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## NKU's Celtic studies minor offers more than just history

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**HIGHLAND HEIGHTS** - Northern Kentucky University's Department of Anthropology has announced a Celtic studies minor.

Professor Michael Simonton said the field is particularly important to this region.

"This area was settled by Scots and Scots Irish in the Federal period," said Simonton. "Today many area people trace their ancestry to these settlers, including famous figures such as Simon Kenton, who founded Maysville, Ky., and Urbana, Ohio, and Rebecca Galloway, who was at one time the fiancée of the great Shawnee leader, Tecumseh."

The minor will be an interdisciplinary program. Students will take courses from different departments - anthropology, history and English. Furthermore, they can take electives in philosophy and political science.

"If one considers the origins of Western culture to be the Greeks and Romans, traditional enemies of the Celts, then you could say that the course combines history, legend, archeology, ethnography and a bit of linguistics to take a non-Western look at the origins of Western culture."

Simonton spearheaded the new minor after conducting research in Ireland and earning his Ph.D. from the National University of Ireland in Galway

"I had always been interested in the idea of a Celtic studies program along the lines of African-American studies, Judaic studies and Native American studies programs," said Simonton.

"After coming to NKU I learned from (NKU English professor) Gary Walton that he had tried to get an Irish studies program started through the Cincinnati-area consortium of colleges and universities. I thought that if it were broadened to include the other Celtic nations and confined to one university that it might be even more successful."

Simonton said anthropology program coordinator Charlotte Neely agreed with him and had the minor approved through NKU's curriculum committees.

He said a Celt could be any number of people, depending on how you study them - archeologically, historically, or linguistically.

"Today, Celtic generally means the inhabitants of the modern Celtic nations," said Simonton. "Archeologically, it refers to people who lived in Austria, Switzerland and the Rhineland in the early Iron Age. Historically, it refers to a tribe, or group of tribes in western Gaul north of Aquitaine and west of the Seine, described about 2,500 years ago as the 'Keltoi' by the Hellenic colonists of what is today Marseille, France. I sometimes linguistically distinguish between Celt, Welsh, Cornish and Breton, and Gael, Scots, Irish, and inhabitants of Mann.

"We could also include any of the descendents of these groups as modern Celts. Take your pick."

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