ARCHAEOLOGY DIG

TARRAGINDI DIG

Dr Jan Sigvartsen PhD

tarragindi.org







Berrien Springs Partnership Syllabus

CLASS TITLE:	Archaeology Dig - Tarragindi
TOTAL REQUIRED HRS:	16
ADDITIONAL TIME POSSIBLE:	Yes
TOTAL SEMESTER HOURS:	48 hours
LOCATION (address):	6161 Pheasant Court, Berrien Springs, MI 49103
PRIMARY INSTRUCTOR:	Dr Jan A. Sigvartsen PhD **(goes by Dr Jan)**
SECONDARY INSTRUCTOR:	Ms Leanne M. Sigvartsen **(goes by Ms Leanne)**
CONTACT INFORMATION:	269-363-3968 (text available) Jan@tarragindi.org Leanne@tarragindi.org tarragindi.org
INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS:	Dr Jan - BA, MA, PhD Ms Leanne – BA Psych, PGD Psych, MCouns

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To allow students to experience an archaeology dig on one of Berrien Springs' oldest settler farms from the 1830s. Dig is overseen by a PhD qualified archaeologist.
2. To teach basic excavating techniques, identification techniques, researching artifacts, critical thought, cleaning artifacts, and presentation of findings.
3. To teach local indigenous and settler history in a real way with the view of students developing belonging and a sense of place in the local community.

All our classes are half semester (8 week) programs due to weather constraints.

We can't dig in the snow or frozen ground! We do two required classes in January (January 12-15 and January 18-22). Then six weeks in either the first half or second half of the semester.

Don't overload your weekly schedule with multiple partnership classes - register for one of our programs in the first half of the semester - then register for a second one (or a class with another teacher) in the second half and still only be committed to one class each week throughout the semester! **Our class list is on the next page.**

ARCHAEOLOGY CLASS TIMES:
*You only attend **one** 2-hour Archaeology class a week FOR 8 WEEKS ONLY – you will get your desired time. You can make up missed classes by attending another time slot if needed.*

- Tuesday 4.30pm – 6.30pm (light meal provided)
- Wednesday 10am – 12pm
- Thursday 4.30pm – 6.30pm (light meal provided)
- Friday 10am – 12pm

Our Spring 2026 Classes

First Half of the Semester

- **Arrowhead Making and Ancient Tools** - learn to make stone arrowheads, identify and date them, and make ancient stone and wood tools used by ancient people. Syllabus at tarragindi.org
- **Board Gaming, Civilization Building** – learn to build strong communities by building small ones in an in-person, interactive, screen-free class. Syllabus at tarragindi.org
- **Genealogy 101** – trace your family tree as far back as you can go (Warning: HIGHLY addictive!!). Syllabus at tarragindi.org
- **Historic Photography** – learn photography by capturing a new local historic site each week and learning its story. Syllabus at tarragindi.org
- **Historic Court Trials** – bring your acting skills and relive real 1800s court trials that were tried in the Berrien Springs Courthouse – Michigan's oldest courthouse. Syllabus at tarragindi.org
- **Historic Storytelling** – learn the ancient art of telling stories and keeping our history alive. Syllabus at tarragindi.org

Second Half of the Semester

- **Archaeology Dig – Tarragindi** - Excavate one of the Berrien County's oldest settler farms, that is nearly 200 years old, with archaeologist Dr Jan Sigvartsen PhD. We find antique bottles, coins, and so much more! Syllabus at tarragindi.org
- **Cemetery Restoration Project** - Help save one of Berrien County's oldest cemeteries and learn the life stories of our earliest European settlers who are buried there. Syllabus at tarragindi.org
- **Garden Recreation Project - 1000 Years Ago** - Recreate a real Woodland Native American garden based on Michigan's very own archaeology record. Syllabus at tarragindi.org
- **Gardening Project, 1830s Early Settlers Garden** - Recreate a real Berrien County early settler garden based on historical records.
- **Historic Writing** – hone your writing skills by capturing local historical stories and getting them published. Syllabus at tarragindi.org

SYLLABUS/OUTLINE:

Class 1: (2 hours) January 12-15
Tarragindi Archaeology Dig site: 6161 Pheasant Court, Berrien Springs, MI 49103.

This is your background class to learn about why we are digging where we are and what archaeology is all about. A parent must accompany you to this program as there are documents for them to sign, we need to confirm you are registered for Google Classroom with your mentor teacher. We will go over expectations and what to wear.

Class 2: (2 hours) January 16, 2.30-4.30pm OR January 17, 2.30-4.30pm (attend 1 only)
1860 County Poor Farm Tour (Love Creek County Park, 9292 Huckleberry Rd, Berrien Center)

Did you know most early settlers couldn't tame the land into a workable farm? Many didn't even have the money to go home. That is why Berrien County set up the County Poor Farm that became a thriving community of its own and an example of what can be achieved when we work together.

Class 3: (2 hours) April 13-16
Tarragindi Archaeology Dig – 6161 Pheasant Court, Berrien Springs, MI 49103.

