For the class on **April 11**, we will be examining the historical ancestral distribution of a particular population: namely, you (CPSP 118G 0101). In order to do this, we would like everyone to try to get as much information as possible as to the **places** their personal ancestors were living at six different points in history:

♦ A century ago, c. 1900 CE
♦ Two centuries ago, c. 1800 CE
♦ Five centuries ago, c. 1490 CE (to make things a little simpler, we’re setting this prior to the continued presence of Europeans in the New World)
♦ Ten centuries ago, c. 1000 CE
♦ Fifteen centuries ago, c. 500 CE
♦ Twenty centuries ago, c. 1 CE

Obviously we won’t have precise historical records back to 1 CE, and in fact most of us won’t be able to trace our family genealogy back to 1490. However, most of us should be able to get back to 1900 and many people’s known family histories might even go back to c. 1800. The best resource for this is your own family, especially grandparents.

Note that you are **NOT** trying to do a family tree here: we aren’t looking for names of ancestors and their relations. We are looking at this more broadly: in what parts of the world were you ancestors **living** at given points in history. Once you’ve traced your heritage back to the Old World, we can use can use general patterns of the history of peoples and nations to approximate earlier time slices. A VERY helpful resource is the web notes compiled by Dr. Merck at http://www.geol.umd.edu/~jmerck/eltsite/reading/pershist/nations.html

The following information can be very helpful in narrowing down the places of your ancestors:

- Exactly where did they live (their city, hometown, home county, or similar, if possible)?
- What languages did they speak?
- To what ethnic and religious groups did they belong?
- Was their social status: aristocratic, mercantile, peasant, or something else?

Remember that you may have a wide range of ancestors. For example, some individuals can trace their ancestry to West Africa slaves, Native American farmers, and European aristocracy.

Your task really breaks down into two parts:

- Use what you know about your family history to trace your roots back as far as possible. Most of us will make it back to 1900 using this information, but very few will be able to get as far as 1800.
- Use your knowledge of world history and the history of the origins and migrations of your ancestor’s ethnic groups and nationalities to go back further.
Part One is simple. Talk to your families about it over Spring Break, check into whatever historical records you have access to, and see what you find out. When you do, be sure to learn all you can about the following:

- Your ancestors’ ethnic background(s)
- Their religion(s)
- Their social class(es)
- Their language(s)
- Folklore about intermarriage with other groups—even the scandalous ones. (e.g., Anglo-Americans, Native Americans, and African-Americans didn’t typically intermarry prior to the modern era, but there were much more sneaky gene-flow than most families acknowledge.)

Part Two SEEMS intimidating, but is actually fun. Don’t worry, we will provide lots of ancillary support material. This exercise will inevitably involve lots of conjecture and speculation.

Simple Rules for Historical Speculation:

Rule 1. Be reasonable. E.g., if your ancestry is English but your English forebears have a surname of French origin, like “d’Urbiville” or “Beaumont,” then it is reasonable to speculate that some of your ancestors were French-speakers who came to England from Normandy with William the Conqueror, because this is the historical origin of most of England’s French-surnamed aristocracy (themselves of both French and Norse descent). It would NOT be reasonable to speculate without evidence that they were descended from disinherited members of the Japanese royal family.

Rule 2. If your ancestors lived in a particular place at one time, assume that at least some of them lived there at previous times. E.g., just because some of your ancestors came to England with William the Conqueror doesn’t mean they all did. Most likely, they came and married local people. So, if your ancestors were English aristocrats in 1490, you would assume that their ancestors were in Normandy and England in 1000.

Rule 3. Aristocratic classes often come from conquerors that move into a region. If you have any reason to think that some of your ancestors were aristocrats of foreign origin, assume that their ancestors came from their country of origin. E.g., if your ancestors were Mexican aristocrats in 1800, you would speculate that at least some of their ancestors had been living in Spain in 1490.

Rule 4. Non-aristocrats are less likely to travel widely. Unless you have definite information to the contrary, assume that if your ancestors of humble origin were in a specific place, their ancestors were in
more or less the same place at earlier times. E.g., if your ancestors were farmers in Ireland in 1800, it's a good bet that their ancestors also were in 1490.

**Rule 5.** Cosmopolitan empires like the Roman Empire, the Abbasid Caliphate, the Ottoman Empire, or Han Dynasty China are ethnic melting pots, full of traveling traders, deployed soldiers, and slaves being shipped from all quarters - all of them sharing genes right and left. If your ancestors came from one of these empires, you must assume that their ancestors could have come from anywhere within it, regardless of their social class. E.g., if your ancestors lived in Central Italy in 1000, then their ancestors could well have lived ANYWHERE in or near the Roman Empire in the year 1.

**Rule 6.** If you come from a group that has traditionally avoided marriage with outsiders, assume that your ancestors respected this rule during the times when it was in force unless you have positive evidence to the contrary. E.g., if your ancestors were Jewish in 1800, it’s likely that they were Jewish in 1490. Be careful, though. Rules change. The Jewish regulation tracing descent through the mother wasn’t in effect in the year 1. If your ancestors were all Jewish in 1000, it doesn't follow that they all were in the year 1.

**Rule 7.** Pay attention to the etymology of your ancestor’s surnames. E.g., if your family is from India, but some ancestors have a Portuguese surname, then probably some of your ancestors were Portuguese.

**Rule 8.** Don't ignore the evidence of your senses. E.g., if your ethnic background is Gypsy, but your physical features are Northern European, you should assume that some of your ancestors were Northern European non-Gypsies, despite what your family tells you.

Your task between now and April 11 is to plot where you ancestors were (or likely were) at each of the maps provided. Each map represents a different time slice. Indicate their position on the following maps. If you know exactly where they were at a particular time slice (for example, specifically the city of Dublin rather than Ireland in 1800), then mark it as closely as you can. If not, however, you can just shade in the appropriate sector of the map. **NOTE:** the divisions on this map do not necessarily represent specific national boundaries of 2006; many instead reflect regions of longer term historical, ethnic, or similar unity.

One each map there is a box asking to explain the changes in distribution from the next most recent time period. Fill this in with your justifications. If it is based on specific information from your family, explain. If it is based on some other source of information, explain.

For class on May 4 we will map out the locations of our direct ancestors on maps representing each of these different time slices. If you want any help for the 1490, 1000, and 1 CE time slices see Drs. Holtz & Merck for advice.