As a Historical Archaeologist with a background in anthropology, philosophy, and history, my interests are relatively wide-ranging and include: political economy of colonialism, capitalism, and slavery; exile; African and Native American Diasporas; resistance and defiance; marronage and the "Underground Railroad"; alienation; race; gender; labor; archaeology and history in contemporary public discourses; animal rights theory and archaeology; landscape and artifact pattern models; and, historical landscape development and dynamics. These interests in part reflect my fundamental intention as an archaeologist to help make Historical Archaeology an impacting and influential area of research for the contemporary world. I believe Historical Archaeology is a mode of professional praxis, or deliberate and purposeful action in the world, that can tell us not only about the conditions people and non-humans faced in the historical modern world but also force us to look at possibilities for positive social and political-economic change in our present and future.

In agreement with Marx, I believe that one has to live and act in the world in order to understand, comprehend, and influence it. Thus, over the past 15 years, I have worked and lived across the US (e.g., Arkansas, Michigan, Montana, Utah, Tennessee, Virginia and North Carolina) motivated by doing cultural resource management and academic archaeological work as well as the general changes that life throws at you. I have found that archaeology means many things to people but, in the end, that it does have a kind of intrinsic power in our world to foster dialogue about history, its meanings for the present, and merits of this kind of research.

Most recently, I initiated the Great Dismal Swamp Landscape Study, an ongoing multi-year archaeological study that also has oral traditional and historiographic aspects. During the first phase of the project that culminated in my dissertation (2003-2008), we discovered and excavated several sites in the vast and remote Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge in Virginia and North Carolina. I focused on the historical components of these sites (1630-1860) related to Diasporic communities that were comprised of maroons, disenfranchised Native Americans, and enslaved laborers. Ultimately, I explored the differing impacts of alienation within swamp communities through a political-economic landscape perspective, contributed new information and perspectives to contemporary discourses on swamp history, and provided some of the most detailed archaeological data available on resistant swamp-dwelling Diasporic exiles in North America. Prior to this swamp work, I studied the political-economic complexities of the nineteenth-century transition to agrarian capitalism in Michigan—with foci on landscape nucleation, alienation, gender, kinship, and labor—through excavations at the Shepard farmstead (in Battle Creek). Also, I did extensive historiographic work on the "Underground Railroad" in the nineteenth-century Midwest, focused on Battle Creek and southwest Michigan, and developed a new anthropological perspective that sees the Underground Railroad as one of many historical instantiations of marronage, a global phenomenon. My articles on these major research projects have appeared in several journals and will soon appear in several edited volumes. Also, these research projects have been discussed in documentaries, televised media, newspapers,
magazines, and at community and public conferences and workshops. Through AU field schools (beginning in May 2009), we will be continuing archaeological work in the Great Dismal Swamp. This field school program will provide a most unique pedagogical and training experience for students and, we hope, foster continued interaction between researchers, the social histories of the swamp, and the public.

I very thoroughly enjoy the process of teaching at the university level and am consistently seeking ways to make the learning experience in my classes, and in the field, more enjoyable and rewarding for students and myself. I have taught introductory courses in archaeology and historical archaeology as well as courses in historical archaeology with foci on labor and resistance. I am currently developing the course "Understanding the Modern Existential Condition through Historical Archaeology" as well as a course called "Archaeological Approaches to Political Economy."