



## **Pilgrimage Program**

### **MISSION**

The purpose of the Pilgrimage program—in keeping with the Chapel and Religious Life Office’s mission of fostering lives committed to doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God—is to help students grow in their faith, to deepen religious life on campus, to learn from other faith communities from around the world particularly in the ways these communities serve the most vulnerable of society.

### **OVERVIEW**

The Chapel and Religious Life Office Pilgrimage program allows students opportunities to explore their faith and the worldviews of others; to experience positive models of coexistence and reconciliation worldwide; and to understand that, by virtue of living in an increasingly global context, achievement in the real world relies on awareness and navigation of religious difference. Through in-depth conversations, pre-trip learning, daily reflection, and post-trip reflection, we will use the common values of listening, respect, and compassion so that participants return with a renewed commitment to their individual faith formation as well as a new commitment to support neighbors in their faith traditions.

### **GOALS**

#### Spiritual Development

To offer a travel experience to a location of sacred importance that will facilitate students’ spiritual development. This will allow them to:

- Learn how to think more critically about what they believe and why they believe,
- Articulate their faith and worldview in the communication with others, and
- Hear and learn from other perspectives within and outside of their own tradition.

#### Practice Belonging

To provide opportunities for students to enable the formation of belonging and community during travel and on the High Point University’s campus. This will enable our students to:

- Learn how to interact in communities within their own tradition and outside their tradition,
- Learn how to communicate in the midst of similarities, difference, and conflict and

- Learn and understand multiple worldview and respect coexistence amongst difference.

### Global Experience

To provide experiential knowledge of the practices of the world's religious diversity and application in a real world context. This will give participants familiarity and context to:

- Learn how multiple traditions either thrived or failed in places of conflict and reconciliation,
- Come together around common practices rather than around a specific theology, and
- Consider the dynamic intersection of faith, history, culture, and politics.

## **Pilgrimage Expectations**

### **Team Commitment**

Pilgrimage teams are comprised of small group of students (no more than twelve) and two staff members. Participation in a pilgrimage requires that students engage with their team and offer their best to the pilgrimage experience.

- Full participation in the learning prior to the pilgrimage is expected. Learning requirements will be outlined at the first meeting.
- During the trip, students are expected to be at all meetings and site visits. Deviation from the group is not allowed.
- Often times, students will have family or friends in host locations. Students may request to spend time with them. However, because of the nature of short-term travel intensity, staff leaders have authority to deny request if it affects group dynamics in a negative way or creates liability issues for the University.

### **Spiritual Commitment**

Spiritual development is the central component of the pilgrimage program. Whether a student identifies with a particular tradition or not, they should be open to listening, sharing, and discussing spirituality during this program.

- Students should be open to the experiences they encounter and be respectful of the experiences of other team members.
- Many activities include prayer, reflection, worship, and discussion. If such activity is within a student's tradition, they should participate as appropriate. If it is of another tradition, they should, at minimum, be willing to listen and observe.

### **Pilgrimage Learning Component**

Pilgrimage teams meet for at least four times prior to the pilgrimage. The pilgrimage leader designates specific meeting times. These meetings are MANDATORY and are an essential part of the program. Only one excused absence will be allowed. Any other absence must be discussed with the leader before the meeting. Missing more than one meeting may affect a student's ability to remain in the program.

- Each specific pilgrimage may have additional expectations for it's participants. Such expectations will be fully outlined on the learning trip handbooks.
- These meetings will serve as an orientation to host sites.
- Inspiration and guides for conversation:
  - "There is no conversation more boring than one where everyone agrees." - Michel de Montaigne*
  - "Different people, in good faith, can look at the same fact and interpret it differently. But that's where an interesting conversation begins." -Eric Schlosser*
  - "Tone is often the most important part of conversation - and listening is so much more important than what you say." -Hoda Kotb*
  - "Nothing is too controversial, but you have to think about how to do it with sensitivity... think really, really carefully about exactly what things mean and how they will affect people." -Stewart Lee*

### **Financial Commitment**

While the Chapel and Religious Life Office and other HPU partners (i.e. SGA, Volunteer Center) will cover the majority of the cost of the trip, participants will be required to pay for meals while traveling to and from the pilgrimage destination. For information on coverage of meals at the pilgrimage destination, please refer to the information provided by the specific pilgrimage. For some pilgrimages, additional meals may be at the expense of the student. Participants are also responsible for spending money, entrance fees to local attractions as well as for purchasing or borrowing any required gear for the pilgrimage. The University will not cover expenses such as internet access, cell phones, room charges, or any damage to the hotel room.

### **Passports / Visas**

Students traveling internationally are required to possess a valid passport and any applicable visas in order to travel.

