**Syllabus - Ceramics – Spring 2016**

**Mr. Rob Boriskin**

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**You are responsible for your learning!!**

**This class is an elective which means you have selected it from lots of other classes you could have taken. You are here to lean and I am here to help. You are in high school, and though you make some decisions about being here, the law and your parents also play a role in your presence at school.**

**I wish I could say “If you don’t want to do it, don’t” but I can’t. You are in high school and there are requirements on both you and me. What I can say is that you will only get out of this class what you put in.** My time is valuable and so is yours, I am not more important than you; we are equals. That said, I have time and I have knowledge. If you want access to either, you’ll have to commit the necessary time to this class. That means you need to do your homework, read the handouts, watch the videos, so you come to class prepared to work with clay.

**Hack your education.**For this class this means you shouldn’t stop at the videos and handouts I have in Schoology – feel free to look anywhere you can to find information about ceramics. Bring that information to class and share it with other students and me. Learn to be a lifetime learner and begin exploring the internet for information on ceramics as early as possible (in this class that will get you extra credit).

**Use electronics outside of the class.**There is a world full of digital knowledge at your fingertips; use it. For this class we are using the classroom as a time to be “unplugged” – No iPads no Phones, just a time to work with clay and talk to the people in your class. Allow yourself to enjoy working with clay and talking to your friends and fellow students.

**I have no idea what you’ll learn.**[**That is up to you.**](http://sandradodd.com/teaching/)For this class I actually have a very specific idea of what I want you to learn. The class will focus on four ways to manipulate clay to create things, including, sculpting, coiling, slabbing and throwing. These techniques will introduce you to working with clay. If you are taking Ceramics II you will have the opportunity to refine all, or specific techniques you are drawn to. I can teach until I’m blue in the face, but if you don’t want to learn, you won’t. [How will you learn new things](http://selfdirectedlearning.com/menu-link-5.html) when you leave high school? Start figuring that out now.

**You will fail. (Please, please fail.)**Take risks. You will learn more from your failures than you will from your triumphs.Ceramics may create more opportunities for failure than you are used to. With the right attitude it will also create lots of opportunities for learning from those failures. In this class, it is your effort that will define your grade, so make lots of effort and take lots of risks.

**Make something.**The world is full of people who talk a good game. Put what you know to work for you and make something tangible. Before he died, [Steve Jobs said](http://further.net/passionate-work/), “It’s not all about you and your passion. You need to get out there and make a dent in the universe.” Do that. This class will give you the opportunity to make things from clay. Take that opportunity to make the very best things you can.

**Give back.**Think hard about how you fit into the world. Make a lasting impact, even if it’s a small one.  Be an active, responsible citizen. Be kind. The world needs more kindness. Enter to learn – Leave to serve. In this class the Empty Bowls Project is just one of the many ways we can give back.

**There are no exams. In this class you have homework (reading handouts and watching videos) that I will grade based on your answers to questions about those assignments. I also give you one quiz to do as homework. For your projects (this is working with clay) you need** to show what you can do with what you know. Did you learn something? Prove it through your projects. See next section.

**Grade yourself.**In the work world, you will often have to justify your usefulness to your employer. I am required to enter grades for you throughout the semester. For projects (unlike homework) you will tell me what grade you deserve and why and then we will meet. The Matrix we use in this class requires you to grade yourself before we agree on a grade. I might be an easy grader but you should be tough on yourself; it will train you for the future.

**Document, document, document.**Show the world what you have done, what you can do. Work hard in class. Make the best pieces of ceramics you can and then share them with the world. Take pictures, put them on social media. Enter your ceramics in Art shows. Be proud of what you have done.

**Start now.**“[Do. Or do not. There is no try](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BQ4yd2W50No).” — Yoda

Below are the more traditional things I put in my syllabus.

**Welcome to Ceramics**. This is a studio level class that requires you to participate every day, be self-motivated, and disciplined. This class is designed to give you an opportunity to learn the craft of ceramics. The focus of the class will be sculpture. Expressing yourself using clay provides a durable multi-dimensional media to work with. Mastering ceramic skills, like other art forms, takes practice, discipline, concentration and patience.

**Work outside of the classroom:** To increase the amount of time you have in the classroom to work with clay, you will be required to do some reading and watching of video demonstrations outside of class. These assignments, in addition to providing you with general information about the class, will provide you with instructions on how to do each one of the required projects for this class. By you getting these instructions outside of class it will allow me more time in class to answer questions and provide you with one on one instruction. This should also allow you time in class to complete lots of extra pieces of ceramics to keep or give away and get extra credit for that work.

