

Six Degrees of Francis Bacon
www.sixdegreesoffrancisbacon.com

Although historians have traditionally conducted and shared their research through the written word, 21st-century historians are increasingly exploring digital alternatives such as geospatial mapping and network analysis. One such project in the emerging field of digital history is the *Six Degrees of Francis Bacon* (SDFB).

SDFB is a collaborative project that seeks to reconstruct the social network of early modern Britain, that is, a network graph of people who lived between 1500-1700 and their relationships with one another. This will eventually become a research tool for all early modern scholars, however it currently only contains small fraction (~13,000) of the people who lived in this time period. Its relationship information was also generated statistically, which means it only documents the existence of a relationship, not what sort of relationship it was. This is where you come in!

As part of this course, I am asking you to contribute on a regular basis - specifically, 10 contributions a week - to the SDFB website. These contributions *must be properly cited*.

There are three ways you can contribute to SDFB: adding information on relationships, people, or groups.

One of the most helpful ways you can contribute to the site is by adding a "type" to a relationship to indicate what sort of relationship it was, as well as its start and end date. For example, if you added a relationship type to Charles I and Charles II's relationship to indicate they are father and son, with said relationship lasting from 5/29/1630 to 1/30/1649, that would be one contribution. If you subsequently added a relationship type to indicate that they also lived together, with dates if known, that would count as a second contribution.

Another way you can contribute is by adding people to the network who are not currently a part of it - for example, not all of Henry VII's children were in our initial data set. You would include the person's name, appropriate birth and death dates, and their historical significance. That would be one contribution. If you then added new, untyped relationships to indicate they had some sort of relationships with existing nodes, that would count as additional contributions. Adding relationship types to those new relationships also count as additional contributions.

When adding new, untyped relationships or relationship types to existing relationships, you will be asked to assign a "confidence estimate" to your contribution. SDFB confidence ranges are:

80-100 certain	(relationships your course books declare to exist)
60-79 likely	(relationships your course books say are probable)
40-59 possible	(relationships that can't be decided one way or another)
20-39 unlikely	(relationships your course books say are unlikely)

0-19 very unlikely

(relationships that make no sense, indicators include

- 1) people who never lived or traveled to the same places
- 2) people whose birth and death dates don't/barely overlap
- 3) people with nothing in common, i.e. friends, profession)

Ex. (4 contributions)

Queen Elizabeth I	<i>patron of</i>	Robert, Earl of Leicester	100%
Queen Elizabeth I	<i>is admired by</i>	Robert, Earl of Leicester	80%
Queen Elizabeth I	<i>sexual partner of</i>	Robert, Earl of Leicester	20%
Queen Elizabeth I	<i>has child with</i>	Robert, Earl of Leicester	0%

The third way you can contribute to SDFB is through groups, that is collections of people. Some of the groups on our site, such as the Virginia Company, are formal associations of people that would have been recognized by contemporaries. Other groups on our site are collections of people with similar attributes, such as all mathematicians, which are instead recognized by modern scholars. You can contribute to groups by either adding a person to an existing group (one contribution per person) or by creating a new group and adding people to that group (one contribution for the group, plus additional contributions for each person you add).

No outside research is required for this assignment, though I encourage you to consult the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (www.odnb.com) to get full the day/month of dates that may only be mentioned by year in your course books. Also note that the ODNB provides you with a citation at the bottom of each article, that you can cut-and-paste into the website as needed. All contributions must be properly cited, just as you must cite information in papers, so that the site's future users can follow your research trail.