



Université  
de Bretagne  
Occidentale

# CELTIC LANGUAGES AND CULTURES IN CONTACT

AN INTERNATIONAL MASTER'S DEGREE



FACULTÉ  
DES LETTRES &  
SCIENCES HUMAINES

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN BRITTANY  
SKOL-VEUR BREIZH-IZEL, BREST

## “Celtic languages and cultures in contact”

The *Centre for Breton and Celtic Research* (University of Western Brittany, Brest) is pleased to announce the creation of a new, two-year, European-Union certified Master’s degree course entitled “Celtic languages and Cultures in Contact”.

Located in the heart of Breton-speaking Brittany, Finistère (*Penn ar Bed* in Breton, meaning literally the “end of the world”), the University of Western Brittany, Brest, is situated in one of the most beautiful regions of France. Furthermore, Brest is a little more than three hours from Rennes and Nantes and four and a half hours by TGV (i.e. high-speed train) from Paris and six hours by ferry from Devon, England.

## An International Master’s degree

Thanks to our partnerships with the University of Ulster (Coleraine) and the University College Dublin, this Master’s degree programme is one of a few in the world to offer students the possibility of learning all of the Celtic languages, medieval or modern. These languages will be studied over three semesters.

## A semester abroad in a Celtic country

The fourth and final semester will be dedicated to the specialized study of one of the medieval or modern Celtic languages in a partner institution in Ireland, Wales or Scotland. Students from outside of France who prefer to concentrate on Breton have the choice of remaining in Brittany to perfect their linguistic skills and delve more deeply into the local culture.

## Two strands: Medieval and Modern Celtic Worlds

Students registering for this Masters have the choice of following one of two strands: “**Medieval Celtic Worlds**” or “**Modern Celtic Worlds**”. As the title implies, the first strand focusses on the study of the medieval Celtic languages (Old Irish, Middle Welsh, Middle Breton/Cornish) as well as their respective literatures and cultures. Medieval Latin is on offer as well. Old French texts (in the original language) relating to the Arthurian Cycle and the Matter of Britain more generally are taught by CRBC specialists.



*A stained glass from the church of Locronan*

The focus of the second strand is on the modern Celtic languages (Irish/Scottish Gaelic, Welsh and Breton), their literatures and cultures. A little known fact is that Brittany, along with Wales, has the greatest number of native speakers (with over 200,000) of any of the living Celtic languages. A large spectrum of subjects ranging from ethnology, Celtic oral traditions as well as sociolinguistics and dialectology are on offer to those registering for this strand.

## Common core curriculum

In addition to language study, students registered in either strand will also follow common courses in the history of the Celtic languages, mediaeval and modern Celtic literatures, as well as the history of the Celtic countries.

All students registered for this Masters will also take compulsory courses in research methodology, digital humanities and will engage in professional internships (for example, translating research articles, participating in ongoing research projects in the CRBC archives...).

## Languages of instruction

We expect that up to a third or more of the students enrolled will come from abroad. This promises to create a dynamic and enriching international atmosphere.

For this reason, during the first year, the majority of classes will be taught through the medium of English. Nevertheless, some classes will be taught in French (but with English-language supports). It would therefore be very helpful for candidates to have at least an intermediate-level of French on their arrival here. To assist in their integration, foreign students will be required to perfect their spoken and written French over time. Likewise, French speakers will follow obligatory English languages classes (cf. UE4,<sup>1</sup> p. 5 below).

