

**VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY**  
**CALENDAR AND POLICY ON RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS AND OBSERVANCES**  
**Office of the University Chaplain and Religious Life**  
**Academic Year 2017-2018**

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 [projectinterfaith.org](http://projectinterfaith.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 on the first date referenced.
- \*\* Regional customs, group preference or moon sightings may cause a variation of this date.
- \* \*\* Both definitions above apply to holy days indicated by three asterisks.

Holy days noted *in italics* 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.

<b>DATE 2017</b>	<b>HOLY DAY</b>	<b>FAITH</b>	<b>NOTES</b>
<b>August</b> 6	Transfiguration	Christian	
14	Krishna Janmashtami	Hindu	
13-15	Obon (Bon)	Buddhist	Some regions of Japan celebrate on July 13-15
25	Ganesh Chaturthi	Hindu	
<b>September</b> 1	<i>Eid Al-Adha</i> * **	Islam	Ends the evening of 9/5
20-22	<i>Rosh Hashanah</i> *	Jewish	21 <sup>st</sup> & 22 <sup>nd</sup> are non-work days
24	Fast of Gedaliah	Jewish	
29-30	<i>Yom Kippur</i> *	Jewish	30 <sup>th</sup> is a non-work day

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<b>October</b> 4-11	<i>Sukkot*</i>	Jewish	5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup> are non-work days
Oct 11-12	<i>Shemini Atzeret*</i>	Jewish	12 <sup>th</sup> is a non-work day
12-13	<i>Simchat Torah*</i>	Jewish	13 <sup>th</sup> is a non-work day
19	Diwali (Deepavali)**	Hindu	
20-21	<i>Birth of the Bab*</i>	Baha'i	
21-22	<i>Birth of Baha'u'llah*</i>	Baha'i	
31-Nov 1	Samhain*	Pagan	
<b>November</b> 1	All Saints' Day	Christian	
<b>December</b> 3	Beginning of Advent	Christian	
6-7	19 <sup>th</sup> of Kislev*	Jewish (Chabad)	
8	Feast of the Immaculate Conception	Christian	
12-20	Chanukah*	Jewish	
24	Christmas Eve	Christian	
25	Christmas Day	Christian	
28	Fast of 10 <sup>th</sup> of Tevet	Jewish	

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<b>2018</b>			
<b>January 6</b>	Epiphany	Christian	
7	Feast of the Nativity**	Christian (Orthodox)	
24	Bodhi Day (Rohatsu)**	Buddhist	

Jan 25-26	10 <sup>th</sup> of Sh'vat*	Jewish (Chabad)	
30-31	Tu B'Shvat*	Jewish	
<b>February</b> 13	<i>Maha Shivaratri</i>	Hindu	
14	Ash Wednesday	Christian	
28	Fast of Esther	Jewish	
28-March 1	Purim*	Jewish	
<b>March 20-</b> 21	<i>Nah Ruz*</i>	Baha'i	
25	Palm Sunday	Christian	
29	Maundy Thursday	Christian	
30	Good Friday	Christian	
30-31	<i>Passover (Pesach)*</i>	Jewish	31 <sup>st</sup> & 1 <sup>st</sup> , and 6 <sup>th</sup> & 7 <sup>th</sup> are nonwork days. Passover ends 4/7.

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31	Magha Puja Day**	Buddhist	
<b>April 1</b>	Easter	Christian	
8	Greek Orthodox Easter	Christian (Orthodox)	
11-12	Yom Hashoah*	Jewish	
12-13	Lailat al Miraj* **	Islam	
17-18	Yom HaZikaron*	Jewish	
18-19	Yom Ha'Atzma'ut*	Jewish	
April 20-21	<i>First Day of Ridvan*</i>	Baha'i	
28-29	<i>Ninth Day of Ridvan*</i>	Baha'i	
<b>May</b> 1-2	<i>12<sup>th</sup> Day of Ridvan*</i>	Baha'i	
2-3	Lag Ba'Omer*	Jewish	
13	Yom Yerushalayim	Jewish	
15	Ramadan (begins)* **	Islam	Ends June 14
20	Pentecost	Christian	
19-21	<i>Shavuot*</i>	Jewish	
23-24	<i>Declaration of the Bab*</i>	Baha'i	

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28-29	<i>Ascension of Baha'u'llah*</i>	Baha'i	
29	Buddha Day (Vesak)	Buddhist	
<b>June</b> 14 - 17	<i>Eid Al-Fitr* **</i>	Islam	
24	Pioneer Day	Mormon	
<b>July</b> 1	Fast of Tammuz	Jewish	
9-10	<i>Martyrdom of the Bab*</i>	Baha'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 faculty member, 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, e.g. Christmas, New Year, etc., and religious work-restricted holy days which are based upon religious tenets, laws, and/or doctrine, e.g. Yom Kippur. Individuals who observe and/or follow these religious work-restricted holy days are not permitted to engage in day-to-day occupations,

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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 Resources Official Holidays/Closings Calendar recognizes December 22, 2017, through January 2, 2018, as Winter Break.

(<https://hr.vanderbilt.edu/holidaycalendar.php>)

*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. The free expression of views in orderly ways is encouraged, but personal vilification of individuals has no place at Vanderbilt. Discouragement of personal vilification includes education and assistance in understanding the differing cultures represented at Vanderbilt, peer disapproval of inconsiderate behavior, and provisions of the Student Handbook regulating abusive or harassing conduct.”

**Extracurricular Activities**

The University is committed to the support and stimulation of the learning experience beyond the boundaries of formal instruction. It will provide opportunities through special personnel, facilities, programs, and services for students to associate with one another on an informal basis for participation in nonacademic activities, including the opportunity to form and join campus organizations.

**Nondiscrimination**

“The University is committed not to discriminate on the basis of unlawful criteria in its policies, practices, programs, and activities.”

“In compliance with federal law, including the provisions of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972, Sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, Executive Order 11246, the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act, as amended, and the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, Vanderbilt University does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of their race, sex, religion, color, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, military service, or genetic information in its administration of educational policies, programs, or activities; admissions policies; scholarship and loan programs; athletic or other University administered programs; or employment. In addition, the University does not discriminate against individuals on

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the basis of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.” *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 the University Chaplain & Religious Life: [religiouslife@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:religiouslife@vanderbilt.edu)*