

ANTH 4900/6900
2016 Archaeological Field School
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY
Summer II

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BACKGROUND

The Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project (FSJAP) began in 1998 when Support the Fort, Inc. invited WMU archaeologists to locate the physical remains of Fort St. Joseph (20BE23), an 18th century mission-garrison-trading post along the St. Joseph River in Niles, Michigan and one of the oldest European settlements in the western Great Lakes. From the outset the project has had a strong community orientation. Work conducted by the 2002 WMU archaeological field school demonstrated that the site of Fort St. Joseph contains intact deposits that can inform on the history and culture of the colonial fur trade along the frontier of the French empire. Subsequent investigations in the summers of 2004, 2006-13, and 2015 have led to the recovery of hundreds of religious, military, and domestic artifacts, along with a number of fireplaces and evidence of structural remains, likely associated with the houses of fur traders.

Archaeological investigations of Fort St. Joseph are conducted under the auspices of the FSJAP, a community-based partnership involving Western Michigan University, the City of Niles, the Fort St. Joseph Museum, Support the Fort, Inc. (STF), the Society for Colonial Wars, and numerous individual and institutional sponsors. The program is an opportunity for students to practice public archaeology and heritage preservation through community engagement. In 2008 the City of Niles entered into a 10-year collaborative agreement with WMU to facilitate site exploration in order to assist in understanding, interpreting, and promoting their cultural heritage. The Museum curates a collection of over 300,000 objects associated with the fort. STF is a non-profit organization dedicated to educating the world about Fort St. Joseph. Our summer camp program and open house are significant public education and outreach components of the project in which you will participate. The field school is organized as a *learning community* with a focus on *community service learning*. The service learning objectives are discussed in greater detail below.

COURSE CURRICULUM SCHEDULE

The 2016 archaeological field school will continue investigations designed to identify, investigate, and interpret the physical remains of Fort St. Joseph (20BE23) and contemporaneous sites in the St. Joseph River valley of southwestern Michigan. This year we will expand our excavations on the floodplain (Fort St. Joseph—20BE23) and continue to explore adjacent areas.

Students in the field school will receive instruction in surveying techniques, proper field excavation, artifact processing and analysis, and interpretation of findings as part of a long-term program devoted to exploring colonial interactions between Native Americans and Europeans in the North American fur trade. In the course of a 4-day orientation, we introduce students to archaeological theory and method; background information on the fort site; and the results of previous work. We will also discuss the development of a research design and how we will implement our field methods to address our research questions. There will be lectures and discussions during orientation and later in the field school on the Native American occupation of the region before contact, the motivations of early French explorers, activities associated with the fur trade and daily life, the history and material evidence of 18th century architecture, and the importance of the St. Joseph River for people who lived in the vicinity of Niles—the theme of this year’s open house. Students will also be exposed to various information sources that historical archaeologists use in their studies such as written records, maps, and museum collections. We’ll spend the next six weeks in the field recovering, recording, and interpreting archaeological materials from sites in the St. Joseph River valley, weather permitting, including Fort St. Joseph. All students have the opportunity to gain experience in a range of different field techniques. In the event of rain we schedule other learning activities such as lectures and field trips whenever possible.

The course pack is required reading. Other required readings are posted to e-learning. Students are also encouraged to consult sources posted on our website along with the comprehensive bibliography of sources related to Fort St. Joseph listed below.

SCHEDULE OF FIELD SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

<u>Date</u>	<u>Activity (meeting time and place)</u>
6/30	Orientation (9 am–noon; 1- 4 p.m.) Topics: Introduction to the 2015 Archaeological Field School, Historical Archaeology, Archaeology of Colonialism, Public Archaeology in a Learning Community, Research Design Reading: Nassaney (2012b); Berliner and Nassaney (2015)
7/1	Orientation (9:00 –noon, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.) Topics: The Search for Fort St. Joseph, Field and Lab Procedures, On campus field exercises Reading: Nassaney (2015)
7/5	Assemble and leave for the field (8:30 a.m. from Moore Hall parking lot) Get settled in Niles, Museum visit, site tour; Evening: set up lab
7/6-7/8	In the field (8 am-4:30 pm); evening lab work (7-9 pm)
7/11-7/15	In the field (8 am-4:30 pm); evening lab work (7-9 pm);
7/18-7/22	In the field (8 am-4:30 pm); evening lab work (7-9 pm); 7/20 public lecture; Summer camp for lifelong learners
7/25-7/29	In the field (8 am-4:30 pm); evening lab work (7-9 pm); 7/27 public lecture

