Sanisera Archaeology Institute for International Field Schools

Course 062: Zooarchaeology: Classifying the Domestic Fauna of the Roman Port of Sanisera

Course Syllabus · 2027 season

Course ID	SAI 062 · Zooarchaeology at Sanisera
Country / Location	Spain · Laboratory of the Sanisera Archaeology Institute, Ciutadella de Menorca, Balearic Islands
Dates	July to August 2027 (2 sessions of 16 days)
Duration	16 days per session
Instructional hours	84 hours (14 instructional days x 6 h)
Recommended credit equivalence	4 semester credits (reference scale: about 20 instructional hours per semester credit; 80 h = 4, 100 h = 5, 120 h = 6). Credit is awarded by the student's home institution; see section 12.
Level / Prerequisites	Introductory / intermediate. Open to students with or without previous experience.
Language of instruction	English
Maximum enrolment	6 students per session
Tuition	from USD 2,300 per session (see section 14)
Instructors	Kay Christine Getchell (Course instructor); Fernando Contreras Rodrigo (Course Director)
Contact	info@archaeology.institute · www.archaeology.institute · Ciutadella de Menorca, Balearic Islands, Spain

1. Program description

A laboratory course, without excavation, on the identification and analysis of the animal bones recovered at the Roman port of Sanisera (1st to 7th centuries AD). More than half of the remains belong to sheep and goats, followed by cattle and pigs, with smaller numbers of horses, dogs, rabbits, chickens and pigeons; the assemblage documents the diet and husbandry of a Roman and late antique port town.

Working with real material from the latest excavation seasons and with reference atlases and manuals, students learn comparative osteology, anatomical identification, ageing and sexing, butchery analysis and the recording of zooarchaeological data, and discuss how faunal remains contribute to the interpretation of the site, including the distinction between food refuse and funerary deposits.

2. Course objectives

- To teach the identification of the main skeletal elements of the principal domestic taxa.
- To train students in the recording and quantification of a faunal assemblage.
- To introduce the analysis of age, sex, butchery and taphonomy.
- To show how zooarchaeological data are interpreted in terms of diet, husbandry and ritual.

3. Learning outcomes

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Distinguish the major skeletal elements of sheep/goat, cattle, pig, horse, dog and birds, and apply this to an archaeological assemblage.
- Use anatomical terminology correctly to describe skeletal elements.
- Identify fragmented bones and butchery marks.

- Record zooarchaeological information on standard forms and quantify an assemblage (NISP, MNI).
- Explain the recovery and analytical procedures of zooarchaeology.
- Build an interpretive narrative about diet and husbandry at Sanisera and present it orally.

4. Course format and instructional hours

The work takes place in the Institute's laboratory in Ciutadella in six-hour working days held in the morning, combining the supervised analysis of faunal remains with the comparative collection (identification, recording and quantification), lectures, exercises and the review of journals and record forms with the instructor, using reference atlases and manuals. Over the 16-day session there are 14 instructional days and 2 rest days: 84 instructional hours. A visit to the site of Sanisera is included.

Total instructional hours: 84 hours. This figure appears on the Certificate of Completion and on the Student Evaluation Report.

5. Course schedule

Indicative daily schedule; the order of activities may change according to weather, site conditions and research needs.

Day	Activities
Day 1	Arrival, orientation and Code of Conduct. Introduction to the Sanisera faunal assemblage and to the recording system.
Days 2-7	Morning laboratory sessions (6 h). Comparative osteology of sheep/goat, cattle and pig: cranial, axial and appendicular skeleton; identification of fragments; taphonomy. Visit to the site of Sanisera. Review of journals and forms.
Day 8	Rest day.
Days 9-14	Morning laboratory sessions (6 h). Horse, dog, rabbit and birds; ageing (epiphyseal fusion, tooth eruption and wear) and sexing; butchery marks; quantification (NISP, MNI); each student records an assigned sample; interpretation of diet, husbandry and ritual deposits.
Day 15	Rest day.
Day 16	Final presentations (morning), assessment and certificates. Departure.

6. Assessment and grading

Students complete three assignments during the course, in addition to daily supervised work: a daily field journal, the course's recording sheets and a final presentation. The final grade is calculated as follows:

Component	Weight	Description
Field / laboratory participation and professional conduct	40 %	Daily assessment by the instructors of engagement, technique, care of the record and of the finds, teamwork and compliance with the Code of Conduct.
Daily field journal	20 %	A written entry for every instructional day describing the work carried out, the methods applied, the contexts or materials handled and the student's own observations. Reviewed weekly.
Recording sheets	20 %	Zooarchaeological recording forms (element, taxon, side, fusion, measurements, modifications) for the sample assigned to each student. Assessed for accuracy, completeness, terminology and legibility.
Final presentation	20 %	A 10-minute PowerPoint presentation, delivered on the last instructional day, on the sample recorded by the student or a taxon, body part or butchery pattern of the Sanisera assemblage, followed by questions.

Grading scale

Letter grade	Percentage

Letter grade	Percentage
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D	60-69
F	below 60

Grades are recorded as a percentage and as a letter grade on the US scale above. Students who request it receive a Student Evaluation Report signed by the Course Director, with the breakdown of the grade, the attendance record and the instructional hours completed, for submission to their home institution. The Institute does not itself award academic credit.

