COURSE DESCRIPTION

Ceramics are one of the most common and durable artifacts on many archaeological sites throughout the world, and these qualities make them especially important for understanding past societies and cultures. Ceramics have helped archaeologists investigate diet, cuisine, chronology, technological change, social learning, social boundaries, kinship, trade and exchange, migration, demography, and many, many other topics. As such, the analysis of ceramics often forms a cornerstone of archaeological research programs.

Archaeological Ceramics is a graduate-level seminar in the analysis of prehistoric pottery. We 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 inferential bases about the decisions and behaviors tied to pottery.

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 plenty of 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 human actions 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

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

FORMAT AND GRADING

We meet every Thursday 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

AUGUST 25. Prospectus
Lab 1: What can we learn from pottery?

SEPTEMBER 1. Pottery in Prehistory
Readings
Rice Chapter 1

Rice, Prudence M.

SEPTEMBER 8. Pots to Sherds to Pots
Readings
Rice Chapter 9

Braun, David P.

Crown, Patricia L.
Stark, Miriam

**SEPTEMBER 15. 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.

**SEPTEMBER 22. 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

**SEPTEMBER 29. 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  

**OCTOBER 6. 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  

**OCTOBER 13. 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.  

**OCTOBER 20. 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  

**OCTOBER 27. Breaking, Discarding, Recycling**

**Readings:**

Rice Chapter 7.4

Deal, Michael  

Deal, Michael, and Melissa B. Hagstrum  
1994 Ceramic Reuse Behavior among the Maya and Wanka: Implications for Archaeology. In *Expanding*

Stanislawski, Michael B.


Senior, Louise M.

NOVEMBER 3. NO CLASS—SEAC CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 10. Ceramic Ecology and Provenance Studies
Readings:
Rice Chapter 10.

Glascock, M. D.

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. Iñañez.

Stoltman, James B.


NOVEMBER 17. Pottery, Society, Culture
(STUDENT PAPER PRESENTATIONS)
Readings:
Rice Chapters 6 and 8
Bowser, Brenda J.  

Brown, James A.  

Crown, Patricia L.  

Eerkens, Jelmer, Hector Neff, and Michael Glascock  

Sassaman, Kenneth E., and Victoria Rudolphi  

Wallis, Neill J.  

**NOVEMBER 24. NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**DECEMBER 1. STUDENT PAPER PRESENTATIONS**

**DECEMBER 8. PAPERS DUE**