

Chaplaincy Pilgrimage Program

MISSION

The purpose of the Chaplaincy's Pilgrimage program is to help students grow in their faith, to deepen religious life on campus, and to learn from others in communities around the world filled with pain and hope.

OVERVIEW

The Office of the Chaplaincy's Pilgrimage program allows students opportunities to explore their spiritual tradition 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, success in the real world relies on awareness and navigation of religious and spiritual difference. Through discussion teams, lectures, in-depth conversations, pre-trip learning, daily reflection, and post-trip projects, we will use the common values of listening, respect, and compassion so that participants return with a renewed commitment to their individual faiths 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 religious and/or spiritual import that will facilitate students' individual spiritual development. This will allow them to:

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

Practice of Community

To provide opportunities for students to enable the formation of community during travel and on the University of Richmond 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 and differences, and
- Learn and understand multiple worldviews and respect coexistence amidst difference.

Global Experience

To provide experiential knowledge of the practice of religious and spiritual diversity and its application in a real world context. This will give participants familiarity and context to:

- Learn how multiple faiths or 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 spirituality, history, culture, and politics.

Pilgrimage Expectations

Team Commitment

Pilgrimage teams are comprised of no more than 12 students 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 group meetings is expected. Program requirements will be outlined at the first class meeting.
- During the trip, students are expected to be at all meetings and site visits. Deviations from the group are not allowed.
- Often times, students will have friends or relatives who will ask to spend an afternoon or a meal with them. However, because of the nature of short-term travel intensives, such deviations are not permitted. These deviations affect group dynamics and also create liability issues for the university.

Spiritual Commitment

Spiritual development is an important component of the pilgrimage program. Whether a student identifies with a particular faith 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 be willing to listen and observe.

Pilgrimage Course Component

Pilgrimage teams meet during the spring semester as part of IDST 270. These class 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 instructor before the missed class. Missing more than one class may affect a student's ability to remain in the program.

- Full participation is required in all components of the program as outlined by the syllabus.
- Each specific Pilgrimage may have additional expectations for its participants. Such expectations will be fully outlined on the course syllabus and discussed in class meetings.

Financial Commitment

While the majority of the cost of the trip will be covered by the Office of the Chaplaincy, 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 program. Participants are also responsible for passport and visa application fees, personal spending money, and purchasing or borrowing any required gear for the pilgrimage. Group entrance fees to local attractions will be covered. The University will not cover expenses such as internet access, cell phones, room charges, or any damage to the hotel room.

Good-Standing

Before selection, Chaplaincy staff will contact the Richmond or Westhampton College Dean's Offices 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 the dean's offices, there are minor concerns that are raised, the pilgrimage leaders and the participant, with guidance from the appropriate dean's office, 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 pilgrimage.

- If, at any time, the student is in violation of the good-standing agreement, the Office of the Chaplaincy 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 utmost discretion.

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 the first team meeting. The Office of the Chaplaincy does 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 the respective embassy no later than 90 days prior to travel. The Office of the Chaplaincy will provide students who require a visa the necessary supporting documentation for the application.

University Housing Requests

If Pilgrimage programs begin after students are required to vacate their student housing on campus, it is the responsibility of the student to be in contact with the Office of Undergraduate Student Housing to arrange to stay on campus. The Office of the Chaplaincy will NOT assume responsibility for students looking for housing during that period.

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 Office of the Chaplaincy will provide multiple withdrawal deadlines which will allow for less financial responsibility for the student. In all cases, the Office of the Chaplaincy 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.
- If a cancellation is necessitated due to medical reasons, the participant will need to seek reimbursement through insurance. The Office of the Chaplaincy will NOT assume responsibility for processing insurance claims. In addition, the University is not responsible for any expenses not reimbursed.
- If expenses are not repaid, a hold will be put on your student account until the issue is resolved.

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. The only exception to this is if the participant has been granted a specific travel deviation after the conclusion of the pilgrimage and the Chaplaincy and Risk Management agree and release the student from the Pilgrimage 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 the program 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, the Office of International Education's Student Behavioral Expectations, and University of Richmond Student Standards of Conduct, including the Sexual Misconduct Policy, at all times.

Alcohol

- Student's alcohol consumption must be in accordance with the law. 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, UR, or the 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 UR travel programs.
- 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 (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.

Sanctioning Students

- If a behavioral incident occurs, trip leaders will immediately contact the Dean's office to discuss appropriate sanctions.
- If a student does not follow the above guidelines and if his/her 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 campus will be at the student's personal expense.
- Any behavior violations will be fully documented and discussed with the appropriate Dean's office. Any decisions about a student's participation in the program will be made through joint deliberation with the Dean's office.
- 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, reports to the appropriate dean's office, and/or disciplinary actions as outlined in the University of Richmond Student Handbook.

I, _____, understand and agree to the expectations enumerated above. I further understand the potential ramifications of non-compliance with these expectations.

Signed _____

Date _____