

# NCAL 407B: BEGINNING CERAMICS HANDBUILDING FOR OLDER ADULTS

## Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Winter 2026
Units:	0
Hours:	3 lecture, 3 laboratory per week (72 total per quarter)
Degree & Credit Status:	Non-Degree-Applicable Non-Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Non-GE
Transferable:	None
Grade Type:	Non-Credit Course (Receives no Grade)
Repeatability:	Unlimited Repeatability

## Student Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrate increased visual awareness by presenting and discussing three dimensional ceramic projects.
- Demonstrate technical competency in basic handbuilding techniques including coil, slab, wafer and pinch methods.
- Demonstrate technical competency in glazing works by implementing glazing techniques demonstrated in class.

## Description

This noncredit course is targeted towards older adults. An introduction to basic ceramic hand-building techniques. This course introduces ceramic hand-building techniques, including pinching, coil, and slab construction, as well as examines various high and low-fire glazing techniques.

## Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate technical competency and understand the process of hand-building construction and clay materials
2. Demonstrate competency and understanding of the process of glazing and various surface treatments
3. Use a variety of hand-building ceramic tools and equipment skillfully
4. Solve technical construction issues, such as slumping and cracking, that arise with hand-building processes
5. Integrate diverse cultural, historical, and contemporary styles and iconography effectively when applying carving, slip, and glaze decoration and patterns
6. Integrate diverse cultural, historical, and contemporary clay forms as ideas for ceramic projects
7. Discuss and be exposed to contemporary guest ceramic artists from various diverse cultural backgrounds
8. Communicate, discuss, identify, critically think about, and write about the personal and cultural differences in a class critique

9. Discuss and write about the tools, processes, and content of "great works" from diverse cultures, historical, and contemporary ceramic sculpture and hand-building
10. Write a one to two page paper about a ceramic sculpture or hand-build ceramic vessel from an art gallery or museum

## Course Content

1. Demonstrate technical competency and understand the process of hand-building construction and clay materials
  - a. Pinch pots
  - b. Coil construction
  - c. Slab construction
2. Demonstrate competency and understanding of the process of glazing and various surface treatments
  - a. Pouring, spraying, dipping, brushing
  - b. Wax and latex resist
  - c. Mishima and sgraffito
  - d. High and low firing
  - e. Raku and pit-firing
  - f. Under-glazes and slip painting
  - g. Stains
3. Use a variety of hand-building ceramic tools and equipment skillfully
  - a. The different kinds of clay
    - i. Stoneware clay
    - ii. Porcelain clay
    - iii. Raku and sculpture clays
  - b. Ceramic extruder
  - c. Slab roller
  - d. Applying glaze and slip
  - e. Clay sculpting tools
    - i. Carving tools
    - ii. Wooden and rubber rib tools
    - iii. Plaster hump molds
    - iv. Slump molds
    - v. Needle and sgraffito tools
    - vi. Wire tools
    - vii. Sponges
  - f. Banding wheels
  - g. Spray booth
4. Solve technical construction issues
  - a. Slumping clay
  - b. Cracking that arises with hand-building processes
  - c. Drying and firing process, greenware
    - i. Wet
    - ii. Leather-hard
    - iii. Bone-dry
    - iv. Attaching clay, scoring, and slipping
    - v. Bisque-ware
    - vi. Glaze applied to bisque-ware
5. Integrate diverse cultural, historical, and contemporary styles and iconography effectively when applying carving, slip, and glaze decoration and patterns
  - a. Greek or Roman decorative patterns
  - b. Asian or Eastern decorative patterns

