CALENDAR AND
POLICY ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS AND OBSERVANCES
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISVILLE
2012-13

The calendar that follows was developed to broaden the University community's recognition of its diverse religious perspectives. The listing is not exhaustive of all major holy days in every religious tradition and some variances of dates will exist due to regional differences. It was developed based on the calendar posted by the National Conference for Community and Justice as well as other calendars or information posted on the web by the various religions.

Definitions and the University's policy on religious holy days and observances follow the calendar.

Questions regarding the calendar or the University's policy may be directed to: Linda Wilson at llwils01@louisville.edu.

WORK-RESTRICTED RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS

DEFINITION OF Religious work-restricted holy day: a recognized denominational sacred or holy day that is observed by persons or groups who are required--through a set or system of religious beliefs, laws/doctrines, tenets, canons or theology-- to restrict or limit work and/or physical or mental activity directed toward the production or accomplishment of something; toil; labor. This definition may include academic endeavors (e.g. examinations, classroom activities and research, or out-of-classroom learning experiences).

There is a distinction between religious holy days, sectarian holidays, and ethnic holidays and festivals which are routinely celebrated in the United States of America, i.e. Christmas, New Year, etc., and religious work-restricted holy days which are based upon religious tenets, laws, and/or doctrine, i.e. Yom Kippur. In the Jewish faith, Saturday (beginning at sunset on Friday) is a work-restricted Sabbath.

Individuals who observe and/or follow these religious work-restricted holy days are not permitted to engage in day-to-day occupations, work, or attend school, including taking examinations or performing other routine commitments.

2012

DATE	HOLY DAY	FAITH	OBSERVANCE/PRACTICE
JULY			
20	Ramadan (30 days)	I	Work-restricted (Friday afternoons)
AUGUST			
9	Krishna Janmashtami	H*	Work-restricted
18-19	Íd al-Fitr	I	Work-restricted

SEPTEMBER			
17-18	Rosh Hashanah	J**	Work-restricted
19	Ganesh Chathurthi	H*	Work-restricted
26	Yom Kippur	J**	Work-restricted
OCTOBER			
1-7	Sukkot	J**	Work-restricted (first 2 days)
8	Shemini Àtzeret	J**	Work-restricted
9	Simchat Torah	J**	Work-restricted
20	Birth of the Bab	Ba**	Work-restricted
25-26	Íd al-Adha	I	Work-restricted
NOVEMBER			
12	Baháúllah's Birthday	Ba**	Work-restricted
13	Bandi Chhor Divas (Diwali)	S*	Work-restricted
13	Diwali	H*	Work-restricted
24	Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib	S*	Work-restricted
28	Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Sahib	S*	Work-restricted
DECEMBER			
23	Vaikunta Ekadasi	H+	Work-restricted

2013

JANUARY			
5	Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib	S*	Work-restricted
MARCH			
10	Maha Shivaratri	H*	Work-restricted
21	Naw-Ruz	Ba**	Work-restricted
21	Norouz	P	Work-restricted
26-Apr. 2	Passover (8 days)	J**	Work-restricted (first 2 days and last 2 days)
APRIL			
20	Ramanavami	H*	Work-restricted
13(14)	Vaisakhi/Baisakhi (Birthday of the Khalsa)	S*	Work-restricted
21 - May 2 (21st, 29th, May 2nd)	Ridvan	Ba**	Work-restricted (1st day, 9th day, and 12th day)
25	Ramakrishna Jayanti	H*	Work-restricted
MAY			
15-16	Shavuot	J**	Work-restricted

JUNE			
16	Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Sahib	S*	Work-restricted

RELIGIOUS, SECTARIAN, AND ETHNIC OBSERVANCES (NON WORK-RESTRICTED)

Sunday is widely observed as a Sabbath and day of worship for many faith traditions. In the Jewish faith, Saturday (beginning at sunset on Friday) is a work-restricted Sabbath. Regulations governing observance for worship depends on regional customs. Observances/practices vary from culture to culture within and across denominations. There are no work-restricted holy days within the Christian faith by tenet. By custom, in the United States, Easter and Christmas are considered to be non-work days.

