

ART6933 -The Poetics of Clay

Ceramics Grad Seminar

M 11:45 – 2:45 PM, FAC B16

Fall 2025

Professor: Grace Sachi Troxell (she/her)

Office: FAC B17

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Office hours: W 10:30am - 1:30pm or by appointment

Teaching Lab Specialist: Derek Reeverts

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Catalog Description:

In this collaborative seminar, students will explore both conceptual and technical ideas around materiality and craft. Through making, reading, critiquing, interviewing, debating and writing, the group will expand their personal practice and communal sensibilities.

Course Description:

The Poetics of Clay is a graduate seminar that will explore elemental time; earth, air, water, and fire in relation to contemporary and historical art practices. Artists will make and think through this lens, read and respond, interview an artist, read exhibition reviews and ultimately participate in culminating events, a raku firing and pit firing. Using Joseph Dumit's *Writing the Implosion*, artists will research materials that are part of the ceramic process and think through the historical, sociological, political, bodily, personal, and metaphysical aspects of using and making with ceramic materials. Through earth, air, water, and fire we are exploring poetic consciousness in relation to clay. Part of the course will be devoted to professional practice. By writing about your own work, writing an application for a residency, interviewing an artist you will contextualize your practice in the larger art world. Artists will teach a process to the seminar in the spirit of mutual aid, it is up to you what you would like to teach the rest of the class. Ultimately, artists will continue to work on their studio practice by creating a mature body of work and participating in critiques. Throughout the semester you will work on your own research and create a mature body of work.

Course Objectives:

- develop a mature body of work and discourse around your art practice
- write about your own work and the work of an artist you choose to interview
- share skills as we develop as a community
- expand your research practice and respond to readings
- experiment with new ways of making
- consider a phenomenological approach to your art making
- ability to locate yourself within a lineage of art making

Calendar and readings will be available on Canvas. The schedule is subject to change. You are expected to write a paragraph response with three questions by Sunday at 5pm before our seminar. Please look for and respond to messages through Canvas.

We will read excerpts from:

Clay as Elemental Wholeness, Ken Beittel, *The Order of Time*, Carlo Rovelli, *Material Intelligence* - Terra Cotta, *Sensitive Chaos The Creation of Flowing Forms in Air and Water*, Theodore Schwenk, *Psychoanalysis of Fire*, Gaston Bachelard, *Fragments of a Poetics of Fire*, Gaston Bachelard, *Vibrant Matter*, Jane Bennet, *The Modern Pot*, Glenn Adamson, *Container Technology*, Zoe Sofia, *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, Ursula K. Le Guin, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology*, Timothy Morton, *Stones of the Sky*, Pablo Neruda, *Mutual Aid*, Dean Spade

As a group we can add to this list and alter it based on your interests. You are expected to read and research on your own simultaneously for your practice. This research will be presented and handed in at the end of the semester with your final critique. Make sure it is cumulative and not done at the last minute.

Calendar

*Schedule is subject to change

Week 1 August 25	Presentations: Research and Family Tree Discuss <i>Clay as Elemental Wholeness</i> , Ken Beittel Read: Mutual Aid https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/dean-spade-mutual-aid
Week 2 September 1	NO CLASS
Week 3 September 8	present plan to complete a body of work for the semester to the group Individual meetings with Grace to discuss workflow Present: Writing the Implosion https://ceramicmaterialsatlas.com/Writerly Ceramics and Metabolic Rift , Rose Schreiber Discuss:

	<p>Material Intelligence - Terra Cotta, Glenn Adamson editor</p> <p>Masterclass: Teach your peers a skill!</p>
<p>Week 4 September 15</p>	<p>Discuss: excerpts from <i>Stones of the Sky</i>, Pablo Neruda <i>The Poets of Reverie, Reverie and Cosmos</i>, Gaston Bachelard <i>The Order of Time</i>, Carlo Rovelli</p> <p>Masterclass: Teach your peers a skill!</p>
<p>Week 5 September 22</p>	<p>Discuss: excerpts from Vibrant Matter, Jane Bennett Sensitive Chaos, The creation of Flowing Forms in Water and Air, Theodor Schwenk</p> <p>Make in response to <i>Sensitive Chaos</i> and present to the group</p> <p>Update group on Research</p> <p>Masterclass: Teach your peers a skill!</p>
<p>Week 6 September 29</p>	<p>Discuss: The Ceramic Reader: Implications: The Modern Pot, Glenn Adamson Rise of the Hyperpot, Glenn Adamson https://www.glennadamson.com/work/2018/hyperpot Container Technology, Zoe Sofia The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction, Ursula Le Guin Hyperobjects, The End of the World, Timothy Morton</p> <p>Masterclass: Teach your peers a skill!</p>
<p>Week 7 October 6</p>	<p>Make in response to the readings thus far to present to the group for critique</p> <p>Guest Artist: Sean Patrick Carney https://www.sjpc.work/ Listen to 3 episodes of time zero before class https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/time-zero/id1804227201</p>
<p>Week 8 October 13</p>	<p>Mid Term Critique - this should be of a mature body of work</p>

	Begin reaching out to and researching an artist to interview- due Nov. 17th
Week 9 October 20	Guest Artist: Zoom Ayla Gizlice https://ayla-gizlice.com/index.html Psychoanalysis of Fire, Gaston Bachelard (excerpt) Fragments of a Poetics of Fire, Gaston Bachelard (excerpt) Watch: Maria Martinez
Week 10 October 27	Make in response to the readings Pit Firing? (tentative date)
Week 11 November 3	Guest Artist Zoom: Rachelle Dang Individual meetings
Week 12 November 10	Raku Firing? (tentative date)
Week 13 November 17	Professional Practice: Present artist statements & interviews
Week 14 November 24	NO CLASS
Week 15 December 1	Final Critique Present on your semester research and a mature body of work that is an extension of the midterm

Information about university-wide policies and resources can be found here:

<https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>

You will find academic resources, honesty policy, course evaluation information, accommodations, attendance and grading.

