

Southwestern University Memo for Religious Holidays, Observance Days, and Related Absences

Southwestern is a community made up of many faiths. We encourage students, faculty, and staff to be aware and respectful of the diverse religious observances of University community members. *Required accommodations exist for: Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Christmas Day, Ash Wednesday, Pesach (Passover), Good Friday, Easter (see below for Southwestern's Religious Observance Excused Absence Policy).* Suggested accommodations may range: adjusted due dates, proctoring exams (if during fasting) at times best for student fasting, offering halal/kosher/vegetarian options when food is offered.

Major Holy Days 2020-2021

The days listed below are the ones most likely to affect the academic calendar. NOTE: Dates in **bold** indicate holy days where work is prohibited or fasting is involved. An asterisk (*) indicates the holy day begins at sundown the day before this date and ends at sundown on this date.

2020

<u>Date</u>	<u>Holy Day Name</u>	<u>Tradition</u>	<u>Brief Description</u>
July 31*	Eid Al-Adha	Muslim	Work is generally prohibited. The Festival of Sacrifice remembers Abraham's devotion.
August 11	Krishna Janmashtami	Hindu	The birthday of Sri Krishna, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu who helped restore the balance of good over evil.
August 16-23	Paryushana Parva	Jain	Eight-day Festival of Forgiveness and Self-Discipline.
August 22	Ganesh Chaturti	Hindu	Birthday of Sri Ganesha, revered as the god of wisdom, prosperity and good fortune and the remover of obstacles.

August 29*	Ashura	Muslim	For Shias, a commemoration of the martyrdom of Hussein, a grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, at Karbala.
September 19-20*	Rosh Hashanah	Jewish	Beginning of the Jewish Year and High Holy Days. Work is generally prohibited.
September 28*	Yom Kippur	Jewish	The Day of Atonement. Most solemn Jewish holy day. Adults fast from food and drink. Work is generally prohibited.
October 3-9*	Sukkot	Jewish	The Feast of the Tabernacles. Harvest Festival. Work is generally prohibited on the first two days.
October 10*	Shemini Atzeret	Jewish	Marks the end of Sukkot. Work is generally prohibited.
October 11*	Simchat Torah	Jewish	Work is generally prohibited. Marks end and beginning of public Torah readings.
October 17 - October 26 & October 27	Navaratri & Vijayadashami/ Dusshera	Hindu	Festival of 9 nights celebrating the Goddess. 10th day is a festival celebrating the Goddess' triumph over evil.
October 20*	Birth of the Bab	Bahá'í	Day honoring the birth of one of the founders of the Bahá'í Faith.
November 1*	Samhain	Wiccan/ Pagan	Festival of Darkness honoring the dead.

November 1	All Saint's Day	Christian	Honors all the saints known and unknown.
November 14	Diwali	Hindu, Jain, Sikh	Festival of Lights. Light symbolizes a force against darkness, ignorance, evil. Diwali is celebrated over 5 days.
December 11-18	Hanukkah	Jewish	Festival of Lights. Marks the victory of the Maccabees and the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem.
December 25	Srimad Bhagavad Gita Jayanti	Hindu	Gita Jayanti is the date that Lord Krishna revealed the Bhagavad Gita, a Hindu sacred text, to Prince Arjuna.
December 25	Christmas	Christian	Celebration of the Birth of Jesus Christ.
December 26-January 1	Kwanzaa	African American	Kwanzaa celebrates 7 principles of African heritage. Each of the 7 days are dedicated to a principle.

2021

January 2	Bodhi Day	Buddhist	Celebration of Buddha's attainment of enlightenment.
-----------	-----------	----------	--

January 7	Feast of the Nativity	Orthodox Christian	Celebration of the Birth of Jesus Christ.
January 14	Makara Sankranti	Hindu	A celebration marking the advent of the Sun's northern migration and forthcoming Spring.
February 12	Chinese New Year	Confucian, Daoist, Buddhist	A festival marking the new year for the Chinese calendar.
February 17	Ash Wednesday	Christian	The beginning of Lent, a 40-day fast and time of reflection.
February 26*	Purim	Jewish	Celebration of the story of Esther.
March 2 – 20*	Nineteen Day Fast	Bahá'í	Bahá'ís between the ages of 15 - 70 fast without food or drink from sunrise to sunset.
March 10*	Lailat al Miraj	Muslim	Commemoration of Prophet Muhammad's ascension to Heaven.
March 12	Maha Shivaratri	Hindu	An evening celebration of the wedding of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati.
March 21*	Nowruz (New Year)	Zoroastrian and Bahá'í	Celebration of the Persian New Year.
March 28	Palm Sunday	Christian	Beginning of Holy Week, prior to Easter.

