

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL CERAMICS

ARKY 471 - Winter 2009

Tues/Thurs 2-3:30, ES 859

Prof. Geoffrey McCafferty

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Office hours: Wed 1-3, Thurs 11-12

In complex societies, ceramic fragments (sherds) often comprise the most abundant artifact class preserved in the archaeological record. Transformed by heat into a myriad of forms, pottery offers remarkable potential for the interpretation of past cultures. This class will present students with both theoretical and practical examples of how archaeologists analyse and interpret archaeological ceramics. Lectures will cover the physical properties of pottery, techniques of production, and social aspects of ceramic consumption. Lab exercises will augment these aspects with hands-on experience employing ceramic collections from Mexico and Nicaragua. Guest lectures from faculty and graduate students engaged in on-going research will provide supplemental case studies. As a final project, students may use materials from the U of C collections, or conduct independent research on a topic of their choice (after consulting the professor).

## REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

As this course blends academic study of the literature with experiential learning, grades will be based on examinations, practical quizzes, and a research paper, as follows: midterm exam (20 pts), lab projects (6 at 5 pts each totalling 30 pts), final exam (20 pts), and an 8-10 page research paper (30 pts). Exams will be take-home essays, based on lecture and readings.

Individual grades will be based on total points received:

97-100 = A+    87-89 = B+    77-79 = C+    67-69 = D+

93-96 = A    83-86 = B    73-76 = C    60-66 = D

90-92 = A-    80-82 = B-    70-72 = C-    Less than 60 points = F

## RESEARCH PAPERS

Paper topics may be based on materials in the U of C museum collections or on themes selected by the student; topics should be cleared with the professor in advance. Referencing format **must** follow that of the journal *American Antiquity*.

**IMPORTANT:** Plagiarism, defined as copying more than 5 words in succession or using information without adequate citation (i.e., reference and page number) of the original source, is a violation of academic integrity. Research papers that plagiarize will receive a 0 score, and the student will be turned in to the Dean of Social Sciences (see

page 49 of the U of Calgary Calendar).

PET PEEVES: #1 The past tense of "to lead" is "led," "lead" as the past tense is incorrect.

#2 Conjoining "it" + "is" results in "it's;" "its" is the possessive of "it." Misuse of these terms *may* result in loss of points.

## READINGS AND TEXTS

*Approaches to Archaeological Ceramics*, by Carla M. Sinopoli. Plenum Publishing, New York, NY. 1991

*The Ceramics of Postclassic Cholula, Mexico*, by Geoffrey G. McCafferty. Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, UCLA. 2001

## COURSE OUTLINE:

Week 1 - Approaches to Archaeological Ceramics

Readings: Sinopoli, chap. 1

Week 2 - Defining Ceramics

Readings: Sinopoli, chap. 2

Week 3 - Studying Archaeological Ceramics

Readings: Sinopoli, chap. 3

Week 4 - Statistical Techniques for Ceramic Analysis

Readings: Sinopoli, Appendix

Week 5 - Introduction to Cholula Ceramic Analysis

Readings: McCafferty 2001, chaps. 1-3

Week 6 - Cholula Ceramic Analysis

Readings: McCafferty 2001, chaps. 4-6

Week 7 - READING WEEK - NO CLASSES

Week 8 - Ceramic Ethnoarchaeology

Readings: Sinopoli, chap. 4

MIDTERM EXAM DUE

Week 9 - Ceramic Production

Readings: Sinopoli, chap. 5

Week 10 - Ceramic Consumption

Readings: Sinopoli, chap. 5

Week 11 - Ceramics and Social Organization

Readings: Sinopoli, chap. 6

Week 12 - Ceramics and Political Organization

Readings: Sinopoli, chap. 7

Week 13 - Ceramic Interpretation

Readings: Hacienda Plain Revisited problem

Week 14 - Directions in Ceramic Research

Readings: Sinopoli, chap. 8