



The Fort St. Joseph Archaeological Project and Western Michigan University's
Institute of Intercultural and Anthropological Studies present:



WMU Archaeological Field School

Summer II: July 6 - August 7, 2026

Description of the Program

You are invited to participate in the WMU archaeological field school. The program will continue archaeological investigations of Fort St. Joseph, a mission-garrison-trading post complex established by the French in 1691 and occupied for nearly a century in Niles, Michigan. Since our initial discovery of the site, we have conducted systematic excavations to demonstrate the presence of undisturbed archaeological remains. Recent work has led to the recovery of significant colonial-era artifacts, features, and faunal remains that provide insight into 18th-century life. We invite you to become a part of our archaeological team as we explore an important multi-ethnic fur-trading site and interpret our findings to the public.

Students will receive instruction in research design, current methods and theories of historical archaeology, and the practical skills of excavation, recording, and laboratory procedures. Archaeological training will specifically include an introduction into survey techniques and tools, excavation methods, as well as the processing, cataloging, and analysis of artifacts and feature data.



This archaeology field school is a community service-learning project in which students get to work closely with members of the Niles History Center, Support the Fort, Inc., the City of Niles, and other community groups who share an interest in the preservation and interpretation of the site. Thus, students will participate in our ongoing interpretation of archaeology to the local community and general public.

Students will actively engage with participants enrolled in our award-winning archaeology summer camp program and assist with outreach programs including radio broadcasting, site tours, and small group lectures. Public outreach for the field school culminates in our annual archaeology open house scheduled for August 1-2 in which we invite the public to visit the site and learn about archaeology and 18th-century life. Throughout the program, students will reflect on their experience and enhance their learning through journal writing and community engagement events like dinners and special lectures.

Field School Schedule

Students will spend their time during the week between excavating at Fort St. Joseph and conducting artifact processing. Daily activities will require physical endurance and good health. The program includes readings and discussions on topics in historical archaeology and Fort St. Joseph; lectures by noted authorities, professional opportunities; and field trips to museums and sites. In the case of rain, other educational opportunities will occur.

- Week 1: Orientation to Fort St. Joseph, learning excavation techniques, field trip, discussion of readings, and what to expect.
- Week 2: Field and lab work at Fort St. Joseph, guest lecture, summer campers, public outreach, discussion of readings and reflections.
- Week 3: Field and lab work at Fort St. Joseph, guest lecture, summer campers, discussion of readings and reflections.
- Week 4: Field and lab work at Fort St. Joseph, guest lecture, summer campers, faunal lab activity, Open House Aug 1 and 2.
- Week 5: Conclusion of field work at Fort St. Joseph, lab work, discussion of readings and reflections, opportunities for further involvement.

Registration and Credit Information

Admission to the field school is limited and by consent of the instructor. Credits are earned by enrolling in ANTH 4900 (6 hours of undergraduate credit) after you have been accepted into the program.

Applicable tuition and fees are published in the schedule of classes, with the addition of a \$500 field school fee to cover some meals, housing, travel, and facilities as well as all equipment and supplies.

Scholarship Assistance

All field school applicants will be considered for two scholarships with the completion of this application. The Paul and Dorothy Reese Armintrout Endowed Anthropology Fund, created by Verne and Paula Trinoskey, provides an award to honor Ms. Trinoskey's parents. Students can also apply for the Peter J. Schmitt Experiential Learning Award through the History Department.

There are a variety of additional scholarship opportunities outside of WMU through various anthropological and archaeological societies. If you are interested, please do not delay in searching online for these scholarships as some deadlines are quite early.

Archaeological Field School Application

ANTH 4900, 6 credit hours
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Complete the following sections and submit your application by February 6, 2026 to be considered for a scholarship. Applications will be accepted after the scholarship deadline until the course is full.

Name_____Student ID No._____

Current Address_____Phone_____

_____Email_____

Colleges/Universities Attended:_____

Major /Minor_____Current Overall GPA_____

Year in School_____Expected Graduation Date:_____

Courses taken in anthropology and related fields (e.g., history, geography, geology, sociology):

Describe any prior field, laboratory, and related experience (e.g., internships).

Other relevant experience or skills (e.g., working with archives, volunteer work, museum docent, work outdoors, carpentry, cooking, camping).

Please provide the names and contact information of two academic references.

1. Name/title_____Email:_____

2. Name/title_____Email:_____

Attach a copy of your unofficial transcript as well as a statement of personal and professional reasons for applying to the field school.

To obtain further information or to submit your completed application, please contact:

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