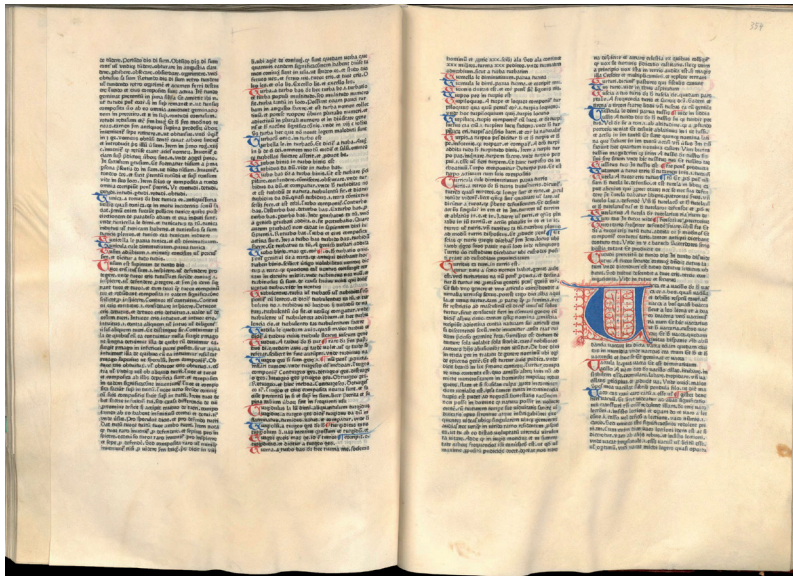
## Breton: a Neglected Celtic Tongue

Because Brittany has long been geographically, culturally and linguistically isolated from the other Celtic-speaking nations, where English generally serves as the *lingua franca* between them, contacts with Brittany have only been sporadic since the 19<sup>th</sup> century Celtic Renaissance.

For this reason, of all the Celtic languages, Breton is perhaps the least known by Celticists around the world. Yet, the depth and variety of Brittany's cultural and linguistic traditions are acknowledged by all specialists. We are confident that the strong Breton component in this Master's degree programme will provide a unique dimension which is currently lacking in most other Celtic Studies curricula elsewhere in the world.

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<sup>1</sup> An 'UE' is a 'teaching unit' which includes three or four separate courses.



In France, registration fee for a **Master's degree is about 250€ per year!**<sup>2</sup> The reason for this low fee is quite simple: French universities are all funded and subsidized by the French government in order to promote educational opportunities for all French citizens regardless of their social and economic backgrounds. Unknown to most is the fact is that non-French citizens can also register under the same conditions and pay the same fees as French nationals.

*The Catholicon, 1464, the first trilingual dictionary in the world featuring Breton, Latin and French entries – Wikimedia Commons*

## Registration and living costs

One of the great advantages of studying in Brittany (or at other universities elsewhere in France) is the low-cost of tuition / registration fees. While the cost of a university education continues to grow to prohibitively high levels in many countries around the world, students seeking to do graduate and doctoral-level study should be aware that there is another alternative!

<sup>2</sup> \$280 and 225£ respectively, according to November 2016 exchange rates. This excludes insurance costs.



*The School of Arts and Human Sciences, home to the CRBC*



*Dr. Nelly Blanchard lecturing on the “Popular ballads of Brittany”*

## The University of Western Brittany, Brest

The University of Western Brittany is located in the lively port-city of Brest. The School of Arts and Social Sciences, home to the CRBC, is modern, practical and functional. Students registering for “Celtic language and cultures in contact” are guaranteed top-notch educational instruction by highly-trained, nationally-certified French and international university lecturers.

This means that money which would be otherwise spent on high registration/tuition fees can be used to cover educational expenses as well as living and transportation costs. In addition, students who would prefer to forgo living in a low-cost student dormitory can easily find high-quality rental accommodations in the city of Brest ranging from 250-400 euros per month.



*Breton folk-singing session with Brigitte Kloareg in a local pub*

In all cases, students who earn this master’s degree will benefit from a rigorous, intellectually stimulating curriculum which will certainly open multiple avenues for PhD research and, perhaps more importantly, provide them with valuable multilingual and practical professional skills which will serve them all of their lives, and all this in one of the loveliest parts of Brittany.

# The Centre for Breton and Celtic Research (CRBC)

The *Centre for Breton and Celtic Research* is a multidisciplinary research laboratory uniting 46 members (historians, linguists, Anglo-Celticists and Celticists, ethnologists, sociologists...) from the Universities of Western Brittany, Brest, and the University of Upper Brittany, Rennes 2.

Together, they explore topics and areas of research within Breton and Celtic linguistic and cultural domains and also do individual or collective research in other fields in Europe and around the world.

The CRBC team is also composed of 60 PhD students, 79 research fellows and 9 administrative and technical staff.

Furthermore, the CRBC library houses the largest collection of Breton and Celtic books, journals and sound archive recordings in continental Europe including hours of Breton-language field recordings (i.e. Professor Le Dû's *Nouvel Atlas Linguistique de la Basse Bretagne*).

