

# **HA 362/562 CERAMIC ARTS OF KOREA – PLACENTA JARS, POTTERY WARS AND TEA CULTURE**

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

From ancient to modern times, people living on the Korean peninsula have used ceramics as utensils for storage and cooking, as well as for protection, decoration, and ritual performances. In this class, students will examine how the availability of appropriate materials, knowledge of production/firing technologies, consumer needs and intercultural relations affected the production of different types of ceramics such as Koryŏ celadon, Punch'ŏng stoneware, ceramics for the Japanese tea ceremony, blue-and-white porcelain, and Onggi ware (a specific type of earthenware made for the storage of Kimch'i and soybean paste).

The class has two principal goals. The first is to develop visual analysis skills and critical vocabulary to discuss the material, style, and decoration techniques of Korean ceramics. By studying and comparing different types of ceramics, students will discover that ceramic traditions are an integral part of any society's culture, and are closely connected with other types of cultural products such as painting, sculpture, lacquer, and metalware. Via an analysis of production methods, students will realize that the creation of a perfect ceramic piece requires the fruitful collaboration of dozens of artisans and extreme attention to detail.

The second goal is to apply theoretical frameworks from art history, cultural studies, anthropology, history, and sociology to the analysis of Korean ceramic traditions to develop a deeper, intercultural understanding of their production. Drawing from theoretical works on issues such as the distinction between art and handicraft (Immanuel Kant), social capital (Pierre Bourdieu), "influence" (Michael Baxandall) and James Clifford's "art-culture system," students will not only discuss the function of ceramics in mundane and religious space but also explore aspects such as patronage, gender, collecting, and connoisseurship within and outside Korea.

A hands-on approach to the examination of ceramic objects in the collections of the Harvard Art Museums and an introductory tour in the art of pottery making at the Harvard Ceramics Studio will complement classroom studies. By the end of this class, students will have mastered methods of material culture analysis that can be applied to any other visual and material culture field for a deeper, multidimensional understanding of the history and culture of a society.

## **COURSE READINGS**

There is no course reader. All readings are available on Blackboard.

## **E-MAIL ETIQUETTE**

Your email's message title and subtitle should contain the course number, followed by one or two words that succinctly identify the content of your message, for example: "East Asian Studies 101 - Assignment," or "Art History 101 - Request for

Appointment.” Whenever possible ask questions in class so that all students can benefit from the answers. Address the professor as “Professor Stiller” or “Dr. Stiller.” An effort will be made to reply to emails within 24 hours. Emails will not be checked on weekends or after 5 pm on weeknights.

### **COURSE PROMISES**

You will learn how to conduct a comprehensive analysis of a ceramic piece by considering the political, historical and social conditions of its time within a broader East Asian cultural framework. Throughout the class, we should keep asking ourselves, “Why does this object look the way it does?” and keep discovering that there are a multitude of factors that explain the creation of ceramics.

This course makes a set of promises to you (assuming you fulfill the expectations below). By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

1. Describe and explain the materials, designs and technologies involved in the production of East Asian (particularly Korean) ceramics.
2. Identify, compare and contrast the meanings and functions of ceramics in varying socio-cultural contexts informing their production and reception.
3. Apply theoretical frameworks from art history, cultural studies, anthropology, history, and sociology to the analysis of Korean ceramic traditions to develop a deeper, intercultural understanding of their production.
4. Create an oral report, in which you not only describe and explain the material and design of a specific object and identify its function but also evaluate recent historiographical and theoretical issues.

### **COURSE EXPECTATIONS**

This course will only fulfill its promises if you promise the following in return:

1. **To attend class.** This course will rely largely on discussion. For this format to succeed, you must be present and on time. You will receive points for participation and attendance in this course. You may miss one class without penalty. Beginning with your second absence, you will lose 25 points from your final grade total for each subsequent absence. If you miss more than three classes, you will fail the course.
2. **To read the assigned materials.** The literature and background material we read will provide us with the common ground upon which we will base our conversations. Without that common ground, our conversations will lose some of their richness. We will have weekly group blogs and team readings to ensure that you are keeping up with the reading, and to help stimulate class discussion.
3. **To be attentive and participate in class.** Participation does not simply mean speaking aloud in class, although that is essential. You should participate by actively following the discussion, and by contributing to our semester-long conversation through the insights you gain from the readings and discussions.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

If you miss one meeting, there will be no penalty.

If you miss more than one meeting, 25 points will be deducted of your final score.

If you miss a deadline, there is no redo. 0 points for the assignment if submitted after the deadline.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Students are subject to disciplinary action for several types of misconduct or attempted misconduct, including but not limited to dishonesty such as cheating, multiple submissions, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information.

