

**CPSP118G Earth, Life & Time Colloquium, Semester 2**  
**Your Family, the Historical Perspective: Phase One**

For the class on April 15 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 particular relations. We are looking at this more broadly: in what parts of the world were you ancestors **living** at given points in history.

[Phase Two will be mapping out your ancestors locations, and extending it back to 1 CE. As a preview, 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, many individuals can trace their ancestry simultaneously to West Africa, North America, and Europe.

Your task for Phase One really breaks down into this:

- 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, a few will be able to get as far as 1800, but nearly no one will get back to 1490. Just get as early as you can: Phase Two will help you extrapolate earlier.

**Phase 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:

- If you know EXACTLY where they were (the city, county, town, province, etc.), record that information; even if you only know vaguely (e.g., southern Italy; northern India; southern China; etc.) this information can be very helpful.
- Your ancestors' ethnic background(s): note that some countries might have multiple ethnicities (e.g., Flemish and Walloons in Belgium; the great number of nationalities throughout India, etc.)
- Their religion(s)
- Their social class(es), caste(s), etc.
- 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 openly intermarry prior to the modern era, but there were much more "sneaky gene-flow" going on than most families acknowledge.)

NOTE: on the next page, fill in the data for the "between" categories for family lines that you cannot trace to the earlier time period. If you know where that family line was at the earlier time period, just list that one.]

PHASE ONE

**1900:**

**[between 1900 and 1800:]**

**1800:**

**[between 1800 and 1490:]**

**1490:**

**[before 1490:]**