

Research in Ceramics - ART 489-01E - 24188

Christy Wittmer - Spring 2026 Syllabus



EAST TEXAS A&M
— U N I V E R S I T Y —

Research in Ceramics - ART 489-01E - 24188

Instructor: Christy Wittmer

Office Location: Room 101 Wathena Temple Fine Arts

Office Hours: Mondays, 9-10:50am and by appointment

Office Phone: 903.468.8704

Email: christy.wittmer@etamu.edu

Class Information

Spring 2026: 1/12/2026 through 5/8/2026

Credits: 1.00

Meeting times: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2-4:50pm

Location: WTFA 116

Preferred Form of Communication: Email

Response Time: 24-48 hours during weekdays

Course Description

In this course, students will work on independent research in Ceramics with the guidance of the instructor. Increased attention will be given to the conceptual and aesthetic aspects of ceramics and the development of an expressive, individual direction. There will also be increased emphasis made on critical research in contemporary and historical ceramics.

Catalogue Description

Independent Study Hours: 1

Individualized instruction/research at an advanced level in a specialized content area under the direction of a faculty member.

Course Objectives

- Demonstrate advanced wheel throwing and/or hand building skills

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- Demonstrate excellent craftsmanship
- Discuss how objects embody meaning
- Discuss historic and contemporary ceramics and the issues that pertain to ceramics as an art form
- Demonstrate an understanding of clay and glaze chemistry
- Use and maintain studio equipment properly
- Demonstrate the development of a personal direction in their artwork
- Demonstrate the development of a solid, sustained work ethic and time-management skills
- Demonstrate the ability to benefit from the critiques of one's own work and the work of others

In addition to competencies students will:

- Research ideas, plan projects and sketch designs.
- Exhibit curiosity, creative problem solving and a willingness to try new things.
- Explain their work in relationship to concepts, ideas, techniques, processes and experiences.

Course Structure

Students are expected to continue a personal investigation of ceramics and object making through independent research. A commitment to research and completing the assignments will be necessary to achieve the goals for this class. It is the responsibility of the student to voluntarily participate with relevant comments and questions. It is expected that you participate in all in-progress and final critiques, Visiting Artist lectures and workshops.

Assignments

Independent projects	60%
Process Journal	30%
Research and Critiques	<u>10%</u>
	100%

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Suggested Text Books And Resources

- Contemporary ceramics: <https://cfileonline.org/>
- Contemporary ceramics: <https://www.ceramicsnow.org/>
- Ceramics techniques and videos: <https://ceramicartsnetwork.org/>
- Contemporary art: <https://hyperallergic.com/>
- Artwork images: [Artstor](#)
- Historical ceramics: <https://www.metmuseum.org/>
- Textbook Recommended: *Clay and Glazes for the Potter*, Revised, Expanded Edition, written by Daniel Rhodes, Revised by Robin Hopper.

Grading Scale

A: 90 to 100 points: Excellent (superior effort and results above and beyond)

B: 80 to 89 points: Good (significant effort and hard work)

C: 70 to 79 points: Average (minimal class requirements met)

D: 60 to 69 points: Below Average (below class average expectations)

F: 50 to 59 points: Poor (inferior work and attitude)

Assignment Grading Details

Grading is based on a completion of course assignments, quality of individual technical and critical development, personal commitment and ability to work in a community studio setting. Personal commitment involves regular attendance, consistent effort, completion of work and participation in group critiques and the willingness to try new things and take creative risks. There are two to three required group critiques.

Assignment Submission & Format

All work in clay should be finished in greenware by the student's proposed deadline set up in their project plan. All glazed and fired work should be complete by the final critique, after which it will be graded. **Images of your finished projects should be posted in the assignment in D2L to receive full credit.**

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Process Journals

Each student will keep a record of their progress each week in a Process Journal which they will turn in for grading at the end of each week. A process journal more than one week late will receive a zero.

Late Work

Assignments may not be turned in late unless there is a legitimate documented emergency. You must contact me before the due date and ask for an extension. I will consider each request on a case-by-case basis. Late assignments will automatically lose 20% of the grade and must be submitted by the final critique.

Absence Policy

Attendance is critical for your success in this course. Students are expected to be present in each class, for the entire class period. Please contact the instructor in advance of any absence. **After the fourth absence of the semester, the instructor may lower the student's final semester grade by one letter grade for each subsequent absence.** No distinction will be made between excused and unexcused absences.

A student who misses a class or is late for class is responsible for any material discussed and any announcements made during class. Demonstrations will not be repeated for excused or unexcused absences. The student is also responsible for making up the missed work time.

Expectations

1. Working outside of class is required. Expect to spend at least 6 hours per week outside of class. Access to the studio at night and on weekends will be through the swipecard system. Use the east entrance to the building.
2. Timely completion of required work by the critique dates is required.
3. Criticism and discussion are important aspects of artistic activity and development. Attendance and active, thoughtful verbal participation at all critiques is mandatory.
4. Participation in loading, firing, and unloading the kilns is required. Students should be aware that these activities sometimes take place outside of class time. Studio Policy on quality control: Any work that is defective or damaged (such as too heavy,

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cracked, broken, etc.) will not be fired. Extra work must meet the standards of the studio.