## **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the [Accessible Education Office](#) (AEO) and speak with the professor by the end of the second week of the term, Feb 5, 2016. Failure to do so may result in the Course Head's inability to respond in a timely manner. All discussions will remain confidential, although Faculty are invited to contact AEO to discuss appropriate implementation.

## **COURSE STRUCTURE**

This course contains four chapters. In each chapter, we will discuss one type or group of ceramics. We will begin each chapter with the formal analysis of the pieces and/or a foundational theory. Thereafter, we will explore aspects of its production, for example international trade, changes in consumer taste, kiln technology, etc. to understand the cultural, political and economic conditions of ceramic production and the functions of ceramics in pre-modern East Asia.

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TO GET A GOOD GRADE IN THIS COURSE**

Every class meeting is part of a chapter. Each chapter section concludes with a high-stakes assignment, i.e., a presentation. Every meeting comes with preparatory assignments. You will be required to 1) engage with the respective meeting's objects through visual examination and readings, 2) write about the objects in group blogs, 3) discuss the object and a wider range of questions in class, 4) demonstrate your knowledge about key events in Korean ceramics history and terminology as well as critical thinking skills. If you perform well in the preparatory assignments throughout the meetings, you will likely perform well in the high-stakes assignments, i.e., the presentations.

**PREPARATORY ASSIGNMENTS:** writing team reading notes; writing think pieces (critical analysis of a primary or secondary source concerning an artifact); actively participating in team reading and discussions in class; meeting with the professor to assess your academic progress in class. Prior to meeting in the classroom, you will have completed/prepared three assignments: 1) you will have uploaded your team reading notes, 2) you will have written a think piece or prepared an oral presentation, 3) you will have prepared for the team reading & discussion. In our discussions, there will be at least two kinds of questions. Straight art-historical

questions will require you to visually observe a ceramic piece and/or describe and compare two ceramic works in terms of their style and function. Inter-disciplinary questions will for example ask you to analyze a translated excerpt from a primary source and relate the information to the ceramic piece. If you do well in all preparatory assignments, you will likely do well in the high-stakes assignments, i.e., the presentations.

**HIGH-STAKES ASSIGNMENTS:** Three oral reports, which will take place in the Spencer Museum in front of the object you will be discussing. The high-stakes assignments pertain to course promises 1-4.

**EXTRA CREDIT ASSIGNMENTS:**

No extra credit.

**POINTS**

8x team reading notes, max. 10 points each, <b>DUE THE DAY BEFORE CLASS: WEDNESDAYS @ 6:00PM</b> (for class meetings on 02/04; 02/18; 02/25; 03/10; 03/24; 03/31; 04/14; 04/21)	80 points
8x participation in team readings, max. 20 points each (for class meetings on 02/04; 02/18; 02/25; 03/10; 03/24; 03/31; 04/14; 04/21)	160 points
4x think pieces about ceramics studio/museum object (one page), max. 10 points each, <b>DUE PRIOR TO THE FOLLOWING WEEK'S MEETING</b> (for class meetings on 02/11; 02/18; 03/03; 04/07)	40 points
3x presentations about museum object (10-12 min. each), max. 60 points each (for class meetings on 02/18; 03/03; 04/07)	180 points
2x meetings with professor, 5 points each (please contact instructor to schedule the meetings)	10 points
<b>Total points</b>	<b>470 points</b>

**GRADING SCALE**

Based on the points listed above final grades will be computed according to the following scale: A+=470-451, A=450-431, A-=430-421, B+=420-408, B=407-381, B-=380-371, C+=370-356, C=355-341, C-=340-331, D+=330-306, D=305-281, F=280-0.

## **RUBRICS**

Rubrics for the 1) oral presentations, 2) participation in team reading, and 3) think pieces are available on our Blackboard Course Webpage in the designated assignment section.

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**

### **CHAPTER I:**

### **ORIENTALISM, COLONIAL DISCOURSES & TERMINOLOGY ISSUES**

#### **WEEK 1 (Jan. 28, 2016)**

#### **Introduction; Overview of East Asian Ceramics History and Terminology; Visit of Study Gallery Installation**

"Ceramics," entry in *The Grove Encyclopedia of Materials and Techniques in Art*, ed. Gerald Ward. Oxford University Press, 2008. 10 pages.

Kang Kyung-sook. "Introduction to Korean Ceramics." in *Korean Ceramics*, pp. 13-19. Seoul: Korea Foundation, 2008.

#### **WEEK 2 (Feb. 4, 2016)**

#### **Yanagi Soetsu, Oriental Orientalism and Colonial Discourses**

Brandt, Kim. "Objects of Desire: Japanese Collectors and Colonial Korea." *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique*, vol. 8, no. 3 (2000): 711-746 (select pages).