7. Attendance policy

Attendance at all scheduled instructional activities is compulsory. A minimum attendance of 85 % of the instructional hours is required to pass the course and to receive the Certificate of Completion. Absences for documented illness or injury are excused but still count towards the 85 % threshold; unexcused absences lower the participation grade. Students who leave the course early receive a certificate stating only the hours actually completed.

8. Prerequisites and who should apply

None. Minimum age 18.

9. Instructors

Kay Christine Getchell — Course instructor. M.A. in Bioarchaeology (San Francisco State University); B.S. in Biological Anthropology (University of San Diego). Biological anthropologist and bioarchaeologist specialised in the osteological analysis of human and faunal remains, palaeopathology and medieval funerary practice; Sanisera field school 2026.

Fernando Contreras Rodrigo — Course Director. Licenciatura in History, specialisation in Classical Archaeology (Autonomous University of Barcelona). Five-year degree officially recognised in Spain at Master's level (MECES 3). Director of the Sanisera Archaeology Institute; since 1993 he has directed research, conservation and heritage-management projects in Spain, Italy and the United Arab Emirates, and since 2015 annual excavation and restoration missions for the Government of Dubai. Author of more than thirty publications and reports.

10. Equipment and what to bring

- Lab notebook, pencils, ruler; calipers if available (the laboratory provides them).
- Own laptop (compulsory) for the recording forms, daily journal and final presentation; tablets and phones are not accepted.
- Passport; health insurance.

11. Travel and meeting point

Fly to Menorca (Mahón, MAH). Students travel on their own to the Student Residence in Ciutadella (bus or taxi, approx. 45 minutes); public buses approx. EUR 30, taxi approx. EUR 75; on the arrival day the Institute

offers a private minibus from the airport for about EUR 30-40 in cash. The address and arrival instructions are sent two weeks before the course. Meeting point: the residence, on Day 1 at 6 p.m.

Students arriving from outside the Schengen area should check whether they need a visa; the Institute issues the letter of invitation required for the application. US, Canadian, UK and Australian citizens do not need a visa for stays of up to 90 days in Spain; they will need the EU ETIAS travel authorisation once it comes into force (no start date has been fixed yet; the Institute will inform admitted students). If a Schengen visa is refused, everything paid is refunded in full on presentation of the official refusal document.

12. Academic credit and transcript

The Sanisera Archaeology Institute is an independent, non-profit institution and does not award academic credit directly. Students who wish to receive credit for this course should obtain pre-approval from their department or study-abroad office before the course begins, using this syllabus. On completion, the Institute issues a Certificate of Completion stating the course, dates, instructional hours and final grade, and, on request, a detailed Student Evaluation Report. Students from universities in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia have regularly obtained credit for Sanisera courses in this way: students from more than 40 universities have done so (see the list on the Institute's website). The Institute is currently working towards a School of Record agreement with a US accredited institution for the issue of official transcripts.

13. Code of conduct and safety

All students and staff are bound by the Institute's Code of Conduct and Anti-Harassment Policy, available on the website, which applies at the site, in the laboratory, in the accommodation and during free time. A safety briefing is given on the first day; students may decline any activity they consider unsafe. Serious breaches of the Code may lead to removal from the course without refund. Accident insurance at the site is included; students are responsible for their own health and travel insurance.

14. Dates, tuition and what is included

Session	Dates 2027	Tuition (USD)
1	14-29 July	$ 2,300
2	1-16 August	$ 2,300

Tuition includes

- Course tuition and teaching.
- Accident insurance at the site and in the laboratory.
- Accommodation in the Institute's Student Residence in the centre of Ciutadella de Menorca (rooms separated by sex, air conditioning / heating, dining room and terrace, daily professional cleaning; launderette three minutes away).
- Visits to museums and archaeological heritage of the island.
- Certificate of completion and, on request, the Student Evaluation Report.
- Letter of invitation for the Schengen visa, if required.

Not included

- Airfare from the student's home to/from Menorca (Spain).
- Meals (budget approx. EUR 23 per day; cafés and restaurants recommended by the Institute).
- Personal expenses and optional travel insurance.

Payment. A deposit of USD 450, which is part of the tuition and is deducted from the total, reserves the place and is due within five days of admission; the balance is due 60 days before the session begins. Payment plans are available on request. The Institute does not offer scholarships or discounts.

Refund policy. If the student cancels, only the USD 450 deposit is refunded, and only if the refund is requested within 20 days of paying it; the balance is not refundable, but everything paid can be converted into credit for any course in the current year or the following season. Everything paid is refunded in full if the Institute cancels the session or if the student's Schengen visa is refused (official refusal document required). Places are not transferable. Full text: Terms and Conditions of Payment on the website.

15. Recommended readings

Recommended, not required. Readings are available in the Institute's library during the course.

- Reitz, E. J. & Wing, E. S. (2008). Zooarchaeology. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- O'Connor, T. (2000). The Archaeology of Animal Bones. Stroud: Sutton.
- Schmid, E. (1972). Atlas of Animal Bones for Prehistorians, Archaeologists and Quaternary Geologists. Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Hillson, S. (2005). Teeth. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lyman, R. L. (2008). Quantitative Paleozoology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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