5. Students in the advanced class are required to help with the maintenance and the running of the ceramics studio. This includes mixing the communal batches of slips and glazes, cleaning and re-coating kiln shelves, and other tasks that contribute to maintaining a clean and appropriate work environment. Technical information and an explanation of "best practice" will be given relating to these tasks.
6. Students are expected to engage in personal research on ceramics websites and in the university library where there is an extensive collection of books on ceramics as well as the periodicals *Ceramics Monthly*, *American Craft*, and *Studio Potter*. You can also see ceramic work in person in nearby museum collections, especially the DMA, The Crow Collection of Asian Art, and the Kimbell Art Museum.
7. Students are expected to attend all exhibitions in The University Gallery as well as other events hosted by the Department of Art such as visiting lecturers and visiting artist workshops.
8. General Studio Rules:
 - **The ceramics studio is a pet-free, child-free zone 24/7.**
 - Do not touch or move other people's work.
9. Remove all work and tools at the end of the semester. Your instructor is not responsible for work left behind when the course ends.

Studio culture and cell phone usage

For the next 16 weeks we will be working together in the shared space of the studio. You are expected to treat your instructor and your classmates with respect at all times. In this spirit, **cell phones should be muted during class**. If you must receive a call during class time please leave the studio before answering it. To be considerate of others working in the studio there should be no phone conversations, text messaging, movie watching, etc. in studios. Online web searches related to course assignments may be done during studio work time, not during lectures and demonstrations. You may also use your phone to document your work.

For the health and safety of everyone, please clean up your workspace, table, floor and all tools and equipment that you used before you leave the studio. **Throwers**

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should mop around their wheel at the end of every work session. Hand builders should mop around their table. Leave the space cleaner than you found it.

Headphone policy: You may wear headphones while you are working in the studio during class time. For the safety of yourself and consideration of your classmates, the volume must be low enough that you can still hear what is happening in the studio. Also, you are still responsible for any announcements that are made while wearing headphones. **You may not wear headphones during lectures, demonstrations or critiques.**

Video/audio recording is prohibited without permission.

Firing policy: Smoking/drug paraphernalia, including but not limited to pipes, ashtrays, images or slogans will not be fired.

Syllabus Change Policy

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

Technology Requirements

LMS

All course sections offered by East Texas A&M University have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm

YouSeeU Virtual Classroom Requirements:

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<https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>

Access and Navigation

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or helpdesk@etamu.edu.

Note: Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a ETAMU campus open computer lab, etc.

Communication and Support

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

UNIVERSITY SPECIFIC PROCEDURES

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.etamu.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

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Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

ETAMU Attendance

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).
<http://www.teamu.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

Academic Integrity

Students at East Texas A&M University are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)
[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.etamu.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

<http://www.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

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Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

East Texas A&M University

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: studentdisabilityservices@etamu.edu

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

[http://www.etamu.edu/campusLife/campusServices/
studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/](http://www.etamu.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/)

Nondiscrimination Notice

East Texas A&M University will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

Campus Concealed Carry Statement

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in East Texas A&M University buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and East Texas A&M Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

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For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url: <http://www.etamu.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all East Texas A&M campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health

The Counseling Center at East Texas A&M, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit www.etamu.edu/counsel

Department of Art, Health and Safety Guidelines: All students enrolled in face-to-face art courses are required to comply with the procedures and policies of the Department of Art's Health and Safety Guidelines. The Guidelines cover activities in all A&M-Commerce art facilities on both the main campus and off-campus sites. Please report any safety issues immediately to your instructor(s), per health and safety guidelines outlined, studio/lab assistant, or the Department of Art, studio technician & health/safety liaison.

https://inside.etamu.edu/academics/colleges/humanitiesSocialSciencesArts/departments/art/documents/DOA_health_safety_handbook.pdf

Health and Safety Form (to be signed online by all students)

<https://dms.etamu.edu/Forms/ArtLabPolicy>

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COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Week 1: 1/12

Monday: Course Introduction

Assignment: Plan for the first project with sketches, due 1/14

Wednesday: Begin working, Plan for the first project with sketches and research is due, uploaded to D2L and meet to discuss

Week 2: 1/19

Monday: No class, Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Wednesday: Work day, Syllabus quiz due

Friday: Process Journal due

Week 3: 1/26

Monday: Work day

Wednesday: Work day

Friday: Process Journal due

Week 4: 2/2

Monday: Work day

Wednesday: In-progress critique

Friday: Process Journal due

Week 5: 2/9

Monday: Work day

Wednesday: Work day

Friday: Process Journal due

Week 6: 2/16

Monday: Work day

Wednesday: Work day

Friday: Process Journal due

Week 7: 2/23

Monday: Work Day

Wednesday: In-progress critique

Friday: Process Journal due

Week 8: 3/2

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Monday: Work day

Wednesday: Work day

Friday: Process Journal due

March 9-13, Spring Break, No classes

Week 9: 3/16

Monday: Work day

Load cone 10 kiln

Wednesday: Work day

Fire cone 10 kiln

Friday: Process Journal due

Week 10: 3/23

Monday: Work day

Wednesday: No class

Friday: Process Journal due

Week 11: 3/30

Monday: Critique of finished work and work in-progress

Wednesday: Work day

Friday: Process Journal due

Week 12: 4/6

Monday: Last day to throw

Wednesday: Work day, last day to trim, last day to work in clay.

All pieces must be on the TO BE BISQUED SHELF BY THE END OF YOUR CLASS.

Friday: Process Journal due

Week 13: 4/13

Monday: Glaze

Wednesday: Glaze

Week 14: 4/20

Monday: Glaze! Load kilns

Load cone 10 kiln.

Last bisque firing

Wednesday: Glaze, load kilns

LAST CONE 10 Firing

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Week 15: 4/27

Monday: Final exam review, **Mandatory clean up** (one grade down if not attended)

LAST CONE 6 Firing

Wednesday: Final critique

Document your work

Week 16: 5/4 Finals Week

Monday: Documentation assignment due

Remove of all work and tools.

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