- c. African decorative patterns
- d. Mesoamerican decorative patterns
- e. Egyptian decorative patterns
- f. Native American decorative patterns
- g. American decorative patterns
- h. European decorative patterns
6. Integrate diverse cultural, historical, and contemporary clay forms as ideas for ceramic projects
  - a. Contemporary decorative patterns from our culture
  - b. Greek or Roman vessel forms
  - c. Asian or Eastern vessel forms
  - d. Mesoamerican vessel forms
  - e. Contemporary vessel forms
  - f. Egyptian decorative vessel forms
  - g. Native American vessel forms
  - h. American vessel forms
  - i. European vessel forms
7. Discuss and be exposed to contemporary guest ceramic artists from various diverse cultural backgrounds
  - a. Artists that use a variety of different slab construction
  - b. Artists that use a variety of different coil construction
  - c. Artists that use a variety of different surface treatments, slip painting, and glaze applications
  - d. Artists from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds
  - e. Artists that make ceramics that are abstract or use new trends in ceramics arts
8. Communicate, discuss, identify, and write about the personal and cultural differences in a class critique
  - a. Using ceramic terminology in the class critique
    - i. Leather hard
    - ii. Bone-dry
    - iii. Bisque-ware
    - iv. Stone-ware
    - v. Glaze
    - vi. Slip
    - vii. High-fire
    - viii. Kiln
    - ix. Molds
9. Discuss and write about the tools, processes, and content of "great works" from diverse cultures, historical, and contemporary ceramic sculpture and hand-building. Write a one to two-page paper about a ceramic sculpture or hand-build ceramic vessel from an art gallery or museum
  - a. Ceramic tools, stylized textured line applications, cultural decorations or applied patterns, surface treatment, glaze or slip treatment, ceramic form or shape, the cultural symbolism or content, and the subject matter in the ceramic piece
  - b. Personal point of view from examining the ceramic piece
    - i. "First impression" the student gets from viewing the piece
  - c. Content
    - i. Expressive meaning in a design
    - ii. The hidden metaphors, symbols, and meaning
    - iii. The artist's intention in ceramic vessel
    - iv. The cultural meaning, function, or symbolism in a ceramic vessel

## Lab Content

1. Sketchbook notations, generating ideas and problem-solving sketches, thumbnail sketches for ceramic forms from diverse cultures, historical and contemporary ceramics.
2. Ceramic projects focused on varied ways to use diverse cultural symbols, iconography, and patterns.
3. Ceramic projects focused on varied ways to create visual or actual texture.
4. Ceramic projects focus on using a variety of ways to apply slip and glaze with a brush, dipping, pouring, and spraying.
5. Ceramic projects that focus on the forms influenced by looking at ceramic vessels from different cultures.
6. Ceramic projects that focus on pinch pots.
7. Ceramic projects that focus on coil pots.
8. Ceramic projects that focus on slab construction.
9. Ceramic projects that deal with learning various ways to attach clay.
10. Ceramic projects deal with creating a personal approach to a project.
11. Research historic and contemporary ceramic forms through in-class video and text library.

## Special Facilities and/or Equipment

1. Clay, ceramic extruder, slab roller, kilns, glaze materials, sculpting tools, banding wheels, spray booth.
2. When taught via Foothill Global Access: ongoing access to a computer with email software and capabilities; email address; JavaScript-enabled internet browsing software.

## Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Each project will be judged on its success in fulfilling the stated goals of the assignment

Demonstration of involvement and understanding of the course material through self-critiques written or verbal by the student about projects and assignments

Verbal or written participation during discussion and class critiques demonstrating knowledge of and ability to use ceramic terminology  
Written or verbal responses about images, methods, techniques as assigned in class

Portfolio of hand built ceramic projects completed during the course and submitted at requested intervals or at the end of each quarter  
Weekly verbal or written participation in class discussions about historical or contemporary hand-built ceramics

## Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Lecture  
Discussion  
Laboratory  
Demonstration  
Field trips

## **Representative Text(s) and Other Materials**

Cobb, Sunshine. Mastering Hand Building: Techniques, Tips, and Tricks for Slabs, Coils, and More. 2018.

Although this text is older than the suggested "5 years or newer" standard, it remains a seminal text in this area of study.

## **Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments**

1. Weekly reading assignments from the selected contemporary ceramic magazines.
2. Weekly reading assignments from the ceramic historical and contemporary textbook.
3. A one to two page paper written about a historic or contemporary ceramic object at a local museum.

## **Discipline(s)**

Art