

**CERM 4324**  
**Special Problems in Ceramics**

**Course Information**

Course title – Special Problems in Ceramics

Course prefix and number – CERM 4324

Course meeting location – Fox Fine Arts Studio room 250

Course meeting times – Monday and Wednesday 11:30am-2:20pm

Required texts and materials – Clay costs and a tool list will be distributed on the first day of class. Generally, students should be prepared to spend \$150-\$250 for supplies.

**Instructor Contact Information**

Instructor's name – Associate Professor Vincent Burke

Instructor's office # - Fox Fine Arts room 251 C

Instructor's office hours –M/W 2:30pm-3:30pm, and by appointment

Instructor's phone # and email – 747-5176 vburke@utep.edu

**Instructor Introduction**

Vincent Burke holds a B.A. degree in Art History from Carleton College, and a M.F.A. in Ceramics from Louisiana State University. Currently, he is an Associate Professor of Ceramics at The University of Texas at El Paso. Vince has been working with ceramics for over 20 years, and actively exhibits his ceramic and mixed media sculpture throughout the United States.

**Course Description**

Ceramics 4324 is an advanced level course with an emphasis upon individual direction in either ceramic sculpture or utilitarian ceramics. In this final advanced course, students will pursue an individually proposed, focused body of work, usually towards the goal of their B.F.A. exhibition. The proposed course of study must have the instructor's approval, and should include, but not be limited to: specific medium choices with justification, exploration/refinement of building processes and technical concerns, and an emphasis on content exploration/refinement. Students will be required to have individual assessments at pre-scheduled times, as well as midterm and final critiques. If the student is working toward a B.F.A. exhibition, he or she will be required to submit an artist statement, resume, and a term paper that addresses material, procedural, technical, and conceptual concerns within his or her art work. Timetables for project completion and for the term paper will be negotiated between the instructor and the student.

Ceramics 4324 is a studio practice course designed primarily to serve the needs of the studio-based art major. Course style can be described as “hands-on” studio/lab with demonstrations, lectures and in-class work time. In-class work-time is structured in order to provide individualized instruction and assistance with the design/build process. This course will require significant additional work-time outside of class. Students should anticipate spending 6 hours in class per week and an additional 6-10 hours outside of class per week to satisfactorily complete this class.

## **Course Prerequisite Information**

Students taking Ceramics 4324 are required to have instructor approval. A student seeking prerequisite waiver must contact the instructor.

## **Course Goals and Objectives**

Goals and objectives targeted in Ceramics 4324 include:

- An advance level experience in the development and production/formation of ceramic sculpture or utilitarian ceramics.
- An advance level understanding of the history of ceramics, with emphasis on contemporary ceramics.
- Advance level technical aspects of ceramic production, including glaze mixing, glaze application, and individual kiln firing.
- Development of improved visual communication skills as they relate to 3-dimensional art.
- Development of self-expression, creative thinking and planning skills.

## **Course Outcomes**

Students who complete this course will have:

- Experience and advance level competency in the planning and production of a proposed body of work.
- Advance level competency and confidence in the use of the ceramics facilities equipped with ceramic forming tools.
- An improved understanding of the history of ceramics.
- An improved understanding and competency of the contemporary art world.
- An improved understanding and competency in their ability to realize and express their ideas both verbally, and in 3-dimensional terms.

Note: Competency is defined, for this course, as a developed understanding and mastery of skills and knowledge needed to complete a task to a successful advanced level. Competency can be demonstrated while designing a project, building a project, using the equipment in the ceramics facilities, etc. Competency is a measure of how well you understand and use a process or skill. Confidence is defined as a student's willingness and self-trust in their own abilities to use the skills and processes learned during this course. Confidence is built throughout the semester and is demonstrated by the way that a student develops skills or competencies and their willingness to utilize these new skills.

## Course Requirements

### Hybrid Course-Information

This course is designated as a hybrid course, which requires work outside of the UTEP studios. This may take the form of at-home artwork assignments, online research, online Zoom-type meetings, online discussions, presentations and individual and/or group critiques. As such, you will be required to have a digital device that will support these remote meetings, and I will ask that you have your cameras turned on for those meetings. You will need a decent internet connection, one that will accommodate those types of online meetings. I ask that we all observe standard practices of netiquette when we meet online.

