

## Exploring Religious Studies in Venues Around the World

Scholars have increasingly discovered the impact of bringing students to places overseas to explore religious history and to examine contemporary beliefs and practices of different peoples, traditions and communities. Illume facilitates faculty led short-term study tours, freeing scholars from logistical oversight and linking scholars with local experts for exceptional programming that inspires students and advances their education.

### Program Objectives

#### Deepen Understanding of Religious History

Traveling to destinations of historical religious significance makes religious history come to life. Students can better piece together the people, places and events of the bible, church history or the events of other religious traditions. These on-site visits transform the curriculum to be more vibrant, relevant and tangible.

#### Gain Global Perspectives

International learning is an integral feature of successful higher education. Students must connect not only with world and religious heritage, but gain perspectives that come from engagement with other lands, peoples and traditions. We are an increasingly interconnected world that invites us to embrace a global community. For many students, short-term study tours are the first step they take in a life-long journey of study abroad and world citizenship and inspire them to be more compassionate and understanding of others.

#### Inspire Academic Curiosity

Students who return from short-term study tours bring a new energy and curiosity to their academic major and other studies. They return more eager to learn and more engaged in classroom discussion and projects. Many begin to imagine new professional goals that include international options or that benefit from enhanced intercultural respect and compassion.

The way we travel the world is always changing but the reasons remain constant— to become citizens of the world, *leading and inspiring respectful and compassionate ways of life*. People who travel the globe begin a lifelong journey of worldly citizenship to gain valuable insight about themselves and the world around them through the discovery and exploration of cultures outside their own.

### Thematic Areas

**Biblical History and Early Christianity** – Illume facilitates travel to Israel, Turkey, Greece, Rome and other destinations to explore biblical history and early Christianity. Archaeological parks, underground sites, churches, museums and other venues are great contexts to explore various disciplines in religious studies.

**Interfaith Programs** – Comparative religion courses come to life in venues where multiple traditions intersect – such as in the Middle East, Turkey, Eastern Europe, India, and Spain. Weave together visits to historical sites with opportunities to meet with local leaders of different faith communities to learn about their beliefs, practices, hopes and struggles.

**Religious Art and Architecture** One of the ways to explore religious traditions is through art and architecture. Trace the development of religious artistic expression from the ancient world to Byzantine, Medieval, Renaissance and Modern forms. Gain an appreciation for the intersection of artistic expression in places like Spain where Jewish, Muslim and Christian artists borrowed from one another.

**Spirituality** Introduce students to the life and times of visionary men and women who forged new insights into spirituality – in places like Spain, England, France, Italy and other locations. Trace the development of new spirituality in the religious orders of Dominicans, Franciscans, Benedictines, Jesuits and others.

**Other themes** Illume collaborates with scholars to explore other themes in religious studies such as gender, health care, peace and justice, reformation, and other topics.

**Illume works with group leaders to create customized and unique programs with activities, visits and resources that support your vision and objectives. Call us to begin planning a program tailored to your constituency.**