

ANTHROPOLOGY 3CA3: CERAMIC ANALYSIS

Class Meetings: Mondays 2:30-3:20 pm, Tuesdays 11:30-1:20 (KTH B122)

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:00-3:00, and upon availability (CNH 509)



| PRODUCTION | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| CONTEXT OF PRODUCTION | |
| Mode of production | |
| Craft specialisation | |
| Raw materials | TECHNIQUES SEQUENCE |
| Tools | |
| Energy sources | |
| | |
| | |
| DISTRIBUTION | |
| Trade - Exchange | |
| USE | |
| CONTEXT OF USE | FUNCTION |
| 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.

Course Goals and Objectives

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.

By the end of this class you will 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 Texts:

In addition to the **Anthropology 3CA3 Course Reader**, you need the following **required** texts:

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

Sinopoli, Carla
1991 *Approaches to Archaeological Ceramics*. Springer.

****Rice, Prudence**
1987 *Pottery Analysis: A Sourcebook*. 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. Rice also published two follow up articles on her book that are a useful overview of the explosion of ceramic research since 1987:**

1996a Recent Ceramic Analysis: 1. Function, Style, and Origins. *Journal of Archaeological Research* 4:133-163.

1996b Recent Ceramic Analysis: 2. Composition, Production, and Theory. *Journal of Archaeological Research* 4:165-202.

Course Website:

The official course website is on Avenue to Learn. This is where we will manage the everyday aspects of the course: announcements, discussion, contribution of discussion questions, project progress reports, project organization issues, etc.

Course expectations and requirements:

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. You will each complete 4 lab assignments (see below). These assignments take place, and are due, on the day listed in the syllabus; no credit will be given for late assignments. 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.

GRADING

| | |
|---------------|-----|
| Participation | 10% |
| Quiz | 15% |
| Lab 1 | 10% |
| Lab 2 | 15% |
| Lab 3 | 20% |
| Lab 4 | 30% |

Participation (10%)

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 September 23, 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.

Quiz (15%)

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 October 21st I will test you on this information with a short (30 minute) quiz.

Lab Projects (75%)

Labs will make up the majority 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.

In our first lab (10%) you will reflect on the process of making a pot. 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 2, 15%). We will then 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 (Lab 3, 20%). 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. 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 (Lab 4, 30%). 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.

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.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and 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 kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, Appendix 3, www.mcmaster.ca/senate/academic/ac_integrity.htm

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty

1. Plagiarism, e.g., the submission of work that is not one’s own for which other credit has been obtained. (*Insert specific course information, e.g., style guide*)
2. Improper collaboration in group work. (*Insert specific course information*)
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

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.

Email Forwarding in MUGSI:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/support/email/emailforward.html>

*Forwarding will take effect 24-hours after students complete the process at the above link

(Approved at the Faculty of Social Sciences meeting on Tues. May 25, 2010)

| Date | Lecture (Mondays) | Lab (Tuesdays) | Readings for the week | Assignment due |
|-------------|---|--|---|--|
| Sept 8/9 | Class Introduction | <i>Two lectures this week</i> Properties of Clay 1, Tour of ceramic labs | O&H: Chapter 1 CP: “The Techniques of Potting” | |
| Sept. 15/16 | Properties of Clay 2 | <i>Two lectures this week</i> Properties of Clay 3 | CP: “Clay Minerals and Their Properties”, “The Production Sequence” | 3 <i>Youtube</i> potting videos on A2L (due on Monday!) |
| Sept. 22/23 | The Pottery Cycle 1 | Lab 1 introduced | O&H: Chapter 10 CP: and “Materials and their Preparation” and “Firing” | Deadline for having WHMIS training finished (Due on Monday!) |
| Sept. 29/30 | The Pottery Cycle 2 | Lab 2 introduced | CP: “Giving the Potter a Choice” | Lab 1 (Due on Monday!) |
| Oct. 6/7 | The Archaeological Record | Lab 2 continued | O&H: Chapter 3 and 4 CP: Tani 1994 | |
| Oct. 13/14 | THANKSGIVING...no class. | <i>Lecture:</i> Classification, Style and Seriation | O&H: Chapters 5,6 and 16 | Lab 2 (Due on Tuesday!) |
| Oct. 20/21 | Production, Style & Mineralogy | Quiz! Lab 3 introduced (and intro to excel) | On-line: Stoltman et al. 2005 | Quiz (On Tuesday!) |
| Oct. 27/28 | Production & Geochemistry | <i>Two lectures this week</i> and Lab 3 cont | O&H: 13 | |
| Nov. 3/4 | Function, form & residues | Lab 4 introduced – (Divided into groups and individual assignments research) | O&H: 14, 18, CP: Kobayashi, | Lab 3 (Due on Monday!) |
| Nov. 10/11 | Standardization, Specialization and Political Economy | Lab 4 – Trends in Ceramic Data, group discussion of reading packets | Tschopick (online) Janusek 1999 (online), and articles pertinent to your research assignment. | |
| Nov. 17/18 | Foodways | Lab 4 - exploratory stats | On-line: Mills 2007, Logan 2014 | |
| Nov. 24/25 | Learning and (the return of) Ceramic Sociology | Lab 4 continued | CP: Gosselain, and articles pertinent to your research assignment. | |
| Dec. 1/2 | In Class Presentations of Lab 4 | | | |

* Course Schedule is subject to change, but any modifications will be done well in advance, and you will be informed ahead of time.

** O&H: Orton & Hughes “Pottery in Archaeology”, CP: Coursepack, A2L: link on Avenue to Learn to article through McMaster library.