We start digging! We will supply all your tools and gloves. Parents and guardians can dig too. This week, we will focus on digging techniques.

Class 4: (2 hours) April 20-23
Tarragindi Archaeology Dig – 6161 Pheasant Court, Berrien Springs, MI 49103.

We keep digging! We also learn how to use the sift. We will start to classify our finds and encourage students to identify what they may have found and its age.

Class 5: (2 hours) April 27-30
Tarragindi Archaeology Dig – 6161 Pheasant Court, Berrien Springs, MI 49103.

We keep digging. Encourage students to not give up hope of finding something important that can help us understand the past.

Class 6: (2 hours) May 4-7
Tarragindi Archaeology Dig – 6161 Pheasant Court, Berrien Springs, MI 49103.

We take a walk down the road to the Long Lake Schoolhouse (now a home) where the 1800s children who lived at Tarragindi went to school. We also visit the Long Lake Cemetery where the former owners and their entire family are buried. We learn how hard early settler life really was and how these people had strong relationships with the local indigenous community.

Class 7: (2 hours) May 11-14
Tarragindi Archaeology Dig – 6161 Pheasant Court, Berrien Springs, MI 49103.

Cleaning artifacts – learn how to clean with the pros and get your finds ready for exhibition.

Class 8: (2 hours) May 18-21
Tarragindi Archaeology Dig – 6161 Pheasant Court, Berrien Springs, MI 49103.

Photographing and describing your finds (and we will do some last digging too!)

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

1) Students agree to attend at least 80% of class sessions/lessons offered. We have plenty of classes scheduled so you can easily catch-up missed classes. Attendance is kept online and tracked by Partnership staff. Unexcused absences, or failure to meet the 80% threshold may result in program discontinuation. See Ms Leanne if there is a problem or you need to attend a different class time.

2) The Partnership Student Assessment is filled out by the teacher and turned in to Partnership staff. The rubric is found on the teacher's online attendance sheet. Failing marks for lack of participation, behavior issues, excessive absences, etc. may result in program discontinuation.

3) Other class-specific assessment: Engagement in the program, follow through with instruction, care taken with handling artifacts, and participation in research of artifacts found.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

www.tarragindi.org/resources - page on our website giving links to local history resources, and Parent Partnership project resources.

CLASS-SPECIFIC POLICIES:

ZERO BULLYING – we have a zero bullying policy. We want to be a space were people build one another up, not tear each other down. Please report bullying to Ms Leanne immediately. Do not attempt to deal with it yourself or have your parent deal with it.

We work on a compassionate three-warning system. A child engaging in anti-social behaviors will be given a first and a second warning, along with compassionate and clear expectations of future behavior and examples of that behavior. We have only ever needed to give one first warning, due to the efficacy of this compassionate system. However, if a child requires a third warning, they will be removed from all Tarragindi Initiative programming.

ZERO Sexual harassment, profanity, sexually explicit, or crude behavior or speech – we have a strict zero-acceptance policy for anti-social behaviors. Again, we are a space that makes people feel welcome and accepted, not uncomfortable. Please report these behaviors to Ms Leanne immediately. She will deal with it and these behaviors were the topic of her Masters research thesis. Again, grace will be offered along with the same compassionate three warning protocol outlined above.

Withdrawal from the class: If you wish to withdraw from the class, you must do so *following Class 1 (January 12-15) or prior to Class 2 (January 16-17)*. Otherwise, very significant investment will be made in your child and their participation in the class that you may be financially responsible for. *Your class starts on January 12-15 – not when you start digging in April.* You must attend your two January classes as they are the foundation of the dig program – let us know if this is a problem as we may be able to schedule a catch-up class for you. Parent Partnership staff have been advised of our deadlines. If your schedule changes after the Tarragini withdrawal deadline, please talk to Ms Leanne, as she may be able to work something out for you or schedule another class time for you.

Attendance: If you can't attend the first two classes in January, please let Ms Leanne know so she can arrange a make-up class for you as they are the foundation of the dig program. Students can attend any one of the four scheduled classes each week. They are also welcome to come more often if they want to, or make up a class by attending another class time.

Dig Square Behavior: Dig carefully – you may damage what is under the ground. Pick up your trash and soil and remove it from the square for sifting – that is where the coins and valuables hide!

Weather: It is rare that we cancel class due to rain as we have tents to put over the square. If it is raining hard, the class will be canceled the night before and all students emailed. Check your email before coming to class. No email – class is on. Dr Jan will still go down to the site to ensure everyone got our email message.

Other: Do not enter the dig site or come onto the property when Dr Jan or Ms Leanne are not there. Stay in your car or a grab a book from the Little Lending Library in front of the property. Be kind to the neighbors by parking in the designated areas – and keep noise to a minimum. Do not remove animals, plants, fungi, artifacts, or anything from Tarragindi without permission. All finds remain the property of the property owner, who may gift them to children at her discretion.