



PILGRIMAGE PROGRAM

MISSION

HPU Chapel's overriding ambition is to build a **Beloved Community**. We keep true to that vision by remaining faithful to three core commitments:

- Experience and practice ***Belonging***.
- ***Becoming*** who God calls us to be.
- ***Beholding*** God's grace in all that we do.

The HPU Chapel Pilgrimage program plays a vital role in advancing this mission. Through sacred travel experiences with diverse faith communities around the world, each pilgrimage is designed to help students:

- Form meaningful and lasting relationships with peers.
- reflect deeply on who God is calling them to become, especially in relationship to the poor and those who suffer.
- Encounter Christian practices that cultivate spiritual maturity and deepen awareness of God's in everyday life.

OVERVIEW AND PRACTICE

The Chapel and Religious Life Office Pilgrimage program offers students opportunities to:

- Deepen their faith through Christian practices within the pilgrimage and by exploring the worldviews of others;
- Experience positive examples of community, reconciliation, and conflict transformation;
- Develop the awareness and skills necessary to navigate religious and spiritual difference in an increasingly interconnected and fast-paced world.

Through pre-pilgrimage learning, daily reflection, Christian spiritual practice, meaningful conversation, and post-trip reflection, students will develop emotional intelligence, conflict-resolution skills, and a stronger understanding of how faith informs daily life and leadership.

PROGRAM GOALS

Spiritual Formation

Pilgrimage is both a sacred practice and an invitation into a wider world of historic Christian disciplines such as silence, sacred rest, scripture reading, contemplative prayer, fasting, and communal living.

Each pilgrimage will center on one or more spiritual practices and is designed to foster students' spiritual growth through travel to places of sacred. Through these experiences, students are encouraged to:

- Encounter the sacred more deeply in their own lives.
- Reflect on what they believe and why they believe it.
- Articulate their faith and with humility and clarity.
- Listen to and learn from other perspectives within and beyond their own tradition.

Practice Belonging

The Pilgrimage Program seeks not only to help students to experience belonging but to learn to practice it – both during travel and within the High Point University community.

- Engage communities both within their own tradition and outside their tradition with curiosity and respect.
- Navigate similarities, difference, and conflict with wisdom and grace.
- Appreciate communities that span across lines of difference and diverse worldviews.

Global Experience

The Pilgrimage Program provides experiential learning rooted in the world's religious cultural diversity, with particular attention to the Christian traditions and their role in history, reconciliation, and public life.

Students gain the opportunity to:

- Examine how faith communities have flourished or struggled in contexts of conflict and reconciliation,
- Build meaningful community around shared experiences and faithful practices.
- Understand and appreciate intersection of faith, history, culture, and politics in real-world settings.

PILGRIMAGE EXPECTATIONS

Team Commitment

Pilgrimage teams are typically comprised of small groups of students and at least two staff members. Some pilgrimages may include up to 20 students, in which case, smaller reflection groups will be incorporated into the experience.

Participation in a pilgrimage requires that students engage with their team and offer their best to the pilgrimage experience. Expectations include:

- Full participation in all pre-pilgrimage learning and preparation.
- Attendance at all meetings, site visits, and scheduled activities during the pilgrimage.
- Respect for the communal nature of the experience.

Students may occasionally have family or friends in host locations. Students may request to spend time with them. Because of the intensity and relational nature of short-term pilgrimage experiences, staff reserve the right to deny requests if it negatively affects group dynamics or creates liability issues for the University.

Spiritual Commitment

Spiritual formation is the central to the Pilgrimage Program. Whether or not a student identifies with a particular tradition, participants are expected to approach the experience with openness, respect, and curiosity.

Students are expected to:

- Remain open to the experience they encounter and respectful of the experiences of other team members.
- Participate appropriately in activities connected to their own tradition.
- Listen respectfully and observe thoughtfully when encountering practices from traditions other than their own.

PILGRIMAGE LEARNING COMPONENT

Pilgrimage teams meet for at least four times prior to departure. Meeting dates and expectations are established by the pilgrimage leader.

These meetings are mandatory and form an essential part of the pilgrimage experience. Only one excused absence is permitted. Additional absences may affect a student's ability to remain in the program.

Pre-pilgrimage meetings may include:

- Orientation to host sites and local communities
- Introduction to sacred practices and spiritual disciplines.
- Historical, theological, and cultural preparation.
- Team-building and reflective discussion.

- 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, The Board of Stewards) will cover the majority of the cost of the trip, participants will be required to pay a portion of the trip costs. We have found that even though the trip is significantly discounted, shared financial responsibility from the student aids them in their commitment and engagement. Students will also 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, Registrar, and Student Accounts 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 OS� 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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