



Office of the Chaplain

Dear Penn Faculty & Staff,

Each year many of our students face a conflict between their involvement in classes or other University activities and their religious observance. The religious diversity of our student body greatly enhances the life of our University, but we recognize that at times the range of faith traditions represented can present significant scheduling challenges. We greatly appreciate the efforts you make to support and accommodate students in their observance. The [Office of the Chaplain staff](#) and the members of the [Penn Religious Communities Council](#) (professional staff who serve our religious student organizations) are always available to assist with any questions that you may have.

This letter includes the full text of the University policy on secular and religious holidays as well as a partial list of holiday dates for the 2014 calendar year to assist in your planning. The policy can also be found online in the [Pennbook](#) or on the [Office of the Chaplain website](#). We would ask that you please forward this message out to your department staff and faculty.

Best wishes for the New Year,

The Reverend Charles Howard, PhD, University Chaplain
& the members of the Penn Religious Communities Council

2014 Calendar of Religious Holidays

Spring	
Tuesday 2/4	Saraswati Puja (Hindu)
Friday 2/28	Shivaratri (Hindu)
Wednesday 3/5	Ash Wednesday (Christian)
Saturday 3/15 (sunset) to Sunday 3/16	Purim (Jewish)
Monday 4/14 (sunset) to Tuesday 4/22	Passover (Jewish)
Friday 4/18	Good Friday (Christian)
Sunday 4/20	Easter (Christian)

Summer	
Tuesday 6/3 (sunset) to Thursday 6/5	Shavuot (Jewish)
Friday 6/27 (sunset) to Sunday 7/27	Ramadan (Islamic)
Monday 7/28	Eid al-Fitr (Islamic)

Fall	
Wednesday 9/24 (sunset) to Friday 9/26	Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)
Thursday 9/25 to Friday 10/3	Navaratri (Hindu)
Friday 10/3 (sunset) to Saturday 10/4	Yom Kippur (Jewish)
Saturday 10/4	Eid al-Adha (Islamic)
Wednesday 10/8 (sunset) to Wednesday 10/15	Sukkot (Jewish)
Thursday 10/16 (sunset) to Friday 10/17	Simchat Torah (Jewish)
Thursday 10/23 to Monday 10/27	Diwali (Hindu)
Tuesday 12/16 (sunset) to Wednesday 12/24	Hanukkah (Jewish)
Thursday 12/25	Christmas (Christian)

Policy on Secular and Religious Holidays

1. The University recognizes/observes the following secular holidays: Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, July 4, Thanksgiving and the day after, Labor Day, and New Year's Day.

2. The University also recognizes that there are several religious holidays that affect large numbers of University community members, including Christmas, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, the first two days of Passover, and Good Friday. In consideration of their significance for many students, no examinations may be given and no assigned work may be required on these days. Students who observe these holidays will be given an opportunity to make up missed work in both laboratories and lecture courses. If an examination is given on the first class day after one of these holidays, it must not cover material introduced in class on that holiday. Faculty should realize that Jewish holidays begin at sundown on the evening before the published date of the holiday. Late afternoon exams should be avoided on these days. Also, no examinations may be held on Saturday or Sunday in the undergraduate schools unless they are also available on other days. Nor should seminars or other regular classes be scheduled on Saturdays or Sundays unless they are also available at other times.

3. The University recognizes that there are other holidays, both religious and secular, which are of importance to some individuals and groups on campus. Such occasions include, but are not limited to, Sukkot, the last two days of Passover, Shavuot, Shemini Atzerat and Simchat Torah, as well as Chinese New Year, the Muslim New Year, Diwali, and the Islamic holidays Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha. Students who wish to observe such holidays must inform their instructors within the first two weeks of each semester of their intent to observe the holiday even when the exact date of the holiday will not be known until later so that alternative arrangements convenient to both students and faculty can be made at the earliest opportunity. Students who make such arrangements will not be required to attend classes or take examinations on the designated days, and faculty must provide reasonable opportunities for such students to make up missed work and examinations. For this reason it is desirable that faculty inform students of all examination dates at the start of each semester. Exceptions to the requirement of a make-up examination must be approved in advance by the undergraduate dean of the school in which the course is offered.

(Source: Almanac, September 7, 2010)