with the care and attention they deserve
- G. Independent work in the studio outside class time
- H. Respect for course protocol (*coming to class on time, staying until the end of the class, cleaning up after class is over, no use of mobile phones during class time, no meals during class time, etc.*)
- I. Contributions to class critiques and evaluation sessions
- J. Contributing to a positive, well-organized working environment

IX. GRADING POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Students will be evaluated according to the criteria described in the **Assessment Overview** as they pertain to the task areas described in **Assessment Details**. The resulting numerical average will assist in the formulation of the final grade.

Studio work involves learning by doing as well as by assimilating an abstract body of concepts through reading and research. Following instructions, paying attention during demonstrations and proceeding with care in the studio at all

times are important at every stage of the creative process. *Acquiring manual dexterity, familiarity with processes and mastering techniques are processes that require time, diligence and repeated effort – they cannot be put off until just before mid-term or the end of the semester. Moreover, DURING PRE-TRAVEL CLASSES PIECES TO BE USED DURING TRAVEL WILL BE CREATED, SO DO NOT MISS CLASS OR YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO GO.*

Keep in mind that artistic work is holistic, and demands a great deal of individual motivation, concentrated effort, care and attention at all times. The course does not aim for complete mastery of artistic processes and techniques, but will provide students with insights and tools to pursue art media and studio techniques independently well after they have completed their university studies.

Please take note of class sessions designated as **ATTENDANCE MANDATORY**, because an unexcused absence will result in a grade of 0 in the Participation area for that assignment. IF ABSENT, STUDENTS ARE EXPECTED TO CONSULT THE MOODLE SITE TO STAY INFORMED OF CLASS ASSIGNMENTS.

Rubrics for written assignments and for self-evaluation of studio projects are posted on the Moodle site.

X. COURSE POLICIES and REQUIREMENTS)

Given the special nature of artistic work, class attendance is fundamental. ***One unexcused absence will be tolerated, but absence from two (2) class periods – excused or unexcused – will result in the reduction of the final grade by at least one (1) letter at the end of the semester . If three absences are reached, the student will be reported to the dean.*** You must attend class in order to acquire the necessary skills and information to understand and complete all assignments. In order for an absence to be excused, it must be accompanied by appropriate documentation. *Students who have been absent are expected consult the Moodle site and do homework assignments so as to keep up with the rest of the class.*

In any event, **make-up work will only be considered in the case of serious health or family issues** that demand prolonged periods of absence from the class. Should an emergency situation occur, please make sure you get in touch with the registrar and the dean so that all of your professors are notified. It is the responsibility of the student to make definite arrangements with the instructor in such cases. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have problems. There is **no extra credit** – if you fall behind in the work you are supposed to do, it is almost impossible to find the physical time to get your art work done, let alone try to do more.

Assignments are due on the established dates announced in class and posted on the Moodle site. Only in extenuating circumstances might extensions be considered, and in any event, on a case-by-case basis. *Turning work in late without an approved extension **will** result in a **lower grade**.*

For student conduct guidelines during the travel component of the class, please see section 4 of the FUS Student Life Handbook, pages 68-83:

<https://www.fus.edu/files/FUS-student-handbook-2018-2019.pdf>

XI. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: STATEMENT ON CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM

Cheating is a dishonest action out of sympathy with the ideals, objectives and spirit of the University. Furthermore, cheating reflects negatively on one's personal integrity and is unjust to those students who have studied. A student whose actions are deemed by the University to be out of sympathy with the ideals, objectives or the spirit of good conduct as fostered by the University and Swiss community, may be placed on Disciplinary Probation or become subject to dismissal from the University.

See the Academic Catalog for full statement (page 199):

<https://www.fus.edu/files/FUS-academic-catalog.pdf>

Plagiarism in written assignments will not be tolerated. If you need help with research and writing skills, come to see me or go to the Writing and Learning Center.

Unless a collective art project is involved, all work submitted ***must be your own***. Although a great deal will be learned through collaborative learning (i.e., watching each other and sharing studio experience), each student ***must do his/her own work***. An **F** will be given for any individual assignment not completed solely by the individual student.