Summer camp for educators

8/1-8/15 In the field (8 am-4:30 pm); evening lab work (7-9 pm); 8/3 public lecture
Summer camp for middle school students

8/4 Media Day

8/6-8/7 OPEN HOUSE (8 am – 4 pm)

8/8-8/9 Recess

8/10-8/12 In the field (8 am-4:30 pm); evening lab work (7-9 pm); 8/10 public lecture

8/15-8/17 Complete field work, process and inventory artifacts, sort samples, and clean equipment. Move out of Niles, unpack on campus.

Niles is located about 65 miles from the WMU campus. To minimize traveling we have secured excellent housing in Niles. Your course fee covers the cost of housing, transportation, and equipment. **Food and general living expenses are not included in the course fee.** As you will see, this course is very different from typical classroom learning as we work and live together as a learning community. In the remainder of the syllabus you will find information on course requirements and our expectations for your performance. What follows is not the last word on these topics, but some guidelines that will facilitate the operation of the field school over the next seven weeks. We are very visible in the community and we expect that you will always be respectful in interactions with the public and our partners; you are literally the face of WMU and the project. The success of the field school is dependent upon you and the way you interact with your classmates and the community. Finally, as anyone who has taken a field school can tell you, get ready for an intense experience and a whole lot of fun!!

SERVICE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Students gain competence in surveying techniques, proper field excavation, artifact processing and analysis, and interpretation of findings by practicing and teaching novice archaeologists in our summer camp program.
2. Students learn to practice publicly engaged archaeology and heritage management by interacting with members of the community to learn how to disseminate information and how decisions are made in developing and interpreting a heritage tourist site.
3. Students gain an appreciation for the multiple stakeholders who have a concern with archaeology by attending our public lecture series and participating in an open house that showcases archaeological findings to a broad segment of the community and allows students the opportunities to discuss their role in the recovery of history.
4. Students learn how to conduct archaeology in the contemporary world in which there are multiple stakeholders with an interest in the work by engaging with communities to make the

writing of history more collaborative in an effort to transform and decolonize the discipline (see Nassaney 2011, 2012).

REQUIRED READINGS: The materials in the course pack are required readings. You should **read the course pack** carefully from cover to cover by the end of the orientation and **have it with you at all times in the field**. In addition, you should consult the readings in the bibliography.

REFLECTION/ASSESSMENT

Reflection and assessment are important components of service learning. There will be ample opportunities for reflection and assessment, both written and oral. Written reflections will take the form of journal entries, whereas oral discussions will be more informal. Read and re-read these guidelines to focus your observations and enhance your learning.

Keeping a journal is different from other writing assignments you may have undertaken. You should view it as an opportunity to express yourself by reflecting on what you hear and see in and outside of the classroom, lab, and field. Think about your personal and group interactions with objects, members of the project, our partners, volunteers, speakers, the public, and other community groups. Learning in this course is meant to be multi-layered, reflexive, and emancipatory—through your efforts you will gain understandings and insights into various subjects including yourself. This is what living in a learning community entails.

Since the field school is an exercise in community service learning (CSL), you should think about some of the following questions in your journal writings:

1. What are you learning by virtue of the service that you are doing? What is the service?
2. What are the sources of your learning (e.g., teachers, other students, the public, our partners, the readings, others)? What are some community assets? In other words, what does the community provide that the university doesn't, and vice versa? Provide specific examples.
3. Service is meant to be beneficial. What are some community needs? Who are the potential beneficiaries of the service we are providing?
4. How is CSL different from traditional classroom learning? How has CSL transformed or reinforced your ideas about archaeology, history, preservation, local communities, the University, and yourself?

