THE PARR CENTER
ETHICS SCHOLAR
PROGRAM

Artwork: Will Applewhite
The Parr Center for Ethics has been proud to be Carolina’s focal point for inquiry into and discussion of ethical questions since 2004. The Parr Center is committed to integrating abstract work in ethical theory with thoughtful, informed discussion of practical ethical issues that are important to the University and the communities it serves. The overall mission of the Parr Center is to nourish and foster ethical reflection on campus and beyond.

As of 2020, the Parr Center is pleased to be able to offer a structured program for Carolina undergraduates from all fields of study who are interested in ethics. Students who participate in the program invest significant time and effort in ethical reflection, leadership, and skills development over two years. In recognition of their special concentration on ethics, students who complete the program are recognized as Parr Center Ethics Scholars by an official designation on their University transcript.

The creation of this program has been made possible by a generous donation from the Center’s founding donor, Gary Parr, whose support we gratefully acknowledge.
The Parr Center Undergraduate Fellowship is a selective co-curricular program for which students are chosen on the basis of a written application and a personal interview with Parr Center staff. Criteria for selection are the student’s interest in deepening their ethical competencies through co-curricular enhancement and their likely contribution to team-based and project-based ethical learning.

Fellows are expected to participate in all required Fellowship activities. The Fellowship kicks off each year with a full-day orientation/retreat with Parr Center staff, at which Senior Fellows lead group activities. Fellows meet regularly as a body throughout the academic year to hear and discuss Fellow-focused lectures in which scholars from across UNC present current research in ethics specifically to the Fellows. In addition, Fellows are required to attend a number of the Parr Center’s public lectures each year. After training with Parr Center staff, Undergraduate Fellows serve as moderators at the North Carolina and National High School Ethics Bowls competitions, which are held on our campus each year. Finally, Senior Fellows pursue team-based projects in ethics at the Parr Center throughout the academic year. They spend at least two hours per week working with their teams and are supervised closely by Parr Center staff. As Senior Undergraduate Fellows, Parr Center Ethics Scholars will spend about 85 hours per year, 170 hours in total, on these co-curricular activities at the Parr Center.

TWO YEARS AS A PARR CENTER SENIOR UNDERGRADUATE FELLOW

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a) One course drawn from a master list of pre-approved undergraduate courses in ethics across the University. Qualifying courses are centrally concerned to nourish student reflection on ethics and ethical problems. Scholars may substitute a course not on the master list if approved by the Parr Center Director.

b) One capstone course in ethics, usually supervised by Parr Center academic staff, for which Scholars may choose between mentored research and mentored experiential learning.

These capstone experiences serve to deepen and put into practice student knowledge of ethics and ethical problems. In the typical case, Parr Center academic staff personally mentor the Scholars in this component, although Scholars may request approval from the Parr Center Director to work with a different mentor when that is more suitable to the project they wish to pursue.

Scholars who elect the mentored research route write a research paper in ethics under the mentorship of a professor, normally a member of the Parr Center academic staff. They register for an appropriate three-credit course, such as (if supervised by Parr Center academic staff) PHIL 396 (Directed Readings), or (if supervised by a mentor from outside the Parr Center) an appropriate course in another academic unit. Courses labeled as Directed Readings, Directed Studies, or Undergraduate Research would typically be appropriate.

Scholars who elect the mentored experiential learning route complete a three-credit experiential learning course in ethics under the mentorship of a professor, normally a member of the Parr Center academic staff. Parr Center academic staff regularly teach two such courses, namely PHIL 261 (Ethics in Action) and PHIL 292 (Fieldwork in Philosophy). Scholars may complete an alternative experiential learning course upon approval of the Parr Center Director.
AT LEAST ONE RELEVANT SKILLS TRAINING COURSE OFFERED BY A CAMPUS UNIT

Approved skills training courses help Scholars learn to include and lead others in ethical pursuits.

TWO REQUIREMENTS FOR SENIORS

a) A senior reflection. Scholars must submit a written senior reflection in which they articulate how participation in the Parr Center Ethics Scholar program has enhanced their ethical reflection, leadership, and practice. Parr Center staff provide individualized feedback in order to help Scholars make meaning from their experiences in the program.

b) A public presentation in the last semester. Seniors must present their mentored research or another project in ethics at a poster show open to the public or at an approved conference or symposium open to the public.

Participants in the program will submit a log each semester of their experiences and activities from the above list. Parr Center staff will review the cumulative logs prior to graduation to ensure completion of all program requirements.