ARROWHEAD

AND ANCIENT TOOL MAKING

Dr Jan Sigvartsen PhD

tarragindi.org



Berrien Springs Partnership Syllabus

CLASS TITLE:	Arrowhead and Ancient Tool Making (ages 8-20)
TOTAL REQUIRED HRS:	16
ADDITIONAL TIME POSSIBLE:	Yes (if needed)
TOTAL SEMESTER HOURS:	32
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. Learn to make stone arrowheads, identify and date the ones you may find locally, and make ancient stone and wood tools used by ancient people from Europe and the Americas. Develop problem solving skills in rediscovering how to build these ancient tools.
2. To teach local European and Native American indigenous 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.

Dr Jan can't do an archaeology in the snow or frozen ground! But he can teach Arrowhead and Ancient Stone Tool making! All his 11 programs do two classes in January and then half of them continue until March. The other half take a break and continue in April when the ground is thawed and we can be outside. This class is in the first half of the semester. **A list of his classes and when they are taught is on the next page.**

If you are eligible, you can register for two of his programs in the Spring 2026 semester – one in the first half of the semester, and one in the second half and not overload your schedule each week!

CLASS TIMES:
*You only attend **one** 2-hour Arrowhead and Ancient Tool Making class each week FOR 8 WEEKS ONLY – January 11 – February 23. You will get your preferred class time. You can make up missed classes by attending the other time slot if needed.*

- Monday 10am – 12pm
- Tuesday 4.30pm – 6.30pm (light meal provided)

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: Weekly approximate breakdown of activities:

Class 1: (2 hours) January 11 or 12
Tarragindi Archaeology Dig site: 6161 Pheasant Court, Berrien Springs, MI 49103.
This class is the foundation of your program. This is where we look at all the different types of arrowheads that are commonly found in Michigan and learn how to identify and date them. We also learn how to identify a worked stone at an archaeological dig. We also learn about why stone and wood tools were preferable to iron and steel tools.

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 in Berrien County 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 communities work together.

Class 3: (2 hours) January 18 or 19
6161 Pheasant Court, Berrien Springs, MI 49013

Using the Tarragindi property, we will take a look at our surroundings and put ourselves into the shoes of an ancient person. What would you need to do to establish a camp or life here with no modern conveniences? What tools would you need to accomplish your goals? What protection from the elements and wild animals would you need? We will then make a wooden spear! And then have a competition to see which ones can really fly.

Class 4: (2 hours) January 25 or 26
6161 Pheasant Court, Berrien Springs, MI 49013
Growing food: Clay was a useful material in the ancient world before they had plasticware. In this class we are going to dig some up from the ground, work it into clay, mold it into a pot and then fire it on an open fire pit. What does it look like then? Could you identify an ancient clay shard in an archaeological dig?

What ancient tools would you need to grow your own food? We will make a wood hoe, rake, and digging implements. What about preparing your food? What stone tools would you need?

Class 5: (2 hours) February 1 or 2
6161 Pheasant Court, Berrien Springs, MI 49013
Shelter and warmth: Michigan is cold. How did ancient people keep warm? We will make a simple stone axe head. We will learn how to identify and select hammer stones. We will also learn how to date ancient axe heads from Michigan and from other cultures around the world.

Class 6: (2 hours) February 8 or 9
6161 Pheasant Court, Berrien Springs, MI 49013
Arrowheads: We will review the different types of arrowheads and spears used over time and how to date them. This is the easiest way to date an archaeological site if points are found. We will also learn the basics of flint napping, how flint (and chert, jasper, and obsidian) breaks, and make our first scrapers and an arrowhead.

Class 7: (2 hours) February 15 or 16
6161 Pheasant Court, Berrien Springs, MI 49013
Clovis Points: The oldest group of people identified in the America were the Clovis people. They had an amazing spearhead called the Clovis Point that they used for hunting Wooly Mammoths and large game. We will learn about these ancient Americans and learn to make a Clovis point. There are modern Knapper's who can make one in 20 minutes!

Class 8: (2 hours) February 22 or 23
6161 Pheasant Court, Berrien Springs, MI 49013
We will do more flint knapping to make whatever you want and develop you skills as a Knapper. You can even try to do it with stone and bone if you want!

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 11-12) or prior to Class 2 (January 16-17)*. Otherwise, very significant investment will be made in you/your child and their participation in the class that you may be financially responsible for if you withdraw after this. *Your class starts on January 11-12 – not when you start flint knapping your first arrowhead.* You must attend your two January classes as they are the foundation of the 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 program. Students can attend any of the two scheduled classes each week. They are also welcome to make up a class by attending another class time too.

Stone Tool Behavior: Be safe – children engaging in horseplay, or threatening behavior with their tools will be sent home. This is an amazing opportunity to relearn ancient skills, let's be safe.

Weather: It is rare that we cancel class due to rain or snow as we have tents to put over the area. 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. Double check your spam folder.

Other: Do not enter the Tarragindi 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.