The following religious observances are NOT work-restricted by definition but may involve a special worship or observance in which a member of the faculty, staff or student body may feel compelled to participate. As stated earlier, faculty and supervisors should be sensitive to requests for accommodating these special observances. The final decision on excused absence for these days rests with the supervisor and can be appealed to the next higher level.

2012

DATE	HOLY DAY	FAITH	OBSERVANCE/PRACTICE
SEPTEMBER			
1	Consecrating the Guru Granth Sahib	S*	Special Worship
13	Paryushan begins	Ja*	Special Worship
19	Paryushan ends	Ja*	Special Worship
OCTOBER			
16-24	Navaratri	H*	Special Worship
NOVEMBER			
13	Diwali	Ja*	Special Worship
DECEMBER			
8	Bodhi Day	B	Special Worship
9-16	Hanukkah	J**	Special Worship
25	Christmas	C	Special Worship

2013

FEBRUARY			
13	Ash Wednesday	C	Special Worship
24	Purim	J**	Special Worship
MARCH			
29	Good Friday	C	Special Worship
31	Easter	C	Special Worship

Key to Religious Groups

Ba	Bahá'í
B	Buddhist
C	Christian (general)
H	Hindu
I	Islam
J	Jewish
Ja	Jain
P	Persian
S	Sikh

*Hindu, Jain, and Sikh holy days are calculated on a lunar calendar and are observed at different times in different regions.
**All Jewish and Bahá'í holy days begin at sunset the previous day.

Descriptions of Religious Holy Days and Observances

Ash Wednesday: The first day of Lent and occurs forty-six days (forty days not counting Sundays) before Easter. Ash Wednesday derives its name from the practice of placing ashes on the foreheads of adherents as a sign of repentance.

Baháúllah's Birthday: Commemorates the birth of the founder of the Bahá'í Faith in 1817.

Bandi Chhor Divas: Celebration of "the day of release of detainees" because the sixth Nanak had agreed to his release on the condition that the other fifty-two detainees would also be released.

Birth of the Bab: Anniversary of the birth of one of the twin Prophet Founders of the Bahá'í Faith.

Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib (1666-1708): The tenth and last living prophet of the Sikhs, he passed the guruship onto the Sikh scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib, and the Sikh community (Guru Panth). Guru Gobind Singh Ji founded the order of the Khalsa during Vaisakhi 1699.

Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Sahib: The founder of the Sikh faith. Born in 1469, he began his mission by proclaiming that there is "neither Hindu nor Muslim," stressing common truths fundamental to diverse faiths. He preached against caste and advocated the equality of women.

Bodhi Day: Buddhist celebration of the Enlightenment of Buddha, ca. 596 B.C.E.

Consecrating the Guru Granth Sahib: The remembrance of Guru Granth Sahib as the final and perpetual Guru of Sikhs as ordained by Guru Gobind Singh in 1708. The Guru Granth Sahib is regarded as the guiding light for the Sikh.

Diwali: Festival of Lights: one of four seasonal celebrations in India. Jains celebrate Diwali as the time when Mahavir left for heaven (Mahavir Nirvana). Sikhs celebrate Diwali in commemoration of the return to Amritsar of the sixth guru after his release from detention.

Christmas: Celebration of the birth of Jesus.

Easter: Christian celebration of the life and resurrection of Christ.

Ganesh Chathurthi: also known as Vinayaka Chaturthi, is the Hindu festival of Ganesha also called Vinayagar in Tamil Nadu, the son of Shiva and Parvati, who is believed to bestow his presence on earth for all his devotees in the duration of this festival.

Good Friday: Christian remembrance of the crucifixion of Jesus and related events.

Hanukkah: Jewish festival of lights, eight-day commemoration of the rededication of the Second Temple in 165 B.C.E.

Íd al-Adha: Islamic festival of sacrifice, commemorates the faith of Abraham; also a memorial to the dead.

Íd al-Fitr: Islamic festival of the breaking of the fast, Ramadan.