Other journal suggestions, procedural and otherwise:

A. Get a notebook. Try to write at least one page a day (M-F). Think of this as a first draft. Over the weekend, reflect on your entries, organize your weekly thoughts, and synthesize your thoughts into a two-page printed summary. Put your name and date on your entry. They will only be used anonymously and kept confidential. You will produce a total of six summaries.

B. In the first two weeks you should reflect on the orientation, including the service learning objectives and teaching methods. Reflect on the practice of keeping a journal as a different way of thinking about the course and about academic knowledge and experience.

C. In subsequent weeks comment on the ideas, knowledge, and approaches that you encounter in the course. What are you learning and how are you learning it? How did our learning community and experiential learning fit your learning style? Try to distinguish between your ideas and those of others. Do these new ideas reinforce or contradict your previous thinking or past experiences? How might the community react to this knowledge? Who might this knowledge serve?

D. It is important to express your own views, perceptions, ideas, and experiences in the process of critical self-reflection. Try to be honest and frank. Your writings will be treated with appropriate sensitivity, kept confidential, and only used anonymously.

E. Always use the first person and be explicit about how your subject position (age, gender, race, ethnicity and nationality, background, socio-economic status) and the specific social conditions of your life affect your interactions with different communities and the way you think about history, archaeology, the fur trade, old forts, heritage stewardship, community groups (multiple publics), our partners, and public interpretation, for example.

F. In the last entry, reflect on the overall experience building on previous observations and understandings. Assess what you have learned and your new understandings and how the course differed from other classroom learning. Reflect on the journal as an experimental and experiential tool and compare it with other assignment methods. Discuss the ways in which learning in this field school may extend beyond archaeology and how it may have impacted your own thinking, learning, living, and social interactions. Revisit questions 1-4 to inform your reflection.

BLOGGING

In the course of the field program you will have ample opportunities to disseminate information about your work to the community. One way we do this is through our blog. Every day we are in the field we post a blog about our daily activities. This could focus on new procedures, encounters, activities, or finds. An important message that archaeologists want to get across to the public is that we are not treasure hunters—**it's not what we find, but what we find out**. The blog is a way to educate the public about our findings.

When an unusual, compelling, or particularly informative object is recovered, a student (often the finder) will be given the opportunity to conduct more research on that object to address a series of questions that can be the basis for a blog. During lab in the evening you can consult with our local resources and one of the staff to learn more about what that object can tell us about the past. The following day you can spend some time in the local library using online resources to assist you in writing your essay for the blog. That evening you share the post with the staff before it's uploaded. Here are some questions to consider:

1. What is the object and have others like it been recovered from other sites? Can you find three

other sites where similar objects have been found and, if possible, the context of their discovery?

2. What is the object made of (raw material), how was it made, and where was it produced?
3. How was it used, what was its function, and how/why did it enter the archaeological record?
4. Provide 3 sources for your information, besides Stone (1974) and Hulse (1977).

EVALUATION

At the end of the course you will be asked to provide an evaluation. You may do so anonymously. There is no formal examination in this course. To successfully complete the course you must:

- a) attend consistently and participate fully in **all** field school events and activities;
- b) provide a regular contribution to the blog; and
- c) submit your printed journal entries in a timely manner (see due dates below). Persistent patterns of tardiness will be noted. Your instructor will provide critical feedback on your journals. Here are some themes you may consider:

- 7/11 Orientation: what did I get myself into?
- 7/18 Gaining familiarity with the field and the community
- 7/25 Mastering fieldwork and cooperative learning
- 8/1 Summer camps: learning by teaching
- 8/10 The open house and lecture series: Is public archaeology worth it?
- 8/17 Back in my own bed: what have I learned from working in a swamp?

You are allowed one full day of absence during the course of the field school, no questions asked. Be sure to inform one of the staff members when you will miss class in advance. We expect all of you to do well in the course and to work to your fullest potential in the field, library, archives, laboratory, on-line, and in the community.

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