

Beginning Ceramics Class – Course Overview

This five-week Beginning Ceramics Class is designed for residents who are new to working with clay and would like to become approved members of the Ceramics Studio. The course provides essential hands-on instruction in clay techniques, studio safety, tools, and glazing.

Membership Pathway:

Successful completion of all five classes (no absences) qualifies participants for Ceramics Studio membership. This class is the primary pathway to independent studio use.

Residents with prior experience may choose to take a studio knowledge and safety test instead. All members must be able to:

- Lift and carry up to 25 pounds
- Follow written and verbal instructions
- Understand and carry out studio procedures for tools, glazes and equipment

Independent open studio use requires the abilities listed above for personal and community safety. Residents who may need assistance with any of the above requirements are welcome to enroll in a Beginning Ceramics class, where support is available. Independent use of the studio requires the requirements listed above to ensure personal and community safety.

What to Expect

Week One – Introduction to Clay & The Studio

Participants will be introduced to:

- Types of clay and their properties
- Proper clay handling and storage
- Basic studio tools and their uses
- Studio layout and shared work areas
- Students will create a pinch pot, explore simple surface decoration using stamps, and learn how to label and place work correctly on the drying shelves.

Week Two – Preparing for Bisque & Slab Roller

Students will learn how to:

- Refine and clean up a bone-dry pinch pot
- Prepare greenware properly for bisque firing
- A new project will introduce slab building, including:
- Safe and proper use of the slab roller
- Making texture impressions in clay
- Cutting and shaping slabs to form a dish
- Using slump and hump molds to create form

Week Three – Joining Clay & Constructing Forms

Students will:

- Clean up the slab-built dish and prepare it for bisque firing
- Learn proper joining techniques using score and slip technique
- Understand the importance of structural strength and sound construction

A new project will include:

- Building a small slab box from a template
 - Joining sides correctly for stability
 - Adding surface decoration and applied elements
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Week Four – Introduction to Glazing

Students will learn:

- The difference between underglazes and cone 5/6 glazes
 - How glazes change during the firing process
 - Proper techniques for glazing bisque-fired pieces
 - How to layer glazes for surface effects
 - The importance of keeping glaze off the bottoms of pieces
 - How to correctly complete a Glaze Tag for kiln firing
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Week Five – Studio Procedures & Membership Readiness

Students will:

- Complete glazing of all class projects for kiln firing
 - Learn how to sign in and reserve studio time using the online system (yourcourts.com)
 - Review studio workflow, project storage, and firing procedures
 - Receive information on where to purchase approved clay, tools, and glazes
 - Participate in a final review of studio safety, cleanup, and membership responsibilities
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Skills Covered During the Course

Over five weeks, students will learn:

- Handbuilding techniques
- Proper joining methods for clay construction
- Safe and proper use of studio tools and equipment
- Glaze application and labeling procedures
- Understanding the bisque and glaze firing process
- Studio safety, cleanup, and shared workspace expectations
- Studio scheduling and membership procedures