

CALENDAR AND POLICY ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS AND OBSERVANCES
Office of Religious Life
2011-2012

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 BBC Interfaith Calendar, the *Interfaithcalendar.org* website and additional multi-faith resource guides.

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

* *Holy days begin at sundown the day before this date.*
 ** *Regional customs, group preference or moon sightings may cause a variation of this date.*

Holy days noted *in italic* are days the religious tradition does not permit an adherent to work or labor. Absences from academic engagements should be considered appropriate for such designated holy days.

2011

DATE	HOLY DAY	FAITH	NOTES:
AUGUST			
1	<i>Ramadan</i> (begins)* **	<i>Islam</i>	<i>Fasting during daylight</i>
31	<i>Eid al Fitr</i> * **	<i>Islam</i>	<i>Ramadan ends</i>
SEPTEMBER			
29,30	<i>Rosh Hashanah</i> *	<i>Jewish</i>	
OCTOBER			
8	<i>Yom Kippur</i> *	<i>Jewish</i>	
13-19	<i>Sukkot</i> *	<i>Jewish</i>	<i>13th & 14th are obligation days</i>
20	<i>Shemini Àtzeret</i> *	<i>Jewish</i>	
20	<i>Birth of the Bab</i>	<i>Bahá'í</i>	
21	<i>Simchat Torah</i> *	<i>Jewish</i>	
26	<i>Diwali (Deepavali)</i> **	<i>Hindu</i>	
NOVEMBER			
1	<i>Samhain - Beltane</i> *	<i>Wicca/Pagan</i>	
6	<i>Eid al Adha</i> * **	<i>Islam</i>	
12	<i>Birth of Baha'u'llah</i> *	<i>Bahá'í</i>	
DECEMBER			
8	<i>Bodhi Day (Rohatsu)</i> **	<i>Buddhist</i>	
21 - 28	<i>Hanukkah</i> *	<i>Jewish</i>	
22	<i>Yule</i> *	<i>Wicca/Pagan</i>	<i>Solstice</i>
22	<i>Yule</i>	<i>Christian</i>	
24	<i>Christmas Eve</i>	<i>Christian</i>	<i>University Paid Holiday</i>
25	<i>Christmas</i>	<i>Christian</i>	<i>University Paid Holiday</i>

2012

JANUARY

6	Epiphany	Christian	
7	Feast of the Nativity**	Christian (Orthodox)	
23	Chinese New Year	Buddhist, Taoist, Confucian	

FEBRUARY

3	<i>Maha Shivaratri**</i>	<i>Hindu</i>	
22	Ash Wednesday	Christian	

MARCH

8	Magha Puja Day**	Buddhist	
8	Purim*	Jewish	
20	Ostara * <i>Equinox</i>	Wicca/Pagan	northern hemisphere
20	Mabon*	Wicca/Pagan	southern hemisphere
21	<i>Naw-Ruz</i>	<i>Bahá'í</i>	

APRIL

1	Palm Sunday	Christian	
5	Maundy Thursday	Christian	
6	Good Friday	Christian	
7, 8	<i>Pesach</i> (Passover)*	<i>Jewish</i>	<i>days of obligation</i>
8	Easter	Christian	
13, 14	<i>Pesach</i> (Passover)*	<i>Jewish</i>	<i>days of obligation</i>
19	Yom Hashoah*	Jewish	
21	<i>First Day of Ridván*</i>	<i>Bahá'í</i>	
29	<i>Ninth Day of Ridván*</i>	<i>Bahá'í</i>	

MAY

1	Beltane -Samhain	Wicca/Pagan	
2	<i>12th Day of Ridván*</i>	<i>Bahá'í</i>	
6	Buddha Day**	Buddhist	
23	<i>Declaration of the Bab</i>	<i>Bahá'í</i>	
27	Pentecost	Christian	
27, 28	<i>Shavuot*</i>	<i>Jewish</i>	
29	<i>Ascension of Baha'u'llah*</i>	<i>Bahá'í</i>	

JUNE

3	Pentecost	Christian (Orthodox)	
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JULY

3	Asalha Puja Day **	Buddhist	
9	<i>Martyrdom of the Báb*</i>	<i>Bahá'í</i>	
20	<i>Ramadan</i> (begins)* **	<i>Islam</i>	<i>Fasting during daylight</i>

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).

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

Religious observances that are not work-restricted by definition may involve a special worship or observance in which a faculty, staff or student may feel compelled to participate. The decision on excused absence for these days rests with the supervisor, department chair or dean.

Religious observance depends on regional customs. Observances/practices vary from culture to culture within and across denominations. For example, there are no work-restricted holy days within the Christian faith by tenet. But, by custom, in the United States, Easter and Christmas are considered to be non-work days.

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. 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.

POLICY

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

Vanderbilt University Human Resource Policy # **HR006** recognizes Christmas Eve and Christmas Day as paid University holidays. No other religious holy days are considered paid holidays.

From the Faculty Manual:

“Civility

A goal of Vanderbilt University is to foster an open and diverse society where the rights of all members of the community are respected.”

“Nondiscrimination

Vanderbilt University has a strong commitment to assuring that every member of the faculty and staff and every student receive fair treatment.”

From the Student Handbook:

“It is the policy of Vanderbilt to make every reasonable effort to allow members of the university community to observe their religious holidays without academic penalty. Absence from classes or examinations for religious reasons does not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the course work required during the period of absence. Students who expect to miss classes, examinations, or any other assignments as a consequence of their religious observance should be provided with a reasonable alternative opportunity to complete such academic responsibilities. It is the obligation of students to provide faculty with reasonable notice of the dates of religious holidays on which they will be absent, preferably at the beginning of the semester. Students who are absent on days of examinations or class assignments should be offered an opportunity to make up the work without penalty (if they have previously arranged to be absent), unless it can be demonstrated that a makeup opportunity would constitute an unreasonable burden on a member of

the faculty. Should disagreement arise over what constitutes an unreasonable burden or any element of this policy, parties involved should consult the department chair, or, in schools without department chairs, the dean of the school.”

Questions regarding this calendar or the University’s policy may be directed to the Office of Religious Life - religiouslife@vanderbilt.edu