

## **ANTHROPOLOGY 3CA3: CERAMIC ANALYSIS**

### **Winter 2022**

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**Lecture:** Mon 2:30-3:20 PM, Weds  
2:30-4:20 (KTH B122)

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### **Contents**

Course Description.....	3
Course Objectives.....	4
Required Materials and Texts .....	4
Class Format.....	4
Course Evaluation – Overview .....	5
Course Evaluation – Details.....	5
Participation 5%, throughout the term.....	5
Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings .....	7
Week 1 (January 8/10) .....	7
Week 2 (January 15/17) .....	7
Week 3 (January 22/24) .....	7
Week 4 (January 29/31) .....	7
Week 5 (February 5/7).....	7
Week 6 (February 12/14).....	8
Week 7 (February 19/21).....	8
Week 8 (February 26/28).....	8
Week 9 (March 4/6) .....	8
Week 10 (March 11/13) .....	8
Week 11 (March 18/20) .....	9
Week 12 (March 25/27) .....	9
Week 13 (April 1/3).....	9
Course Policies .....	9
Submission of Assignments.....	9
Grades.....	9
Late Assignments .....	10

Absences, Missed Work, Illness .....	10
Avenue to Learn .....	10
University Policies .....	10
Academic Integrity Statement.....	10
Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities.....	11
<b>Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO)</b> .....	11
Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy .....	11
<b>Privacy Protection</b> .....	11
Course Modification .....	12

## Course Description



PRODUCTION	
<u>CONTEXT OF PRODUCTION</u>	
Mode of production	
Craft specialisation	
Raw materials Tools Energy sources	<u>TECHNIQUES SEQUENCE</u>
	Procurement
	Processing
	Forming
	Surface treatment
	Firing
DISTRIBUTION	
Trade - Exchange	
USE	
<u>CONTEXT OF USE</u>	<u>FUNCTION</u>
Domestic	Transport
Prestige gifts	Storage
Feasting	Cooking
Institutional storage	Serving
Ritual-funerary	Group identity
	Social status
RE-USE + DISCARD	

**Bolivian Pottery drying prior to firing (left), the ceramic life cycle from Sillar and Tite (2000) (right).**

Pottery is abundant in many archaeological sites, and the study of pottery has a long history in archaeology. Analysis and interpretation of ceramics has been used by archaeologists to accomplish varied ends: to establish a time scale; to document interconnections between different areas, sites, or groups of people; and to suggest what activities were carried out at particular sites. More rarely, archaeologists use ceramics as a basis to understand the organization of ceramic production itself as an important activity. The varied means that archaeologists use to bridge the gap between the recovery of ceramics and their interpretation is the focus of this course.

The course is introductory and does not assume any previous knowledge of ceramics. Although the course has a significant amount of scientific content, it will not assume a formal scientific background. It is intended to be comprehensible to non-scientists. The course aims to make you familiar with the range of techniques used in traditional pottery manufacture and to discuss the ways in which archaeological ceramics can be analyzed to yield information about the technology of their manufacture, their provenance and their date. A further aim of the course is to introduce students to some of the physicochemical analytical techniques used in the study of archaeological ceramics and to discuss the types of information each may yield.

## **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- explain the physical processes of pottery production
- explain the relevance of the societal contexts within which the production may have taken place
- critically evaluate published work relating to archaeological ceramics
- evaluate the relevance and applicability of various methods of ceramic analysis
- employ some archaeological techniques for the analysis and interpretation of ceramic materials

## **Required Materials and Texts**

- Anthropology 3CA3 Course Reader (posted as PDFs on A2L)
- Orton, Clive and Michael Hughes, 2013 *Pottery in Archaeology*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge UK.

The following books are **recommended**. If you are interested in having a copy they can be purchased through Amazon.com. They will also be available in the lab for your perusal.

- Shepard, Anna, 1982 *Ceramics for the Archaeologist*. *The full-text PDF is available for free online at*  
[http://www.carnegieinstitution.org/publications\\_online/Ceramics\\_Arch.pdf](http://www.carnegieinstitution.org/publications_online/Ceramics_Arch.pdf)
- Sinopoli, Carla, 1991 *Approaches to Archaeological Ceramics*. Springer.
- Rice, Prudence 2015 *Pottery Analysis: A Sourcebook*, Second Edition. University of Chicago Press \*\* This is the “bible” of ceramic studies, and if you can afford to buy it you are encouraged to do so.

