

# PhD Studentship in Collections-Based Research (English Literature)

**Project title:** Beckett and the City

**Department:** Department of English Literature

**Supervisors:** Dr Conor Carville and Professor Steven Matthews

**Project Overview:** Samuel Beckett was a city-dweller all his life and his prose and early poetry in particular contain vivid descriptions of the urban life and urban fabric of Dublin, London and Paris. Thus for example the recently acquired *Murphy* MS reveals how London becomes a character in itself, conceived as an active force in the narrative rather than a passive stage on which events are played out. Focusing on *Murphy*, along with its supporting notebook (also held by the Beckett Collection), this PhD also proposes to examine Beckett's wider depiction of the twentieth-century city, its shifting populations, marginal spaces, institutions and informal networks. Drawing on urban studies, architecture and philosophy as well as literary criticism and textual scholarship, *Beckett and the City* will exhaustively examine a previously overlooked dimension of Beckett's achievement.

The project may be guided by the following research objectives, although it is important that the successful researcher builds their own distinctive project in collaboration with their supervisors.

- To establish the importance of the concept of the city for Beckett's work.
- To demonstrate the influence of specific urban geographies on Beckett's work.
- To analyse Beckett's relationship with contemporary urban thought such as postcolonial town-planning in 1930s Dublin or Situationism in Paris.
- To track the development of Beckett's engagement with the politics of the city up to and including his lengthy stays in Cold War Berlin.
- To distinguish Beckett's use of the city from that of Modernists like Eliot and Joyce.

The University of Reading's Samuel Beckett Archive comprises around 8,000 items and is the most extensive collection of materials relating to the author and dramatist Samuel Beckett (1906 - 1989) in the world. Dating back to the 1930s it is unique in the richness of its manuscript holdings including manuscript, typescript drafts, notebooks, annotated production texts, and books from Beckett's personal library.

For more information about the Samuel Beckett Archive, please visit

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/special-collections/collections/sc-beckett.aspx>

The Department of English and the wider intellectual community at the University of Reading provides a supportive environment for advanced research in Beckett. Please visit the Beckett at Reading website for further details of current projects and activities:

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/beckett/>

**Eligibility:**

- Applicants should hold a minimum of a 2:1 Bachelors Degree in a relevant subject (e.g. English Literature).
- Due to restrictions on the funding this studentship is only open to candidates who are categorised for fees purposes as UK(Home)/EU.

**Funding Details:**

- Start date: October 2014
- Duration: 3 years full-time or part-time equivalent
- Value of award: Fees paid plus £2000 per annum bursary.

**How to apply:** To apply for this studentship please submit an application for a **PhD in English Literature** to the University - see <http://www.reading.ac.uk/Study/apply/pg-applicationform.aspx>

Please quote the reference GS-CBR8 in the '*Scholarships applied for*' box which appears within the *Funding Section* of your on-line application.

**Application Deadline: 29 March 2014**

**Further Enquiries:** For further details please contact Dr Conor Carville :  
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