### Assignments

Ceramics 4324 is designed around a proposed body of work submitted by the student, and approved by the instructor. Because this is an advanced course, the body of work may be considered only one piece (an installation for example), or it may include 500 pieces. The proposal must specifically state the nature and scope of the work for the semester. The student and instructor will discuss the proposed work, and will jointly determine the criteria for the proposed work no later than the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of the semester. It is expected that the advanced student will be able to budget their time according to the demands of the agreed upon proposal. There will be one major midterm critique (date to be set by professor), and one final critique (date to be set by professor), with mandatory weekly progress meetings throughout the semester. Demonstrations will be given if a student needs specific technical information.

Grades established for the proposed body of work will constitute 100% of the final grade for this course.

### Grading Standards and Criteria

Evaluation of student performance for this course is done in the following manner:

- All grades are calculated using percentages and converted into letter grades according to the following scale:

90% & above	= A	excellent quality work
80% & below 90%	= B	above average work
70% & below 80%	= C	average work
60% & below 70%	= D	below average work
Below 60%	= F	unsatisfactory work, failing
- The primary project grade will be established using full-class and individual critiques at the instructor's discretion. All students are expected to participate in all critiques, which include discussion of their own projects as well as the projects of other students. At the completion of each project and discussion, the instructor will evaluate the project success by assigning a rating of 0-10 for each of the 3 criteria, namely Concept, Concern, and

Crafts(wo)manship. Concept will evaluate the quality of the idea for the project. Concern will evaluate dedication, diligence and effort with which the student designs and completes the project. Crafts(wo)manship will evaluate the skill and quality of the material manipulation within the project. The resulting 3 criteria ratings will be averaged together to establish a project percentage for each assignment. The project grade will constitute 100% of the course final grade.

- Once a final course average is calculated, attendance penalties (if applicable) will be deducted and the final grade established.

### **Final Exam date-to be determined by Registrar**

### **Course Communication: How we will stay in contact with each other**

**Active communication is crucial to the success of any relationship.** I ask that you communicate with me if you have any questions, concerns, or have life issues that may be impacting your course participation.

In addition to meeting in class, we can meet in person during my office hours, or virtually via Teams or Blackboard Collaborate. Email me in advance to let me know if you would like to meet so I can prepare for that meeting.

The best way to contact me is through the UTEP email system. My email address is vburke@utep.edu. Please do not email me through Blackboard. Go through the UTEP system. I will make every effort to respond to your email in a timely manner.

Please be aware that I send out course announcements via Blackboard, which go to your UTEP email address. I expect you to check your UTEP email regularly.

### **Course Policies: Health and Safety Section**

***Each of us helps to build our collective commitment to use best health practices all the time.***

Getting the basics right is the most important thing each of us can do to protect ourselves and each other.

#### **Student Responsibilities**

- Sick Policy

If you are not feeling well, or if you are sick, then you should not come to this class under any circumstances. You should instead seek medical care, and/or recuperate at home. Coming to class when you are sick does not make you a hero. Email me or call me when you are able and let me know the circumstances, and I will help you to catch up in class when you are feeling better. If you are pregnant, or have other physical issues such as allergies to dust, respiratory issues, anything that I should be aware of, please inform me of this immediately, and we will work to make you safe and comfortable. If a family member is ill, and you need to care for that person, please email me or call and let me know your situation.

## Course Policies: General

Attendance, punctuality, participation and appropriate class conduct are considered performance criteria for this class. Failure to perform to required standards will result in strong grade penalties and can cause failure of this course.

### Attendance Policy:

Each student is permitted 3 excused absences during the semester without penalty. Students with more than 3 excused absences should consider dropping this course and retaking it at a time when the student can commit the proper attention to the course.

Excused absences vary in nature. Please provide proof in the form of doctor's notes or letters from governmental agencies with each absence. Excused absence examples include:

University sanctioned events (athletics, etc.) with a letter from The Dean of Students Office

Medical emergencies (yourself or care for a household/family member)

Death in the family

Military service/deployment

Weather related events that make it impossible or dangerous to travel to UTEP. I will know about weather related events that prohibit travel. If you are stuck in traffic due to an accident, you can email me at [vburke@utep.edu](mailto:vburke@utep.edu) and let me know the circumstances. Be safe and take care.

Please do not schedule non-emergency appointments during our class time. Examples include: academic advising, job interviews, legal, dental and medical etc. Missing class due to these absence examples constitutes an unexcused absence.

Each unexcused absence after 3 will result in the final course grade being lowered by 1 full letter grade.

