

January 2020

Dear Graduate Students,

I am writing today to offer you an opportunity to participate in a Northwestern project about ethics and civic life. It will give you a chance to work across disciplines and to learn more about how to mentor undergraduates as you engage with them in a project that serves the Evanston community. Let me tell you a bit about the program – the Brady Program in Ethics and Civic Life.

It is the result of a generous gift to Weinberg College from the Brady family. They had been concerned about the ethical failures of so many of our public officials, scientists, business and religious leaders, and scholars. They were distressed that so many undergraduates lack a disciplined academic training in the texts of moral philosophy. They wanted to find a way of nurturing a sense of obligation to humanity among Northwestern students. In 2007, we began the Brady Program to address these needs.

The Program supports sixteen undergraduate students for a three-year course of study and practical experience. They apply and are selected during the spring quarter of their freshman year. The program begins in their sophomore year, when they take a full year of philosophy seminars. Here they receive a rigorous background and training in the fundamental concepts and issues of morality and politics – the nature of the good life, justice, democracy and other core values in the humanities and sciences. The Program gives them exposure to the wider world by requiring them to study abroad in their junior year, and to reflect on the politics and values of another country. In their senior year, they work together for two quarters on a single collaborative capstone project that focuses on a local (Evanston) political issue of their choosing.

We include graduate students in the Brady Program by offering them three-year fellowships. In return, we ask them to mentor one sixteen-student cohort, and to oversee their progress as they work their way through the three years of the program. Each class of Brady undergraduates is divided into groups of four. A graduate student is assigned to each group. At frequent meetings of these small groups, graduate fellows provide ongoing support and guidance to undergraduates as they learn about the city of Evanston and its social, economic, and political problems. The graduate students maintain frequent contact with their four assigned undergraduates when the latter are studying abroad. And when those undergraduates return to campus, the graduate students who are mentoring them help them further refine their ideas about the collaborative community project that will be undertaken in the senior year. It is expected that their international experience, combined with their first year of course work, will create a firm basis for the task they undertake as seniors.

One further aspect of the Brady Program are frequent informal meetings with refreshments, coffee, and tea – and sometimes lunch and dinner. These are open to and attended by everyone affiliated with the Program: the undergraduates in each of its three cohorts, the graduate students who are mentoring them, and the faculty affiliated with the Program.

Here are further practical details: For your three-year participation, you will receive an award of \$9,000. As Director, I will guide your interaction with your group of students. You will have to be in residence in Evanston during your class's sophomore and senior years, but in your junior year you are free to do research elsewhere, provided that you maintain frequent contact with your group. We will award four fellowships each year. You need not be in a Weinberg department to apply for the fellowship, as we are interested in bringing together a broad range of scholars. (If you choose to do so, you may re-apply in a later year to supervise another class, as long as you commit to the three years each class will need.)

I believe that this will be a valuable and enjoyable experience for you, and an excellent way for you to develop mentoring skills and prepare for the job market.

Please consider becoming a part of this small, lively, politically engaged, scholarly community. We attract some of the most interesting and impressive students at Northwestern. I would be happy to answer any questions you have, and to put you in touch with graduate students who are currently serving as Brady Graduate Fellows. You can email us at brady@northwestern.edu. I recommend browsing through our website, <http://www.bradyprogram.northwestern.edu/>. That will give you additional information and a link to the application, which is due March 1, 2020.

Sincerely,

Richard Kraut
Department of Philosophy
Director, Brady Program in Ethics and Civic Life