



FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH: AN INTRODUCTION

Class Code: OS626

Level: 10 credit points

Rationale

Family History research has become a contemporary cultural phenomenon. In response to this growing interest, the Centre for Lifelong Learning has designed a suite of genealogy-related learning opportunities. *Family History Research: An Introduction* is the first of a series of classes covering ancestry and family history and is part of the Genealogical Studies Pathway of the Open Studies Certificate. The course will cover the study of ancestry and family history in the search for heritage and roots and will provide a solid knowledge and skills base for future study in the field.

Successful completion of *Family History Research: an Introduction*; *Using Technology in Your Family History Research*; and *Family History Research: Beyond the Basics* will be accepted as evidence of suitability to apply for a place on the Postgraduate Certificate in Genealogical Studies.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the class, students will be able to:

- Use basic methods in researching the history of a family
- Construct a family tree
- List the principal sources available
- Use historical evidence to place ancestors in their social, economic and cultural contexts
- Demonstrate competence in genealogical record keeping
- Illustrate ways in which the internet can be used in family history research

Class Outline

The following presents an overview of the major areas to be covered. The list does not necessarily represent the order in which topics will be addressed, nor does it imply that equal time will be devoted to each topic.

- Theory of genealogy: motivation, factors affecting successful research, historical demography & social mobility.
- A discussion of resources within the family and the methods used to record the results of research.
- An introduction to resources in libraries, national, local and specialist archives: the use of genealogical indexes, online databases and the role of family history societies.
- Civil registration and the census: a discussion of the civil registration of births, marriages and deaths and the census returns of 1841-1911 in Scotland, and in England and Wales.
- An introduction to the Old Parish Registers (OPR) and Parish Records (PR): the registers of nonconformist churches: Kirk session records and monumental inscriptions (primarily Scottish).
- A brief introduction to the use of records relating to occupations, including the professions, trades, businesses and the armed forces.
- An introduction to map and geographical resources.

Mode of Delivery / Methods of Presentation

Classes will be delivered via a combination of lectures, demonstrations, group discussions and practical activities. A flexible framework will facilitate efforts to link class discussion and required reading and study outside class meetings. Problems in family history research will be illustrated by case studies and students will be encouraged to raise individual problems in class discussions. Additionally, there are in-class formative exercises which are either collaborative or swap-marked.

Assessment

There will be two pieces of coursework. Both must be submitted to gain a satisfactory result:

- A research report, giving full details of the student's historical researches and the results. It should contain referencing and illustrations where appropriate. The report shall not exceed 2500 words (+/- 10%) excluding sources, illustrative material, documents and referencing. (100%)
- A Learning Log to be completed throughout attendance at the class and submitted in the 6th class. This provides an opportunity for students to reflect on their own learning and development during and after the class.

Students will be given a Feedback Form which outlines the various aspects of the marking.

Recommended Text

Holton, G. & Winch, J. (2009) *Discover your Scottish ancestry: internet and traditional resources*, 2nd ed. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Suggested Reading

Fowler, Simon. (2011) *Tracing your ancestors*. Barnsley: Pen & Sword. [Focus is on English sources.]

National Archives of Scotland (2011) *Tracing Your Scottish Ancestors: the Official Guide*. 6th ed. Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd.

Tutors

The tutorial team for Genealogy classes includes Tahitia McCabe BA BFA MLS PgDip (Genealogical Studies), Marie Dougan BSc, PgDip (Genealogical Studies), Judith Russell MA DipLib MSc (Genealogical Studies) and Ronnie Scott BA MPhil PhD FSA (Scot).

The online resource for Class D404, Family History Research: An Introduction (Tutor: Judith Russell; Thursday 21st January – Thursday 17th March 2016; 13.30-16.00) is now up and running at:

<http://classes.myplace.strath.ac.uk/mod/oublog/view.php?id=728968>

Here you can download the weekly handouts and any extra information.