

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

As my students expand upon their artistic vocabularies, I act as a guide, helping them discover their own imaginations. Throughout undergraduate courses in 3-D foundations and in beginning and intermediate ceramics, students are given a framework of detailed assignments. Advanced students receive more individualized mentoring specific to their areas of inquiry.

Each semester, I conduct several individual critiques. I also conduct group critiques in order to cultivate dialogue. I provide students with a context for their artworks by incorporating power-point presentations, Google searches, group discussions, and you tube videos on issues related to the history and practice of making art. I also instruct students on contemporary issues in the ceramics field by discussing articles from current ceramic magazines.

My approach to teaching is very hands-on: to work side-by-side with my students in the studio. I believe that it is very important to involve students in all aspects of the art making process. I require my beginning ceramic students to mix clay for the Ceramics I class. Intermediate and advanced students are expected to mix their own clay and can, in addition, choose their clay bodies. Electric kilns are loaded in small groups, and I utilize this time to explain the process of firing a kiln. Advanced students are expected to fire their own artwork and gas kilns are loaded and unloaded by all students. I also require my advanced students to take an active role in kiln firings by signing up for shifts.

Ceramics is a community driven medium. I organize students into work teams so that they get hands-on knowledge of the process while learning to work together. I also introduce my students to their surrounding artistic community. I require their attendance at lectures, both on and off campus. As an assignment, intermediate and advanced students assist a local artist in his or her private studio. Students are also encouraged to host studio throw a thons and pot lucks.