COURSE DESCRIPTION

Ceramics are one of the most common and durable artifacts on many archaeological sites throughout the world, and they are important material for understanding past societies and cultures. The analysis of ceramics often forms a cornerstone of archaeological research programs and have been the basis for investigations of a wide range of topics such as diet, cuisine, chronology, technological change, social learning, social boundaries, kinship, trade and exchange, migration, and demography, to name a few.

Archaeological Ceramics is a graduate-level seminar in the analysis of pottery. In this sense the course title is a misnomer—we will deal nearly exclusively with low-fired, unglazed, and unvitrified pottery. We will review a wide variety of analytical approaches to pottery, but the emphasis is on technological and functional (i.e. “technofunctional”) approaches. The course is organized around a “life cycle” perspective that begins with the selection of clay and temper and follows the manufacture, use, discard, and recycling trajectories of alternative vessel technologies. We will focus on topics such as the mechanical performance of pastes, design specifications, vessel forms, use alteration, and assemblage formation processes.

Ethnoarchaeological and experimental research provide the criteria for understanding the decisions and behaviors linked to pottery. We will also review briefly some of the analytical techniques used to study pottery provenance and use.

The overall goal of the course is to familiarize you with pottery analysis so that you can conduct independent research in the technofunctional variation of archaeological ceramics. Accordingly, you are required to either have access to an assemblage of potsherds for analysis (ideally from a context that is relevant to your research interests), or to review a body of extracurricular literature (i.e. not class assigned) on technofunctional variation in pottery. Analysis will take a considerable amount of time, so you are strongly encouraged to begin working on an assemblage early in the semester. In this term project, we will employ a vessel unit of analysis and gather data on variables such as temper, wall thickness, vessel profile, orifice diameter, use alteration, and breakage patterns. The actual data you collect will be determined by the question(s) you pose. Our readings and class discussions will provide inspiration for the sorts of questions you might address, and will also form the basis for inferences that bridge the gap between your data and the practices that created your assemblage. Your product should be a publication-quality paper, which means that you should present new data from your analysis of a ceramic assemblage or offer a novel view of an archaeological problem based on your synthesis of existing literature. Papers that merely summarize the literature and make no new contribution will not receive high scores.
REQUIRED TEXT


Recommended:

Additional readings as specified below. All are available on e-Learning within “Resources”:
https://lss.at.ufl.edu/

FORMAT AND GRADING

We meet every Tuesday from 1:55-4:55 pm. The format of the course consists of a mixture of lecture, laboratory demonstrations, discussion, and an occasional film. You are required to be prepared to discuss all readings prior to each class meeting. Your grade for the course will be based on your performance on three lab quizzes (30 percent), a 20 page paper (60 percent), and class participation, including a 15-minute presentation to the class on your research project (10 percent).

ACCEPTANCE OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS

By remaining registered in this course, you agree to accept the course requirements and expectations as stated in this syllabus. These are in addition to other general University requirements and codes of conduct as stated in official documents. The following information is included to conform with University Policy: 1) Students seeking modification of due dates for assignments and exams for religious reasons (e.g., holiday observance) should feel free to contact the Professor and request this modification. 2) Students seeking any classroom accommodation to facilitate their education must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the Professor when requesting accommodation. 3) The University reminds every student of the implied pledge of Academic Honesty: on any work submitted for credit the student has neither received nor given unauthorized aid. This refers to cheating and plagiarism. Students should consult the Student Guide at www.dso.ufl.edu/stg/ for information.

SCHEDULE

JANUARY 7. Prospectus
Lab 1: What can we learn from pottery?

JANUARY 14. Pottery in Prehistory
Readings
Rice Chapter 1

Brown, James A.

Rice, Prudence M.


**JANUARY 21. Pots to Sherds to Pots**

*Readings*
Rice Chapter 9

Braun, David P.

Crown, Patricia L.

Stark, Miriam

**JANUARY 28. Life Cycle Perspective**

Lab 2: Quantifying Assemblages

*Readings*
Beck, Margaret

DeBoer, Warren R.

DeBoer, Warren R., and Donald Lathrap
Mills, Barbara J.  

Sullivan, Alan P.  

**FEBRUARY 4. Clay Selection and Preparation**

*QUIZ 1

*Readings*

Rice Chapters 2 and 3; Chapter 13: 375-382; Chapter 14: 406-413

Fowles, Severin W., Leah Minc, Samuel Duwe, and David V. Hill  

Gosselain, Olivier P.  

Stark, Miriam T., Ronald L. Bishop., and Elizabeth Miksa  

**FEBRUARY 11. Temper Selection and Forming Techniques**

Lab 3: Identifying Aplastics

*Readings*

Rice chapter 5

Arnold, Dean E.  
1985 *Ceramic Theory and Cultural Process*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. (Chap. 8 only)

Bronitsky, Gordon, and R. Hamer  

Rye, O. S.

Schiffer, Michael B., and James M. Skibo

Skibo, James M., Michael B. Schiffer, and Kenneth C. Reid

**FEBRUARY 18. Finishing and Firing Techniques**

*QUIZ 2*

Lab 4: Surface Treatments

*Readings*

Rice chapters 4, 14.3

Gosselain, Olivier P.

Longacre, William A., Jingfeng Xia, and Tao Yang

Pierce, Christopher

Schiffer, Michael Brian, James M. Skibo, Tamara C. Boelke, Mark A. Neupert, and Meredith Aronson

**FEBRUARY 25. Form and Function**

Lab 5: Vessel Profiles

*Readings*

Rice Chapters 7, 12.4

Blitz, John H.
DeBoer, Warren R.

Frink, Lisa and Karen G. Harry

Hally, David J.

Linton, Ralph

Mills, Barbara J.

Reid, Kenneth C.

MARCH 4. NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)

MARCH 11. Use Alteration

*Quiz 3

Lab 6: Reporting Results

Readings
Rice Chapter 7.4

Arthur, John W.

Hally, David J.

Skibo, James M.
Skibo, James M., Tamara C. Butts, and Michael Brian Schiffer

**MARCH 18. Breaking, Discarding, Recycling**

*Readings*
Rice Chapter 7.4

Deal, Michael

Deal, Michael, and Melissa B. Hagstrum

Senior, Louise M.

Stanislawski, Michael B.


**MARCH 25. Pottery, Society, Culture**

*Readings*
Rice Chapters 6 and 8

Beck, Margaret E.

Bowser, Brenda J.
Crown, Patricia L.  

Eerkens, Jelmer, Hector Neff, and Michael Glascock  

Sassaman, Kenneth E., and Victoria Rudolph  

**APRIL 1. Provenance Studies**

*Readings*  
Rice Chapter 10


Neff, Hector and Frederick J. Bove  

Sharratt, Nicola, Mark Golitko, P. Ryan Williams, and Laure Dussubieux  

Speakman, Robert J., Nicole C. Little, Darrell Creel, Myles R. Miller, and Javier G. Iñáñez.  

Stoltman, James B., Joyce Marcus, Kent V Flannery, James H.Burton, and Robert G. Moyle  

**APRIL 8. Residue Analysis**

Eerkens, J.W.  
Evershed, Richard P.  

Mukherjee, Anna J., Alex M. Gibson, and Richard P. Evershed  


Skibo, James M.  

**APRIL 15. STUDENT PAPER PRESENTATIONS**

**APRIL 22. STUDENT PAPER PRESENTATIONS**

**APRIL 29. PAPERS DUE**