Said, Edward. "From Orientalism," and Dennis Porter. "Orientalism and Its Problems." In *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, edited by Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, 132-161 (select pages). New York: University of Columbia Press, 1994.

Soetsu, Yanagi. "The Kizaemon Bowl (written in 1931)." In *The Unknown Craftsman: A Japanese Insight into Beauty*, 190-196. Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1989.

**PROMPT #1: How does Edward Said define "orientalism"? In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, who were the foreigners buying Korean ceramics? What did they buy and why? In how far is the foreigners' attitude towards Korean ceramics related to Said's theory?**

#### **WEEK 3 (Feb. 11, 2016)**

#### **FIELD TRIP #1: Ceramics Studio Visit**

### **CHAPTER II: TEA CERAMICS**

#### **WEEK 4 (Feb. 18, 2016)**

#### **FIELD TRIP #2: Tea Culture in East Asia (Museum)**

Anthony, of Taize, Brother. "A History of Tea in Korea." In *The Korean Way of Tea: An Introductory Guide*, 88-101. Seoul: Seoul Selection, 2007.

- \_\_\_\_. "A Brief History of Tea in China." In *The Korean Way of Tea: An Introductory Guide*, 76-87. Seoul: Seoul Selection, 2007.
- Willmann, Anna. "The Japanese Tea Ceremony." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-.  
[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/jtea/hd\\_jtea.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/jtea/hd_jtea.htm) (April 2011)

**PROMPT #2: How would you define the term "tea ceremony"? In how far are Korean ceramics related to the history of tea in East Asia?**

**WEEK 5 (Feb. 25, 2016)**

**Elite Ceramics for Japanese Tea Practice**

- "Bourdieu and 'Habitus'," *Powercube: Understanding power for social change*, John Gaventa/Jethro Pettit, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, <http://www.powercube.net/other-forms-of-power/bourdieu-and-habitus/>
- Eplett, Layla. 2015. "In the Japanese Tea Ceremony, Politics Are Served with Every Cup." *The Salt*, June 23, 2015.
- Koo Tae-hoon. "Flowering of Korean Ceramic Culture in Japan." *Korea Focus*, vol. 17, no. 2 (2009): 113-128.
- Lee Soyoung. "Chapter Four: Trends and Antiquarianism: Joseon Ceramics in Japan, ca. 1500-1700." In "Interregional Reception and Invention in Korean and Japanese Ceramics, 1400-1800," 100-127. PhD diss., Columbia University, 2014. UMI Number 3628210.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Chapter Three: New Beginnings in Northern Kyūshū and Western Honshu: Ceramics by Korean Immigrant Potters, ca. 1600-1650." In "Interregional Reception and Invention in Korean and Japanese Ceramics, 1400-1800," 51-99. PhD diss., Columbia University, 2014. UMI Number 3628210.

**PROMPT #3: What were the political and social functions of the Japanese way of tea? In how far did Korean ceramics support these functions? How can we relate this development to Bourdieu's theory of taste?**

**WEEK 6 (March 3, 2016)**

**FIELD TRIP #3 + FIRST PRESENTATION:**  
**Tea Culture in East Asia (Museum)**

**CHAPTER III: CELADON & POWDERED GREEN CERAMICS**

**WEEK 7 (March 10, 2016)**

**Wine Ewers & Perfume Bottles: The Chinese Perspective on Korean Celadon**

- Baxandall, Michael. "Excursus against Influence," in *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures*, 58-62. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.

- Jang Namwon, "The Development of Koryŏ Porcelain and the Chinese Ceramic Industry in the Tenth Century," in *New Perspectives on Early Korean Art: from Silla to Koryŏ*, edited by Youn-mi Kim, 193–242 (select pages) (Cambridge: Korea Institute, Harvard University, 2013).
- Jeon Seungchang, "The Best Under Heaven: The Celadons of the Goryeo Dynasty," 9–53 (select pages), in *Goryeo Celadon* (Seoul: National Museum of Korea, 2013).
- Wood, Nigel. "The Technology of Korean Celadon Wares." In *Korean Art from the Gompertz and Other Collections in the Fitzwilliam Museum: a Complete Catalogue*, edited by Yong-i Yun and Regina Krahl, 12-24. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

**PROMPT #4: What are the innovations (in terms of glaze, decoration techniques, etc.) in Koryŏ ceramics? What pottery styles and production techniques were introduced to Koryŏ from China? Why might this be? How can we relate this development to Baxandall's discussion of the term "influence"?**