March 28 - April 4*	Pesach (Passover)	Jewish	Festival of liberation of Israelites from Slavery in Egypt. Work is prohibited on the first two and last two days.
March 29	Holi	Hindu	Festival of colors. A two-day festival celebrates the advent of spring and the message that good victorious over evil.
April 1, April 2, April 4	Holy Thursday, Good/Holy Friday, Easter	Christian	Commemoration of the Last Supper of Jesus with the Disciples; Commemoration of the Crucifixion of Jesus; Celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus.
April 13- May 14*	Ramadan	Muslim	Holy month of fasting without food or drink from sunrise to sunset.
April 14	Vaisakhi	Sikh	Marks the formation of the Khalsa (religious community of Sikhs) by Guru Gobind Singh.
April 16- May 2*	Ridvan	Bahá'í	Commemoration of the 12 days when founder, Baha'u'llah, declared mission.
April 21	Rama Navami	Hindu	Celebration of the birth of Sri Rama, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu who helped restore balance of good over evil.
April 27	Hanuman Jayanti	Hindu	Celebrates the birthday of Hanuman, foremost devotee of Sri Rama and Sita.
May 2	Pascha	Orthodox Christian	Celebration of Resurrection of Jesus.

May 13*	Eid al Fitr	Muslim	Holy day celebrated to end Ramadan.
---------	-------------	--------	-------------------------------------

Southwestern's Religious Observance Excused Absence Policy

Policy Reminders: One-time University events should not be scheduled during the following holidays; these are events which either (1) require attendance, (2) may not be mandatory, but those not attending would miss an important opportunity to be included in a campus event, and/or (3) are one-time opportunities for participants to receive the services offered: Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Christmas Day, Pesach (Passover), Good Friday, Easter.

Chapel Services: In addition to the above religious holidays, the following dates and times have been identified for Chapel services during the 2020-2021 academic year. These are priority events which no student, faculty, or staff member may be denied the opportunity to attend because of a conflicting class, meeting, or event.

- Welcome Week worship service, Sunday, August 16, 2020, 11:00am-12:00pm (virtual)
- Candlelight worship services, Thursday, December 3, 2020, 6:00pm & 8:00pm (virtual)
- Ash Wednesday, Wednesday, February 17, 2021 (reflection and ashes to go offered 11:30 to 12:30)
- Homecoming worship service, Sunday, April 11, 2021, 10:00am-11:00am
- Baccalaureate worship service, Friday, May 7, 2021, 7:00pm-8:00pm

Religious Absences: Because the religious holidays listed above reflect some, but not all, of the most commonly observed holidays, the University policies also permit any student to miss class in order to observe any religious or cultural holidays that are part of their tradition, including holidays that are not listed above. Students are expected to notify their professor of religious absences as far in advance as possible and fulfill missed assignments prior to the absence. Additionally, University policies permit faculty and staff, including student employees, to miss work in order to observe religious and cultural holidays that

are part of their tradition, including holidays that are not listed above. This time off may be without pay or taken as accrued vacation time, and in the case of student employees, it can include a change in work hours within a pay period to accommodate the absence. The University policy notes that faculty members are still expected to meet their class schedules and should work with their Department chair or the Dean of the Faculty to arrange these absences.

These policies can also be found in the *Student and Faculty Handbooks* and on the Spiritual and Religious Life website: www.southwestern.edu/life-at-southwestern/spiritual-and-religious-life/holidays/

Religious Observance GoogleCalendar

Directions to subscribe to the Religious Observance Calendar for GoogleCalendar.

1. On your computer, open [Google Calendar](#).
2. On the left side, find “Other calendars” and click the down arrow .
3. Select Subscribe to Calendar.
4. Enter the following calendar’s address in the field provided:
h1fkc78ne7p70f5dmt8mac79ems@group.calendar.google.com
5. Click Add calendar. The calendar will appear on the left side under “Other calendars.” (Thank you to our friends at the Yale University Chaplain’s Office for developing the calendar.)