XII. RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Office hours: I have weekly office hours, and individual meeting times will be scheduled throughout the semester. You may come anytime during those hours to get feedback about assignments and course work. Please do not hesitate to contact me the moment you have any uncertainties about the class. The best place to find me is the studio, before or after class for small matters. For more complex issues, schedule an appointment.

Accessibility Services and Accommodations: For documented disabilities and rights to accommodations, see <https://www.fus.edu/services/accessibility-and-tutoring/accessibility>. Write an email to accessibility.services@fus.edu, and make an appointment during my office hours if you want to discuss the matter with me.

Collaborative learning: In studio work, we all work together, and learn by doing, so watching your classmates at work and exchanging impressions on working methods are excellent ways to acquire more knowledge. For the presentation part of the course, they can also help you by giving feedback before you give your presentation to the group or post it on the Internet. The studio is a place of continuous exchange and feedback. Use it!

Moodle site: The class Moodle site contains a record of the material covered in each class and descriptions of all assignments, with video demonstrations or links to sites for review. It will be updated as we go along. It also has resources on ceramics and the areas of Italy we will travel to, including uploaded documents or links to helpful material on the Internet. *THE MOODLE SITE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SOURCE OF INFORMATION FOR THIS COURSE AND SHOULD BE CONSULTED FREQUENTLY. Students who have been absent are expected consult the Moodle site and do homework assignments so as to keep up with the rest of the class.*

Technology Help: The IT Staff office is located in the Lowerre Academic Center, ground floor, for all computer-related and Internet problems.

Grace Library: Art materials are located in the 700s section of the reference section upstairs and in the stacks downstairs in Grace Library. You may need to use the library to research material, and art books are a wonderful way to browse and get ideas. The library staff can help you with your library needs.

XIII. COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	ASSIGNMENTS
23/01	Presentation of course syllabus Introduction to the course Clay: basic notions and terminology Pinch pots: the most essential of all techniques	Get to know your materials and tools 2 pinch pots, 6.5-7cm in diameter and 8 cm in height: make one and trim one Reading to prepare for short field trip
30/01	Coils	Create 2 drinking vessels, 6.5-7cm in diameter and 8 cm in height: : make one and trim one
06/02	Slabs ALL WORKS MUST BE FINISHED BY 13/02 SO THAT THEY DRY AND BE TAKEN TO THE KILN FOR FIRING	Create saucer-size plate from a slab – model will be provided Finish trimming other pieces
13/02	Principles of color application and surface decoration: explore analogies between the transparencies of watercolor, applying color to an underglaze and the vitreous pastes of glazes. Introduce theme project for travel. Facial features alignment workshop	Short reading assignments for theme project.
20/02	Possible field trip or Work on theme project for travel	
27/02	Possible field trip or Work on theme project for travel	
06/03	TRIP BRIEFING – ATTENDANCE MANDATORY	
10-21/03	ACADEMIC TRAVEL: MAIN DESTINATIONS FAENZA MARSCIANO (with excursions to other hill towns in Tuscany and Umbria) FLORENCE	A SEPARATE, DETAILED ITINERARY WILL BE DISTRIBUTED IN THE COMING WEEKS

27/03	<p>Begin Project 2: use the handbuilding and mold-making techniques we have learned to make a sculptural mask.</p> <p>Mold will be provided.</p> <p>ATTENDANCE MANDATORY</p>	INDEPENDENT WORK ON PROJECT 2
03/04	WORK ON PROJECT 2 – Works must be completed and dry for firing by 10/04	INDEPENDENT WORK ON PROJECT 2
10/04	<p>No class, but make sure your Project 2 work is completed and dry for firing!!!</p> <p>For University Day, organize a small exhibit of works done during majolica workshop in Faenza and smaller works done at La Fratta</p>	
17/04	Lecture on non-fired coloring methods	
24/04 TBA	Visiting artist lecture and/or workshop	
01/05 TBA	<p>Last Class</p> <p>Project 2: use a non-fired coloring technique to finish Project 2</p>	
08/05 13:30- 15:30	<p>Final critique</p> <p>Pick up works</p>	

This syllabus and course calendar is provided as a courtesy to the student, and is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in due time in class and on the Moodle site. Please consult the Moodle site regularly to keep informed of latest developments.