**Read – Watch – Do:** This class creates the opportunity for you to go through 3 separate steps in learning the craft: First, you can read about what you will be learning. Second, you can watch it being done (most of this will be in videos). Third, you will do it.

**Safety:** You will be working with tools and chemicals (glaze). It is important that you understand how to use them before embarking on any project. If you are not sure about how to use a tool or chemical get instruction prior to using them.

**Environment:** Ceramics creates opportunities for you to be aware of your environment. Until the clay has been fired, it can be reused many times. If it gets too dry, you add water (see the recycle buckets). If it’s too wet, you let it dry. The glazes you use do not contain lead, but they do contain other chemicals that are best not put into our water system. Therefore, you will be very careful not to have excessive clay or glaze washed down the drain.

**Clothing:** You will be working with clay and glazes**. It will be your responsibility to protect your clothes**. Aprons and overalls are available in the classroom. If you prefer, you can bring other protective outfits from home.

**Conduct:** All school rules as outlined in your Student Handbook will be enforced at all times. Respect your classroom environment by cleaning up thoroughly at the end of each class. Be careful not to splatter clay or glaze on furniture or other students. Any inappropriate behavior including throwing clay or misuse of materials will insure your immediate removal from class.

**Craftsmanship** will be taught. To be successful in learning you must:

* 1. **Arrive on time, prepared to work.**
  2. **Take care of outside needs before class.**
  3. **Work on ceramics only in this class.**

**Attendance:** It is imperative that you attend class regularly. You are learning a craft that requires you to use visual and other senses to learn the techniques being taught. You will be allowed to take clay home to work on projects, if necessary.

**Inappropriate Pieces:** Ceramics creates the opportunity to make lots of different forms. Sculpting on the forms creates additional opportunities to express yourself. Every piece of ceramics that students make must be consistent with Christian Brothers High School values. No inappropriate pieces will be tolerated.

**Re-cycle:** Be prepared to re-cycle what you have created. Though you may want to keep the first pot you throw or hand build, you must determine if you have mastered the skills and techniques you have been taught before keeping it. Cutting pots in half is an excellent way to determine if what you have done, was done right or wrong. You are here to learn and improve your skills. Your willingness to recycle your clay and start again shows a discipline that will help you improve your craft.

**Late/Incomplete work:** Late work will be accepted for partial credit. Work handed in that appears incomplete may not be accepted or will be marked down accordingly.

**Cheating:** All work must be your own. Any violations will receive no credit.

**Grades:** Grading Scale: Your grade is determined on a hundred-point scale.

90-100% = A

80-89% = B

70-79% = C

60-69% = D

Below 60% = F

You will be learning the craft of Ceramics in this class. Each project will be graded on how well you learned the specific techniques you have been assigned. Ceramics also provides an opportunity for artistic expression. Though you will not be graded on how your work “looks”, the opportunity to be artistic exists in every project you will be given. Each project will come with a self-evaluation form that defines what is expected. This, along with finishing the project on time and effort will determine your grade. (Note: projects that explode in the kiln reveal a lack of proper preparation and this event will affect your grade).

Your ability to judge your own work is critical so you will always grade your project first before submitting it for a final grade. This allows you to judge the effort you made and success you had. Though the final grade will be made by the instructor your assessment will help generate the discussion of your final grade.

In this class you should focus on the quality of your work. A few pieces that you spend time and hard effort on will gain you a higher grade than many quickly done or rushed pieces.

Since ceramics comes with its own vocabulary, you will also be tested on your ability to learn this new language. You will also have lots of opportunities to get extra credit that can add up to 5% to your grade.

**Office Hours** – The best way to contact me is via Schoology or e-mail. [rboriskin@cbhs-sacramento.org](mailto:rboriskin@cbhs-sacramento.org). If you prefer to meet in person, please make an appointment. If you and / or your parents have any questions do not hesitate to contact me

**Be prepared to get a little muddy and have fun!**

STUDENT AGREEMENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, have read the above list of class expectation and am in agreement with them.

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Student Signature Date

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Parent Signature Date

**Time Line: Start 1/5/16 - Please submit the electronically signed copy of this syllabus by 1/8/16. Value 15 Points.**