Coming to class late or and leaving early is disruptive to the learning environment. All students are required to attend class on-time and to remain in the class the entire period. Each late/leaving early after 3 will result in the final course grade being lowered by 1 full letter grade.

Coming to class unprepared or attending class and not working is regarded as absent.

Information missed during an absence is the sole responsibility of the student.

### Course Participation:

- Participation in all discussions, critiques and class days is required for this course.
- Development and execution of class projects must be done utilizing all class meetings. Projects executed solely out of class will not be accepted.
- Participation in the collaborative group environment of the studio is essential to the successful completion of this course. This includes the online group environment for digital class meetings.

### Class Conduct:

- Guests

**Guests are not permitted at any time during class.** Please tell your friends, family members, partners, that they may see you before or after class time. You are expected to remain in class at all times, and may not step-out to visit with guests during class. You will be held responsible for adhering to this policy, and I will give you one warning. After that, I will ask you to leave class and you will be counted absent for that class period.

- Children

**Children are not permitted at any time to be in the studios.** The studios can be very dangerous places, especially ceramics studios. There are often open flames, equipment that reaches over 2,300 degrees, chemicals that should not be ingested, etc.

- Cell phones

Unless you need to have your ringer on for family or potential emergency type of reasons, please silence your phones during class time.

- Music

Music systems in the form of a boom box or cellphone or cellphone connected to Bluetooth speakers is not allowed. However, you may wear earbuds or headsets if you wish.

- Open Studio

Open studio hours will be posted for your convenience.

- Studio Safety

As mentioned earlier, ceramics areas can be hazardous if proper precautions are not taken. All safety procedures will be explained to you throughout the semester, and every consideration has been taken to create a safe environment for you to work in. If you are pregnant, or have other physical issues such as allergies to dust, respiratory issues, anything that I should be aware of, please inform me of this immediately, and we will work to make you safe and comfortable.

- Cleanliness

You are required to clean up your work area when you are finished working in the studio. Please put all of your tools, materials, etc. away in your lockers, and wipe down tables, pottery wheels, and equipment once you are finished using the labs. If you have difficulty cleaning up after yourself, then you will receive a special tutorial on how to clean up after class.

- Personal Safety

If you work alone, late at night, please be sure to let someone know where you are, and please keep a cell phone with you. **If you feel unsafe for any reason, you should call the UTEP police immediately (747-5611).** Additionally, if you would like an escort to your car at night, please call the UTEP Police department, and they should accommodate your needs. Please inform me if there is a problem, and I will address it immediately with the proper authorities.

- Work Removal

Finished works must be removed by the date set by the instructor of this course. All works left in the studio after this date will be disposed of. All tools, extra clay, etc. will become the property of the studio after this date.

### **Late Assignments, Make-up Work and Exams**

Late assignments, make-up work, and make-up exams are only afforded in the case of an excused absence by arrangement and approval of the instructor.

### Incompletes, Withdrawals, Pass/Fail

- Incompletes or “I” grades will be considered for students completing satisfactory or better work and having serious legitimate situations beyond their control requiring additional time to complete the course requirements. All “I” grades are at the discretion of the instructor and the approval of the Department Chair.
- Students hold full responsibility for withdrawing from this course if that procedure is elected. Withdrawals must be completed on or before the final date to drop a course with a “W”. Students missing this deadline will be issued a grade for the performance in the course.
- This is a grade-based course and is not available for audit or pass/fail options.

### University Policy Statements

The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Students who become pregnant or have parenting responsibilities may also request reasonable accommodations. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. The UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) will process requests for accommodations based on a disability, pregnancy, or parenting. Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, email them at [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu), or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

**Cheating/Plagiarism:** Cheating is unethical and not acceptable. Plagiarism is using information or original wording in a paper without giving credit to the source of that information or wording: it is also not acceptable. Do not submit work under your name that you did not do yourself. You may not submit work for this class that you did for another class. If you are found to be cheating or plagiarizing, you will be subject to disciplinary action, per UTEP catalog policy. Refer to <http://www.utep.edu/dos/acadintg.htm> for further information.

**Disabilities:** I will make any reasonable accommodations for students with limitations due to disabilities, including learning disabilities. Please see me personally before or after class in the first two weeks or make an appointment, to discuss any special needs you might have. If you have a documented disability and require specific accommodations, you will need to contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, email them at [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu), or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

**By choosing to enroll in this class, you agree to the conditions of this syllabus**