Email:

I am available Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm through email. Allow me 24 hours to respond before following up. If you write on the weekend, expect a response on Monday. Please respond to and check for messages from Canvas.

Attendance:

Students are expected to be in class. You are allowed two absences during the semester without penalty to your grade. After two absences your grade will go down one letter. Four absences will lead to a failing grade. As a studio class the time together is invaluable and cannot be replicated outside of class on your own.

Grading & Evaluation:

We will have individual meetings to discuss grades and evaluation. You will be graded on your individual projects, participation in critique and conversation, completion of responses to readings, completion of artist interview, artist statement, and participation in group events. Feedback will be given verbally.

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.

A	4.0
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.0
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C	2.0
C-	1.67
D+	1.33
D	1.0
D-	.67
S	0

Accommodations:

[Disability Resource Center](#)

If you have an accommodation please share the letter with me early in the semester and schedule an appointment to discuss how to best accommodate you.

Class Demeanor:

It is assumed you will act like a professional artist in this class. Respect the group and always clean up after yourself. Differences in perception and interpretation are inherent between people of different backgrounds. Mature artistic engagement is when you are able to recognize and respect multiple perspectives. In this class, we will be open minded and thoughtful to what each individual member brings to the class. This will be most important during critique. Give constructive feedback to your peers and do so with respect.

Cell phones are not to be used during class. If you have your cell phone out it will count as being late to class. Respect the time in the studio and stay present and focused.

Materials:

You are responsible for your materials. Plan accordingly so you have clay to work with.

Health and Safety: Ceramics

[Health and Safety Handbook - P. 36 - 37](#)

Hazards of the Materials

Ceramic dust is a potential irritant and prolonged exposure may result in chronic conditions. Many substances in the glaze room are marked as toxic or hazardous materials. Ingestion and inhalation of these materials could be hazardous or fatal.

Best Practices

Use gloves to avoid exposure to hazardous materials.

Area Rules

All users of the studio classrooms are expected to follow studio area rules at all times. If you have any questions, ask your instructor.

- follow all SA+AH Health and safety handbook guidelines, found at the link above
- Follow the SA+AH satellite waste management chart in the classroom and other health and safety guidelines posted for your media
- in case of emergency, call campus police at 391-1111
- file an incident report (forms may be found in SA+AH H&S handbook in each satellite waste accumulation area, the SA+AH faculty handbook, and in the main office.) Submit completed forms into the SA+AH Operations +Facilities Manager within 48 hours of the event.
- SA+AH is committed to upholding policies set forth by the University of Florida with regards to drug and alcohol use and smoking in educational facilities. Possession or use of drugs or alcoholic beverages is not permitted. In addition, The Florida Clean Indoor Air Act of 1992 prohibits smoking in educational facilities. Violation of university policies and applicable laws is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including expulsion and does not preclude the possibility of criminal charges
- no eating or drinking in the glaze or mixing areas

- familiarize yourself with the closest eyewash unit
- shoes must be worn at all times
- it is required to use safety glasses when grinding, chipping shelves, etc. protective lenses for kiln viewing, gloves for hot objects, heat resistant aprons for raku, ear protection for grinding and sawing, rubber gloves for mixing hazardous material
- do not block aisles, halls, or doors
- do not bring children or pets into the studios
- do not store things on the floor
- clean up spills immediately
- scoop dry materials, mop up liquids, do not return spilled materials to original source as they are contaminated now
- carry heavy or large trash to the dumpster
- place materials containing barium or chrome in the hazardous waste disposal area
- do not sweep. This puts hazardous materials in the air. Rather, scrape up chunks and wet-clean.
- Report any safety issues immediately to you instructor
- all courses must engage in an end of the semester clean up (this is part of your participation grade)
- Follow the SA+AH container policy

There are two types of labels used in the SA+AH -- yellow and white. Both labels are found at the red SDS box and are supplied by the SA+AH. Each is used for a different purpose.

White

All new and or used product in containers (hazardous or what might be perceived as hazardous, i.e., watered down gesso, graphite solutions, satellite containers of solvents, powders, spray paints, fixatives, oils, solvents, etc.) must be labeled within the SA+AH to identify their contents. Labels can be found at the SDS box in each studio and work area. All containers must be marked with your name, contents, and date opened. All secondary/satellite containers for hazardous materials must be marked with content, your name and the date opened. Unmarked containers will be disposed of without notice.

Yellow

WHEN HAZARDOUS ITEMS ARE DESIGNATED AS WASTE

All containers must have a yellow label identifying the contents to be designated as trash for EHS pick up.

- flammable solid containers (red flip top) must have a yellow hazardous waste label on the outside (top).
- 5 gallon jugs must have a yellow hazardous waste label on the outside
- fibrous containers must have a yellow hazardous waste label on the outside (top)
- each item in the blue bin must have a yellow hazardous waste label