For those interested in learning more about this educational opportunity, consult the University of Western Brittany's website:

[http://www.univ-brest.fr/  
UFR-Lettres-et-Sciences-Humaines](http://www.univ-brest.fr/UFR-Lettres-et-Sciences-Humaines).

For further questions please contact Dr. Gary German [garygerman.crbc@yahoo.fr](mailto:garygerman.crbc@yahoo.fr) (Director of the Master's programme in "Celtic Languages and Cultures in Contact").

For more specific information about mediaeval studies, contact the co-directors of this strand:

- Dr. H el ene Bouget : [helene.bouget@univ-brest.fr](mailto:helene.bouget@univ-brest.fr)  
or
- Dr. H el ene T etrel : [helene.tetrel@univ-brest.fr](mailto:helene.tetrel@univ-brest.fr)



*The CRBC library*

## The Curriculum: Semesters 7, 8, 9

### Mediaeval Celtic Worlds

<b>UE1</b>	History of the Celtic languages
	Introduction to the medieval Celtic languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old Irish</li> <li>• Middle Welsh</li> <li>• Middle Breton &amp; Middle Cornish</li> </ul>
	Literatures of the Celtic nations
	Histories and civilisations of the Celtic nations

<b>UE2</b>	An Introduction to Old French or Latin
	Transversal approaches: The Arthurian Cycle and the Matter of Britain in the literatures of Europe
	History of texts and manuscripts (studies in paleography)

### Common to both strands

<b>UE3</b>	Digital humanities
<b>UE4</b>	Modern languages: English, French, Breton
<b>UE5</b>	Economy and law : professional integration
<b>UE6</b>	Tutorial subjects and professional internships

### Semester 10 (common to both strands)

<b>UE1</b>	Study abroad/internship in one of the Celtic countries
<b>UE2</b>	Master's dissertation and viva

## The Curriculum: Semesters 7, 8, 9

### The Modern Celtic Worlds

<b>UE1</b>	History of the Celtic languages
	Introduction to the modern Celtic languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern Irish / Scottish Gaelic</li> <li>• Modern Welsh</li> <li>• Modern Breton</li> </ul>
	Literatures of the Celtic nations
	Histories and civilisations of the Celtic nations

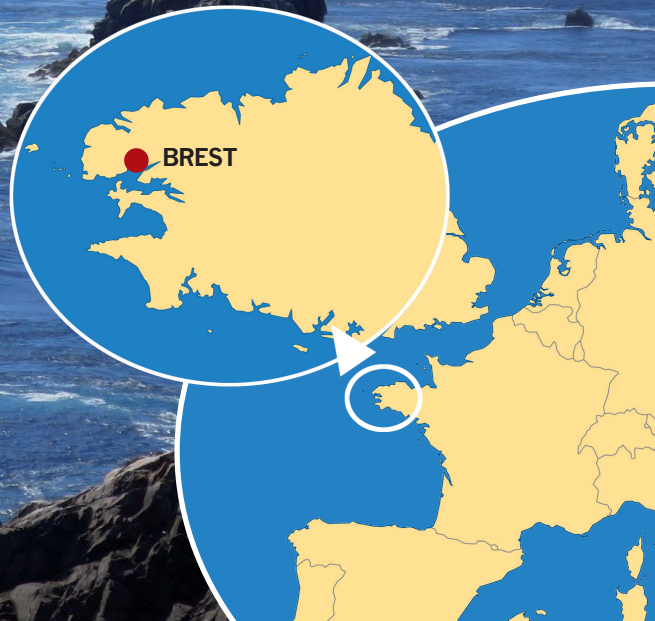
<b>UE2</b>	Immaterial heritage of the Celtic countries (Ethnology, morays and folkways...)
	Oral literatures of the Celtic countries
	Language shift, sociolinguistics & linguistic policies

### Common to both strands

<b>UE3</b>	Digital humanities
<b>UE4</b>	Modern languages: English, French, Breton
<b>UE5</b>	Economy and law : professional integration
<b>UE6</b>	Tutorial subjects and professional internships

### Semester 10 (common to both strands)

<b>UE1</b>	Study abroad/internship in one of the Celtic countries
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<http://www.univ-brest.fr/UFR-Lettres-et-Sciences-Humaines>