

Independent Study in Clay - Syllabus

Required Text

Pitelka, Vince. *Clay: A Studio Handbook*, American Ceramics Society, 2016

Course Objective:

Supervised individualized study in an area or direction unavailable through other current course offerings.

Course Description

Independent Study, provides the opportunity for independent, supervised, focused study in an area or direction mutually agreed upon by you and me. Whenever possible, you should pursue your studies and develop your work within the regular course offerings. Independent Study is appropriate whenever a project or study direction does not fit current course offerings, or in special cases when there is an unavoidable course conflict. Possible areas of focus might include clay forming methods, surface decoration materials and techniques, kilns and firing processes, clay and/or glaze properties and chemistry, advanced research into professional studio practices, exploration in a particular historical or contemporary style or technique, or focused development of an individual direction or portfolio in ceramics. You work on your own without lectures, demos, or slide shows, and thus the expectation of productivity is considerably higher than in normal classroom instruction. To take Independent Study you must have completed at least the Intro to Clay class and must already have a significant foundation of skill in the area you wish to study. In other words, Independent Study is for research and/or to skill-development into something where you already have considerable experience. Independent Study is ideal for researching and experimenting with new decorating techniques, forms, glazes, or claybodies, but not appropriate for learning a major new skill like throwing that requires regular hands-on instruction.

The Project Proposal, Reviews, and Meetings

By the end of the first week of class, submit via email attachment a MS Word project proposal. Your project proposal is your assurance of the work you'll complete. It must contain a brief description of the proposed work including specific types and quantities of pieces (be ambitious), and a schedule outlining expected accomplishment through each of the four quarters of the semester. Except in special circumstances, work submitted for review at midterms and finals should all be glaze-fired with any post-firing additions completed. As mentioned, Independent Study is entirely studio time and research, so expect to accomplish significantly more than you would in a normal classroom-instruction course. Each credit of independent study requires a minimum of four hours per week in the studio. The proposal and schedule are a starting point, and should not be seen as absolute, restricting the evolution of idea and direction during the semester. If there is a change in your work that alters your proposed project, contact me right away and we'll discuss it and you can submit a modified project proposal.

There is no regularly-scheduled meeting time for all independent study students. We will meet for formal reviews at midterms and finals, but will also meet informally every two or three weeks in

order to gauge your progress and to give me an opportunity to provide constructive feedback. The meeting schedule should benefit your project and your ways of working, but the minimum is once every three weeks. I am available to meet with you whenever you need assistance or input. Your work schedule is up to you, and it is your responsibility to let me know when you are here working so we can meet regularly.

Expectations and Grading

Up to 80% of the grade depends on progress on your proposed project, appropriate to the number of credits you signed up for. At least 20% of the grade depends on proactive involvement in smooth operation of the clay studio, including glaze and kiln-room practice, studio cleanup, and the diligence and regularity with which you meet with me throughout the semester. These percentages are flexible, at my discretion. If your firing practices and/or other studio behavior create a problem and/or if you fail to stay in touch with me regularly, it will adversely affect your grade regardless of the quantity and quality of work. It is the responsibility of the students working in the Independent Study room to keep that room clean and free of trash, even in the spaces not currently being used.

Contacting You via Email

I will occasionally send messages via email, and it is your responsibility to check your email frequently. Make sure that the email address you provided is one you monitor. You are responsible for any information sent to you via email.