**WEEK 8 (March 12-20, 2016)**  
**Spring break**

**WEEK 9 (March 24, 2016)**

**Consumers of Koryŏ Celadon, Lacquer and Bronze Objects**

- Choi, Eung-chon. "Metal Crafts." In Kumja Paik Kim, ed. *Goryeo Dynasty: Korea's Age of Enlightenment, 918 to 1392*, 171-172. San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, 2003.
- Deuchler, Martina. "Connoisseurs And Artisans: A Social View on Korean Culture (part I on Koryŏ)." In Yong-I Yun, *Korean Art from the Gompertz and Other Collections in the Fitzwilliam Museum*, 3-6. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Frick, Patricia. "Refined Craftsmanship and Exquisite Beauty: The Art of Lacquerwork in the Goryeo Dynasty." In *Korean Lacquer Art: Aesthetic Perfection*, 34-55. Exh. cat. Muenster: Museum fuer Lackkunst; Muenchen: Hirmer, 2012.

**PROMPT #5: Who were the consumers of Koryŏ celadon? What were the general aesthetic trends in Koryŏ period fashion? How can we relate this development to Bourdieu's (or any other) theory of taste?**

**WEEK 10 (March 31, 2016)**

**Powdered Green Ceramics: Ceremonial and Popular Taste**

- "Buncheong Wares Display Native Aesthetics of Joseon." In *Masterpieces of Korean Art*, 176-181. Seoul: Korea Foundation, 2010.
- Deuchler, Martina. "Connoisseurs And Artisans: A Social View on Korean Culture (part II on Chosŏn)." In *Korean Art from the Gompertz and Other Collections in the Fitzwilliam Museum*, ed. Yong-I Yun, 6-11. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Jeon, Seung-Chang. "Buncheong: Unconventional Beauty." In *Korean Buncheong Ceramics from Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art*, edited by Soyoung Lee and Jeon Seung-chang, 3-35. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2012.

Lee, Hee-Kyung. "Ideology, Politics and Vessels: White Porcelain Wares at the Early Joseon Royal Court." *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies*, vol.16 (2003): pp.167-191.

**PROMPT #6: What are the special features of powdered green ceramics (shape, glaze, design)? Why didn't the Chosŏn government continue using Koryŏ celadon ceramics at court? In how far is the production of ceramics related to power and politics?**

**WEEK 11 (April 7, 2016)**

**FIELD TRIP #4 + SECOND PRESENTATION:  
CELADON AND POWDERED GREEN CERAMICS AT MUSEUM**

## **CHAPTER IV: WHITE, BLUE-AND-WHITE & BROWN/BLACK CERAMICS**

**WEEK 12 (April 14, 2016)**

**Placenta Jars, Moon Jars and Blue-and-White Ceramics**

Chang, Chin-sung. "Ambivalence and Indulgence: The Moral Geography of Collectors in Late Joseon Korea." In *Archaism and Antiquarianism in Korean and Japanese Art*, edited by Elizabeth Lillehoj, 118-142. Chicago: Center for the Art of East Asia, Department of Art History, University of Chicago, 2013.

Kim Han, Hyonjeong. "Placenta Jars." In *In Grand Style*, ed. Hyonjeong Kim Han, 8-13. San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, 2013.

Kim, Jaeyeol. "White Porcelains Painted in Underglaze Iron-brown; White Porcelains Painted in Underglaze Copper-red," "White Porcelains Painted in Underglaze Cobalt-blue." In *Handbook of Korean Art: White Porcelain and Punch'ŏng Ware*, 48-121; 123-191. Seoul: Yekyong, 2002.

Lee, Soyoung. "In Pursuit of White: Joseon Ceramics." In *Art of the Korean Renaissance, 1400-1600*, ed. Soyoung Lee, 39-49. New York: Metropolitan Museum, 2009.

**PROMPT #7: In how far does the argument that Chosŏn elites collected colorful luxury items imported from China and Japan contradict the image of a Confucian scholar favoring "humble" white ceramics? What are the historical and stylistic differences between Chinese and Korean white/blue-and-white porcelain?**

**WEEK 13 (April 21, 2016)**

**Onggi Storage Jars for Kimch'i and Makkŏlli**

Kang Kyöngsuk. "Nest for Fermentation: Onggi." In *Korean Ceramics*, 183-191. Seoul: Korea Foundation, 2008.

Sayers, Robert. "Artisan and Merchant," "Catholic Onggi Potters," "The Ware." In *The Korean Onggi Potter*, 28-25; 36-47; 55-68. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987.

"100 Icons of Korean Culture, Ep31 Onggi." Video produced by Arirang TV, publ. Aug. 24, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6p57x0g1WfE>

**PROMPT #8: How old is the tradition of Onggi making, and why are people trying to revive it today? What are the specific production/design features of Onggi ware?**

**WEEK 14**

**NO CLASS (Stop day)**

**THIRD AND FINAL PRESENTATION: 05/05**