## **Class Format**

Class meetings will include regular discussion of assigned readings, and instruction in practical steps to ceramic analysis. You will all be expected to participate in discussions of assigned readings every session. Labs will make up most of your grades in this class, and I expect you to approach them with a degree of professionalism (i.e not late, no grammatical issues, and carefully considering the issues at hand). While many of these labs will consist of group work, you are expected to show independent thought in your

lab write-ups. I will hand out some guidelines within the first few weeks of how to present these labs. The point of these labs is to develop some basic skills, all while keeping at hand the bigger issues of anthropological archaeology. You will each complete 4 lab assignments (see below). Attendance will be recorded and is one of the course requirements. **In order to successfully complete the required assignments you should expect to spend (minimally) an additional 2 - 3 hours a week in the lab.**

In order to enter the laboratory **YOU MUST HAVE WHMIS TRAINING.** Please consult the web link on Avenue to Learn.

Please also note that this class is taking place during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. **Students are reminded that you MUST complete MacCheck to obtain clearance every day that you are on campus.** Do not come to campus until you feel well. **You MUST wear a well-fitted mask to be in the laboratory.** You will be asked to leave if you cannot comply.

### **Course Evaluation – Overview**

1. Participation 5%, throughout the term
2. YouTube potting videos 5%, January 19<sup>th</sup>
3. Quiz 15%, February 14<sup>th</sup>
4. Lab 1, 10%, February 2<sup>nd</sup>
5. Lab 2, 15%, February 16<sup>th</sup>
6. Lab 3, 20%, March 7<sup>th</sup>
7. Lab 4, 30%, presentation April 4<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> report due April 13<sup>th</sup>

### **Course Evaluation – Details**

#### **Participation 5%, throughout the term**

You need to attend class! If you miss more than 3 classes you will receive a 0 for participation. "Participation" includes the expectation that every student will be prepared to begin class by discussing the most significant point they learned at the previous class session. I will be asking students, at random each week, to sum up three key points of the prior meeting. After January 26<sup>th</sup>, each week two students will be in charge of preparing two brief discussion questions for the class based on the readings. **READINGS ARE NOT OPTIONAL.** If I get the sense that you are not doing the readings your participation grade will suffer.

#### **YouTube potting videos 5%, January 19<sup>th</sup>**

You will place in an Avenue to Learn forum three links to YouTube videos showing potters at work. These links can show any number of the steps in the manufacturing sequence (accessing raw materials, preparing the materials, forming, firing, etc.). Ideally you should find three links that show different areas of the world, and different techniques. We will then show several videos each week before we start class. Have fun!

### **Quiz 15%, February 14<sup>th</sup>**

The first few weeks of class we will explore some key issues of archaeological ceramics and some of the basics of the clay-water system. It is essential that you understand the science behind pottery – without this basic background you will not understand the archaeological potential of these artifacts. On February 14<sup>th</sup> I will test you on this information with a short (30 minute) quiz.

### **Lab 1, 10%, February 2<sup>nd</sup>**

In our first lab you will reflect on the process of making a pot.

### **Lab 2, 15%, February 16<sup>th</sup>**

In the second lab you will begin to train your eye to see variability in archaeological ceramics by looking at a wide variety of sherds from a variety of socio-historical contexts. You will also learn how to translate these observations into professional illustrations.

### **Lab 3, 20%, March 7<sup>th</sup>**

In lab 3, we turn to consider the life history of vessels, from raw material procurement to vessel use, by examining sherds from a real archaeological assemblage, excavated from a local site. Here you will have to carefully reconstruct the use-life of rather fragmented vessels and explore basic patterns by using tables and graphs in excel spreadsheets.

### **Lab 4, 30%, presentation April 4<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> report due April 13<sup>th</sup>**

Our last (and biggest) lab will also rely upon pattern recognition through the tool of Microsoft excel, but this time from a much larger archaeological assemblage. This will consist of interpreting archaeological data from sites in highland Bolivia. You will learn a bit more about the archaeology of the region and you will explore specific issues pertaining to the “social life” of these potsherds. In class we will examine local clays and petrographic thin sections of the ceramics. You will present your findings in the form of a group presentation and a written paper. This lab will be more difficult, and to do well you will need to draw on aspects from lectures, labs and readings.

## **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

### **Week 1 (January 10/12)**

#### **January 10 – Class Introduction**

Readings: None

#### **January 12 – Properties of Clay 1**

Readings: O&H: Chapter 1; CP: “The Techniques of Potting”

Notes: Tour of ceramics labs.

