




AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

W A S H I N G T O N , D C

MEMORANDUM

August 13, 2008

TO: All Faculty

FROM: Scott A. Bass, Provost 

SUBJECT: Major Religious Holy Days

American University is deeply committed to building an inclusive community, which includes recognition of and respect for different religious beliefs and traditions. In the spirit of celebrating our different traditions, I ask that you assist our students in observing their religious holidays.

A calendar of the major religious holy days for the 2008 - 2009 Academic Year, prepared by the University Chaplain, is attached and is available on the Provost's Office Web site at <http://www.american.edu/academics/provost/communications/memoAug2008HolyDays.pdf>. Included on the calendar are notes that explain some of the religious commitments associated with some of the holy days. Please feel free to share this list with your colleagues and refer to it when preparing your course syllabi. The holy days listed in bold are those that most likely will have a number of students requesting accommodation. Especially on those holy days, please try to avoid scheduling exams or other important events. If you must schedule important class events on these days, please provide proper notification in your syllabi and give students reasonable opportunities to make-up the missed work. Students will be instructed by the University Chaplain to notify faculty in advance if they intend to miss class for a religious commitment. Likewise, I encourage you to discuss this matter with your students.

Your cooperation and assistance is part of the tradition that makes American University such a welcoming and special place. The deans' offices are aware of the university's commitment to religious expression and may be contacted should questions arise.

Attachment

cc: Richard M. Durand, Dean
Louis W. Goodman, Dean
Claudio M. Grossman, Dean
Larry Kirkman, Dean
William M. LeoGrande, Dean
Haig Mardirosian, Dean
Kay Mussell, Dean

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Some Major Religious Holy Days for 2008-2009 Academic Year

Date(s)	Holy Day	Faith Tradition/Religion
Sep. 1	Ramadan begins (30 days of Fasting)*	Islam
Sep. 4	Shri Krishna Janamashtami	Hindu/Vedic
Sep 30-Oct 1	Rosh Hashanah**	Jewish
Oct. 9	Dusserah (Dushahara)	Hindu/Vedic
Oct. 9	Yom Kippur**	Jewish
Oct. 14-20	Sukkot (First 2 days of 7 days observance)**	Jewish
Oct. 20	Birth of the Bab***	Baha'i
Oct. 21	Sh'mini Atzeret**	Jewish
Oct. 22	Simchat Torah**	Jewish
Oct. 28	Diwali (Deepawali)*	Vedic/Hindu
Oct. 1	Eid al Fitr (End of Ramadan)*	Islam
Nov. 1	Feast of All Saints+	Roman Catholic & Protestant
Nov. 2	Feast of All Souls++	Roman Catholic
Nov. 12	Birth of Baha'u'llah***	Baha'i
Dec. 8	Feast of the Immaculate Conception +	Roman Catholic
Dec. 8	Eid Al-Adha*	Islam
Dec. 22-29	Hanukkah	Jewish
Dec. 25	Feast of the Nativity (Christmas) +	Roman Catholic & Protestant
Jan. 4	Feast of the Epiphany +	Roman Catholic & Protestant
Jan. 10	Muharram (Islamic New Year)	Islam
Jan. 19	Aashurah	Islam
Feb. 25	Ash Wednesday ++	Roman Catholic & Protestant
March 10	Purim	Jewish
March 21	Naw Ruz, Baha'i New Year***	Baha'i
April 9-16	Pesach (First 2 days of 8 days observance) **	Jewish
April 9	Holy Thursday++	Roman Catholic & Protestant
April 10	Good Friday++	Roman Catholic & Protestant
April 11	Holy Saturday Vigil (begins at sundown) ++	Roman Catholic & Protestant
April 12	Easter+	Roman Catholic & Protestant
April 15 & 16	Concluding Days of Pesach **	Jewish
April 21	First Day of Ridvan***	Baha'i
April 29	Ninth Day of Ridvan	Baha'i
May 2	Twelfth Day of Ridvan	Baha'i
May 29 & 30	Shavuot	Jewish

Holy Days in bold type face are considered very important holy days when students/employees may be absent from school or work.

* Observance of Buddhist, Hindu/Vedic and Islamic holy days is dependent on the sighting of the moon. Please note that the dates printed herein may not be the exact dates but the closest approximates. Buddhists observe the new moon and full moon as holy days.

** Observance of Jewish holy days begins at sundown of preceding day and ends at one hour after sunset of the last day.

*** Observance of Baha'i holy days begins at sundown of preceding day and ends at sunset of the holy days.

+ Roman Catholic obligatory feasts require attendance at services and avoidance of servile work.

++ Roman Catholic traditional feasts are those days on which it is assumed that the faithful will attend services and may exclude servile work and include various requirements of prayer and fasting.