Dear Graduate Students,

Hope your new academic year is off to a great start! This year, Sungkyunkwan University has joined the consortium of the Dickens Project and will send a graduate student to represent SKKU at the 2023 Dickens Project summer institute (the Dickens Universe), to be held at UC Santa Cruz. Details about the Dickens Universe can be found here: http://dickens.ucsc.edu/universe/index.html. The featured novel for 2023 will be *A Tale of Two Cities* by Charles Dickens. Graduate students should plan to arrive by Saturday afternoon, July 22, and depart Saturday morning, July 29, 2023.

The Dickens Universe is a one-week summer boot camp for Dickens lovers. Every summer, each consortium university sends a couple of (or several) delegates to participate in the universe, which consists of a variety of guest lectures, workshops, graduate seminars, tea parties, etc. Graduate students will select either one of the professional academic seminars or lead a reading session for the general public. They will also attend the guest lectures and graduate seminars. The speakers for this year’s Universe include Catherine Robson (New York University), Andrew Miller (Johns Hopkins University), and Catherine Gallagher (UC Berkeley). They will share the complete slate once all of the plenary speakers have been confirmed.

In order to participate, you must be a graduate participant in the BK21 program of the English department at SKKU and get an academic article published by the end of the year. We plan to have the housing, meals, and transportation to be covered by our BK21 budget, so please apply for the BK21 fellowship as well.

Students who are interested in attending the Dickens Universe this summer to represent SKKU for the first time should send a single-spaced page of research statements and a double-spaced page of close-reading to Professor Ji Eun Lee at jieunclee@skku.edu by March 9 at 9pm and are encouraged to attend the info session, which will held at noon on Friday, March 3rd. Those who are enrolled in Prof. Lee’s graduate seminar will be asked to stay for the first day of the graduate seminar after the info session ends.

In your research statement, please specify your field of research and questions you want to pursue in your master’s thesis or doctoral dissertation in English. If you are a first year and do not have a specific plan yet, please select and read one of the articles published in https://online.ucpress.edu/ncl/issue/75/2. Summarize the main arguments of the article and write about what interests you most and how the arguments resonate with your future research questions. What do you want to study more?

In the close-reading response, please select a passage from the first chapter of *A Tale of Two Cities*, available on Gutenberg. Check the attached guidelines for close-reading and write a paragraph or two to analyze what the passage suggests in English. Please think it as a kind of class assignment that you have done and will do in graduate seminars.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email me and come see me at the info session. I am so excited to have an opportunity to bring a brilliant graduate student (you!?) to represent SKKU at the Dickens Universe!

Looking forward! -J
Close Reading

To move from reading as a good high school student to reading as a university-level English student, you must **SLOW DOWN**. To complete thoroughly the steps I have outlined below takes time and patience.

1. **WHAT/WHO:** Establish the basic information by addressing all of the following questions that apply to the passage:
   
   What’s happening?
   To Whom?
   How does it fit into the larger story?
   Who is narrating/speaking?
   Who/What is being described?
   Who/what is being addressed?
   Can you roughly paraphrase the passage?
   Check the following: **characters, plot, setting, themes or motifs**

2. **HOW:** Make observations regarding language and form. This is where the slowest, closest reading comes in.

   How does the passage express or convey its meaning?
   Are figurative devices used?
   Are certain sounds, words or phrases repeated?
   Are certain parts of speech repeated?
   Is the diction unexpected or unfamiliar?
   Are there any words you want to look up in the *OED*?
   Is the order of words (syntax) unexpected or unfamiliar?
   What types of sentences are used (simple, complex)?
   Do any details seem odd or irrelevant?
   Do any of the line breaks seem abrupt or odd? (poetry)
   Check the following: **structure (and genre), imagery, diction, tone, figurative languages** *(metaphor, simile), syntax, narrative perspective*

3. **WHY, SO WHAT?:** Think about how steps #1 and #2 interact. In other words, consider why the author writes the passage the way s/he does.

   How does what you’ve observed in step 2 affect (deepen, raise questions about, shift or change) your understanding of the passage?
   Do additional meanings or implications or ambiguities become visible?
   Do any contradictory meanings arise (allowing one to begin reading against the overt meaning of the passage)?

   → Generate an analytic or interpretive thesis based on your close reading.