Krishna Janmashtami: Hindu celebration of the birthday of Krishna.

Maha Shivaratri: Lord Shiva's birthday:

Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Sahib: The fifth Guru of the Sikhs and their first martyr. He compiled the Guru Granth Sahib. It was on his martyrdom day in June 1984 that the Indian army attacked the Golden Temple.

Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib: The 9th Guru of the Sikhs, who was killed by Mughal rulers in 1675 for defending Hindus facing forcible conversion to Islam.

Navaratri: Holy celebration of gifts from goddess Ambadevi.

Naw-Ruz: Bahá'í New Year.

Norouz: Persian New Year.

Paryushan: Holiest day for Jains. An eight day festival is held signifying human emergence into a new world of spiritual and moral refinement.

Passover: Eight-day celebration marking the deliverance of the Jews from slavery in Egypt; "Seder" ceremonies emphasize concept of freedom. The first two days and the last two days are observed as Holy Days.

Purim: Purim is a festival that commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish people living throughout the ancient Persian Empire from a plot by Haman the Agagite to annihilate them.

Ramadan: The ninth month in the Islamic calendar; 30 days of strict fasting from sun-up to sun-down in honor of the first revelations to the Prophet Mohammed.

Ramakrishna Jayanti: Birthday of Sri Ramakrishna. This is celebrated according to the Visuddha Siddhanta Panchika, an Indian almanac. It falls on Phalguna Shukla Dvitiya, the second day after the new moon day in the month of Phalguna (February-March).

Ramanavami: Anniversary of the birth of Rama, incarnation of Vishnu (the Preserved) in Hinduism.

Ridvan: Commemorates the declaration of Baháúllah to his followers in 1863. The first, ninth and twelfth days of Ridvan are major Baha'i holy days on which work should be suspended.

Rosh Hashanah: Jewish New Year beginning 10 days penitence concluded on Yom Kippur.

Shavuot: Jewish Festival of Weeks; celebrates harvest of first fruits and commemorates the giving of the Torah and Commandments at Mt. Sinai.

Shemini Àtzeret: Eighth and last day of Sukkot.

Simchat Torah: Joyous festival in which the reading cycle of the Torah is completed and its first book begun again.

Sukkot: Jewish festival of booths (or tabernacles) and the fall harvest; takes name from the booths used by Israelites during desert wanderings.

Vaikunta Ekadasi is the Shukla paksha Ekadashi that occurs during the Dhanurmasa period in the Hindu calendar (corresponding to late December - January in English calendar). Vaishnavism (Worship of Lord Vishnu) culture believes that 'Vaikuntha Dwaram' or 'the gate to Lord's Inner Sanctum' is opened on this day.

Vaisakhi: A spring harvest festival in Punjab, usually held around April 13. It holds special significance for Sikhs, as it serves as a time to commemorate the founding of the Khalsa in 1699. Considered the beginning of the Sikh new year, it is a time of religious observances and festive celebration.

Yom Kippur: Jewish Day of Atonement; most solemn Jewish holy day devoted to prayer, fasting, and repentance.

POLICY

Federal law and university policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of religious belief. It is the policy of the University of Louisville to accommodate students, faculty, and staff who observe religious work-restricted holy days.

STUDENTS: Students who observe work-restricted religious holy days must be allowed to do so without jeopardizing their academic standing in any course. Faculty are obliged to accommodate students' request(s) for adjustments in course work on the grounds of religious observance, provided that the student(s) make such request(s) in writing during the first two (2) weeks of term.

Deans and department chairs must investigate and resolve student complaints arising from alleged faculty failure to make reasonable accommodations under these guidelines.

FACULTY & STAFF: Faculty and staff supervisors are directed to accommodate requests for absence for work-restricted religious holy days, unless it would cause an undue hardship. Further, whether the holy days are work-restricted or not, supervisors of faculty and staff should be sensitive to requests for accommodations.

Questions or requests for additional information may be directed to Linda L. Wilson at llwils01@louisville.edu.

8/10/12