- If a student has a passport, the passport **MUST** be valid for at least 6 months after the date of return from the Pilgrimage.
- If a student does not have a passport or their passport is about to expire, the student must complete a passport application **NO LATER** than six months prior to the pilgrimage. The Chapel and Religious Life Office will not pay for application or renewal fees for passports or visas.
- Students who require a visa for travel need to complete and submit their application to their respective embassy no later than 90 days prior to travel. High Point University will provide the supporting documentation for the application.

### **Good-Standing**

Before selection, Chapel staff will contact the Office of Student Life to inquire about each participant under consideration. This inquiry will include questions of academic, behavioral, and financial standing of the student.

- If, after communication with OSL there are minor concerns that are raised, the pilgrimage leaders and the participant will draw up an agreement that will recognize the specific lack of good-standing and will outline additional behavioral expectations for the participant while on the pilgrimage.
- If, at any time, the student is in violation of the good-standing agreement, the Chapel and Religious Life Office can elect to remove the participant from the program with financial costs to be covered by the student.
- All of this information will be handled with the utmost discretion.

### **Withdrawal**

If a participant cancels participation in the program they will be required to repay the university any money lost due to the cancellation. This includes airfare, room and board.

- When possible, the Chapel and Religious Life Office will provide multiple withdrawal deadlines which will allow for less financial responsibility for the student. In all cases, the HPU will enumerate the non-recoupable costs created by the student's withdrawal and will send an invoice to the student. The expectation is that the payment will be received within 60 days of withdrawal from the program.

### **Travel Deviations**

All participants are expected to follow the set itinerary of the pilgrimage program. During the entire trip, students are NOT allowed to make alternative plans. Each student is required to stay with the group for the full length of the program.

### **Disabilities and Dietary Accommodations**

If a student has a need for an accommodation due to a physical restriction or dietary constraint that may impact their travel, they are encouraged to discuss such needs with the pilgrimage leader within the first two weeks of class so that proper accommodations can be made in the planning of the trip and itinerary.

### **Behavioral Expectations**

Students are expected to abide by the Pilgrimage expectations in this overview and High Point University's Honor Code and Code of Conduct, including the Sexual Misconduct Policy, at all times. Students are expected to adhere to the laws of the host country.

### *Alcohol*

- Student's alcohol consumption must be in accordance with the laws of the host country. Drunken behavior will not be tolerated and is cause for immediate expulsion from the program.
- A student does not miss any scheduled event because of the effects of alcohol consumption.
- A student does not become ill due to the effects of alcohol consumption.
- A student does not engage in behavior that causes embarrassment to the

other members of the groups, the faculty/staff leaders, HPU, or the in-country host(s) as a result of alcohol consumption.

- Students under the age of 21 are not permitted to bring alcohol back with them to the United States or to campus as it would violate the University's alcohol policy.

#### *Illicit Drug Use*

- The use of illegal drugs is prohibited on any and all HPU travel programs.
- In some areas, the penalties for illegal drug use may be much higher than in the US. There is nothing that a faculty/staff leader or the US Embassy can do to assist a student who is caught breaking the laws of the host country.
- If it comes to the attention of the faculty/staff leader that any student is using illegal substances, the student will be immediately removed from the program.

#### *Treatment of Peers, Trip Leaders, and Local Host(s)*

- Students are expected to be respectful of one another at all times. This includes their interactions with the trip leaders and local hosts with whom we work.
- We will work both individually and as a group to resolve miscommunication issues or general disagreements. We will work to refocus our efforts and confirm group and personal goals.
- Don't forget that your behavior affects the ENTIRE group!

#### *Overall Expectations*

- Students are expected to attend ALL meetings and excursions.
- Students are required to arrive 10 minutes before any given departure times to ensure that we stay on schedule throughout our trip.
- Students must always travel in groups of two or more.
- Students must carry a cell phone and/or calling card (depending on the expectations of the particular pilgrimage) at all times as well as a list of other trip participants.
- Students should avoid any high-risk activities, including street demonstrations.

#### *Sanctioning Students*

- If a behavioral incident occurs, trip leaders will immediately contact the appropriate HPU office or entity.
- If a student does not follow the above guidelines and if their behavior is clearly unacceptable and/or in violation of the student code of conduct, they will be immediately removed from the program. The subsequent removal from the program and travel back to the US will be at the student's personal expense.
- Any behavior violations will be fully documented and discussed with the Office of Student Conduct.

- Behavior violations will be handled with the same judicial process as if they were on campus.

**Ramifications**

Non-compliance with any of the above policies could result in a hold on the student's account, and/or disciplinary actions as outlined in the High Point University Handbook.

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