Sample service-learning course syllabus

ANTH 4900/6900

2012 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 and 2006-11 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 habitations.

The FSJAP is a community-based partnership involving Western Michigan University, the City of Niles, the Fort St. Joseph Museum, Support the Fort, Inc. (STF), the Michigan Humanities Council, 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 200,000 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.

THE 2012 PROGRAM: GOALS AND LOGISTICS

The 2012 archaeological field school will continue investigations under the auspices of the FSJAP. The goals of the project are 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 continue excavations at the nearby Lyne site (20BE10) and expand our excavations on the floodplain to ascertain the southwest and southeast boundaries of the fort.

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. Following an orientation in archaeological theory and method, we will introduce you to 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 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, and the history and material culture of the colonial military and militia. You will also be exposed to various information sources that historical archaeologists use in their studies such as written records, maps, and museum collections. We will spend approximately 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. Each of you will have the opportunity to gain experience in a range of different field techniques. In the event of rain we will schedule other learning activities including field trips when possible.

Niles is located about 65 minutes from the WMU campus. To minimize transportation time, we have secured housing in Niles. Your course fee includes 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. Above all, it is very important that 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 will 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 will learn to practice publicly engaged archaeology and heritage management by interacting with members of the community to learn how decisions are made in developing and interpreting a heritage tourist site.

3. Students will gain an appreciation for the multiple stakeholders who have a concern with archaeological matters by 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 will 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 following readings:

Nassaney, Michael S.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity (meeting time and place)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6/28</td>
<td>Orientation (9 am–noon; 1- 4 p.m., Moore 0121)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Topics: Introduction to the 2012 Archaeological Field School, Historical Archaeology, Archaeology of Colonialism, Archaeology at Fort St. Joseph</td>
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<tr>
<td>6/29</td>
<td>Orientation (9:00 –noon, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m., Moore 0121)</td>
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<td>Topics: Research Design, Public Archaeology in a Learning Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/2</td>
<td>Orientation (9:00 –noon, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m., Moore 0121)</td>
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<td>Activities: tDAR, Field and Lab Procedures, Native Americans in the St. Joseph River valley</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/3</td>
<td>Orientation (9:00 –noon, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m., Moore 0121)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Activities: Field exercises, pack the trailer</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/4-7/8</td>
<td>Independence Day Recess</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/9</td>
<td>Assemble and leave for the field (8:30 a.m. from Moore Hall parking lot)</td>
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<td>Get settled in Niles, Museum visit, site tour</td>
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<td>Evening: set up lab</td>
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<td>7/10-7/12</td>
<td>In the field; evening lab work (7-9 pm); 7/11 public lecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/16-7/19</td>
<td>In the field; evening lab work (7-9 pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7/23-7/27</td>
<td>In the field; evening lab work (7-9 pm); 7/25 public lecture</td>
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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 provide a two-page (500 word) printed summary. You will produce a total of six summaries; date them and use only your initials as a means of identification.

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 identity (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.

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. Persistent patterns of tardiness will be noted. Your instructor will provide critical feedback on your journals. Here are some themes and due dates:

7/9 Orientation: What did I get myself into?
7/16 Getting acquainted with the field and the community
7/23 Fieldwork at the Lyne site and cooperative learning
7/30 Fort St. Joseph: the place of mud and backhoes in archaeology and interpretations of 18th century
material culture

8/6 Summer camps: learning by teaching

8/15 The Open House: Is public archaeology worth it?

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.