### **Week 2 (January 17/19)**

#### **January 17 – Properties of Clay 2**

Readings: CP: “Clay Minerals and Their Properties”, “Manufacture” pp. 129-135

#### **January 19 – Properties of Clay 3**

Readings: None

Notes: 3 *Youtube* potting videos due on A2L

### **Week 3 (January 24/26)**

#### **January 24 – Lab 1 introduced**

Readings: O&H: Chapter 10

#### **January 26 – The Pottery Cycle 1**

Readings: CP: “Manufacture” pp. 135-165

Notes: Deadline for having WHMIS training finished.

### **Week 4 (January 31/Feb 2)**

#### **January 31 – Lab 2 introduced**

Readings: CP: “Manufacture” 166-185

#### **February 2 – The Pottery Cycle 2**

Readings: CP: “Giving the Potter a Choice”

Notes: Lab 1 due

### **Week 5 (February 7/9)**

#### **February 7 – Lab 2 continued**

Readings: O&H: Chapter 3 and 4

**February 9 – The Archaeological Record**

Readings: CP: Tani 1994

Notes: Optional Trip to the Gardiner Museum (Toronto) on Saturday or Sunday.

**Week 6 (February 14/16)**

**February 14 – Quiz and Lab 3 introduced**

Readings: None

Notes: Quiz

**February 16 – Production, Style & Mineralogy**

Readings: O&H: Chapters 5,6 and 16

Watch RZM Video 1

Notes: Lab 2 Due

**Week 7 (February 21/23)**

**Reading Week**

**Week 8 (February 28/March 2)**

**February 28 – Production & Geochemistry Pt. 1/ Lab 3 continued**

Readings: None

Watch RZM Video 2

**March 2 – Production & Geochemistry Pt. 2**

Readings: O&H: 13

Watch RZM Video 3 and 4

Notes: Optional trip to Sustainable Archaeology

**Week 9 (March 7/9)**

**March 7 – Lab 4 introduced**

Readings: O&H: 14, 18

Notes: Lab 3 due

**March 9 – Function, Form & Residues**

Readings: CP: "Sooting and Carbonization"

**Week 10 (March 14/16)**

**March 14 – Lab 4: Trends in Ceramic Data**

Readings: Tschopick (A2L) Janusek 1999 (A2L)



**March 16 – Standardization, Specialization and Political Economy**

Readings: articles pertinent to your site for Lab 3 (on A2L)

**Week 11 (March 18/20)**

**March 21 – Lab 4: Exploratory Statistics**

Readings: none

**March 23 – Political Economy/Foodways Pt. 1**

Readings: A2L: Mills 2007

Optional (and Weather dependent): Clay Sourcing Trip on Saturday or Sunday

**Week 12 (March 28/30)**

**March 28 – Lab 4 continued**

Readings: None

**March 30– Foodways Pt. 2**

Readings: A2L: Logan 2014

**Week 13 & 14 (April 4/6/11)**

**April 1 – In Class Presentations of Lab 4**

Readings: None

**April 3 – In Class Presentations of Lab 4**

Readings: None

**April 11 – In Class Presentations of Lab 4**

Readings: None

**Course Policies**

**Submission of Assignments**

Assignments will be submitted electronically on Avenue to Learn.

**Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

### **Late Assignments**

Assignments take place, and are due, on the day listed in the syllabus; no credit will be given for late assignments. (But see below on “Absences, Missed Work, Illness”).

### **Absences, Missed Work, Illness**

If you are absent due to illness, you will receive one extension within a reasonable time-frame (to be worked out with Dr. Roddick). After this one extension, any subsequent missed work will require documentation.

### **Avenue to Learn**

In this course we will be using Avenue to Learn. Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

## **University Policies**

### **Academic Integrity Statement**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g., the submission of work that is not one's own or for which credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities**

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca). For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

### **Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

The University recognizes that, on occasion, the timing of a student's religious, Indigenous, or spiritual observances and that of their academic obligations may conflict. In such cases, the University will provide reasonable academic accommodation for students that is consistent with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Please review the [RISO information for students in the Faculty of Social Sciences](#) about how to request accommodation.

### **Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy**

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

### **Privacy Protection**

In accordance with regulations set out by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act, the University will not allow return of graded materials by placing them in boxes in departmental offices or classrooms so that students may retrieve their papers themselves; tests and assignments must be returned directly to the student. Similarly, grades for assignments for courses may only be posted using the last 5 digits of the student number as the identifying data. The following possibilities exist for return of graded materials:

1. Direct return of materials to students in class.
2. Return of materials to students during office hours.
3. Students attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with assignments for return by mail.

4. Submit/grade/return papers electronically.

Arrangements for the return of assignments from the options above will be finalized during the first class.

### **Course Modification**

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.