

Diversity Resource OFFICE



Diversity is the key to global success

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Workshops and programs that address diversity issues are available for faculty, staff, and students. The Diversity Resource Office also administers the DiversiKey Program, which prepares students to be active and responsible members in their local and global communities.



August 2009						
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A Partial Listing of Religious, Ethnic, and Civic Observances Academic Year 2009-10

	2009
Rosh Chodesh Elul (Jewish)	August 19
Ramadan (Islamic)	August 22
Ganesh Chaturdhi (Hindu)	August 23
Labor Day (U.S.)	September 7
Lailat al Kadr (Islamic)	September 16
Quds Day (Islamic)	September 18
Devi Navaratri (Hindu)	September 19
Rosh Hashanah/Jewish New Year*	September 19
Eid al-Fitr (Islamic)	September 20
Tzom Gedaliah (Jewish)	September 21
Dassehra/Dussehra (Hindu)	September 28
Vijayadashmi (Hindu)	September 28
Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement (Jewish)*	September 28
Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles) (Jewish)	October 3
Karva Chauth (Buddhist, Hindu)	October 8
Hosha'anah Rabah (Jewish)	October 9
Shemini Atzeret (Jewish)	October 10
Cirio de Nazare (Brazil)	October 11
Simchat Torah (Jewish)	October 11
Columbus Day (U.S.)	October 12
Diwali (Buddhist, Hindu, Sikhism, Jainism)	October 17
Birth of the Bab (Bahá'í)	October 20
Chong Yang (China)	October 26
All Hallows Eve/Halloween	October 31
Samhain (Pagan/Wiccan)	October 31
All Saints' Day (Christian)	November 1
Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) (Latin America)	November 1
All Souls' Day (Roman Catholic)	November 2
Bunka No Hi (Japan)	November 3
Veterans' Day (U.S.)	November 11
Birth of Baha'u'llah (Bahá'í)	November 12
Shichigosan Matsuri (Shinto)	November 15
Day of the Covenant (Bahá'í)	November 26
Thanksgiving (U.S.)	November 26
Waqf al Arafah (Islamic)	November 26
Eid al-Adha (Islamic)	November 27
Sundays of Advent (Christian)	November 29, December 6, 13, 20
Bodhi Day (Buddhist, Hindu)	December 8
Feast Day — Our Lady of Guadalupe (Latin America)	December 12
Las Posadas (Mexico)	December 16-24
Rosh Chodesh Tevet (Jewish)	December 18
Muharram/Islamic New Year	December 18
Winter Solstice/Yule (Pagan, International)	December 21
Chanukah/Hanukkah (Jewish)	December 22-29
Christmas (Christian)	December 25
Kwanzaa (African American)	December 26- January 1
Asarah B'Tevet (Jewish)	December 27
Ashura (Islamic)	December 27
Japanese New Year	January 1
New Year's Day (U.S., International)	January 1
Shogatsu (Shinto New Year)	January 1
Dia de los Santos Reyes/Three Kings Day (Latin America)	January 6
Epiphany (Christian)	January 6
Makar Sankranti (Hindu)	January 14
Birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. (U.S.)	January 18
Tu B'Shevat (Jewish)	January 30
Imbolc/Imbolg (Pagan, Wiccan)	February 2
National Founding Day (Shinto)	February 11
Maha Shivaratri (Hindu)	February 12
Chinese New Year	February 14
Presidents' Day (U.S.)	February 15
Clean Monday/Lent begins (Orthodox Christian)	February 15
Ash Wednesday/Lent begins (Christian)	February 17
International Mother Language Day (International)	February 21
Fast of Esther (Jewish)	February 25
Mawlid al-Nabi (Islamic)	February 26
Purim (Jewish)	February 28
Holi (Hindu)	March 1
Shushan Purim (Jewish)	March 1
Hinamatsuri (Japan)	March 3
Rosh Chodesh Nissan (Jewish)	March 16
St. Patrick's Day (Christian)	March 17
Nowruz (Iranian New Year)	March 21
Palm Sunday (Christian)	March 28
Mahavir Jayanti (Jainism)	March 28
Palm Sunday (Orthodox Christian)	March 28
Passover/Pesach (Jewish)	March 30- April 5
Good Friday (Christian)	April 2
Great Friday (Orthodox Christian)	April 2
Holy Saturday (Orthodox Christian)	April 3
Easter (Christian)	April 4
Great and Holy Pascha (Orthodox Christian)	April 4
Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) (Jewish)	April 11
Yom Ha'atzmaut (Jewish)	April 19
Beltane (Pagan/Wiccan)	May 1
Lag BaOmer (Jewish)	May 2
Cinco de Mayo (Mexican/Mexican-American)	May 5
Tango no Sekku (Shinto)	May 5
Yom Yerushalayim (Jewish)	May 12
Rosh Chodesh Sivan (Jewish)	May 14
Shavuot (Jewish)	May 19
Declaration of the Bab (Bahá'í)	May 23
Pentecost (Christian)	May 23
Ascension of the Baha'u'llah (Bahá'í)	May 29
Memorial Day (U.S.)	May 31
Rosh Chodesh Tammuz (Jewish)	June 12
Summer Solstice/Litha/Midsummer (Pagan, Wiccan)	June 21
Fast of Shiva Asar B'Tammuz (Jewish)	June 29
Independence Day (U.S.)	July 4
Martyrdom of the Bab (Bahá'í)	July 9
Lailat al Miraj/Shab-E-Miraj (Islamic)	July 9
Rosh Chodesh Av (Jewish)	July 12
Tisha B'Av (Jewish)	July 20
Lailat al Bara'a/Shab-E-Barat (Islamic)	July 26
Lammas (Pagan/Wiccan)	August 1
Rosh Chodesh Elul (Jewish)	August 10
Ramadan (Islamic)	August 12
Raksha Bandhan (Hindu, Jainism)	August 24

Many Islamic and Jewish observances begin at sundown/sunset on the evening preceding the noted date.

* Work and school are prohibited during Jewish High Holy Days. These days begin at sundown of the evening preceding the first day and conclude at sundown on the days noted.

A Partial Listing of Religious, Ethnic, and Civic Observances — Academic Year 2009–10

Advent: The Christian church year begins with Advent (from the Latin *adventus* meaning “coming” or “arrival”). Advent is also a time when Christians prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ. Advent begins on the Sunday nearest November 30 (St. Andrew’s Day) and lasts until Christmas Eve.

All Saints’ Day: A Christian holy day observed by many Western churches on November 1 and by Eastern churches on the first Sunday after Pentecost. The day now honors all saints of the church, even those not known by name.

All Souls’ Day: A Christian holy day commemorating the faithful departed or those baptized Christians believed to be in purgatory. It is celebrated on November 2 except when the date falls on a Sunday, in which case All Souls’ Day is celebrated on November 3.

Ash Wednesday: Marks the first day of Lent in the Western Christian liturgical year. Lent is a season of spiritual discipline, cleansing, and fasting, which occurs in the 40 days before Easter.

Chanukah/Hanukkah: The Hebrew word for “dedication,” begins on the 25th day of Kislev in the Hebrew calendar. It lasts eight days, beginning at sunset the previous day, and also is known as the Festival of Lights. Hanukkah celebrates the victory (165 BCE) of the Maccabees over the Syrian tyrant Antiochus IV and the subsequent reclamation of Jerusalem.

Christmas (Western Christian)/Nativity of the Lord (Eastern Christian): This celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ has fallen on December 25 for more than 1,600 years, although the exact date of Christ’s birth is not known.

Cinco de Mayo: Cinco de Mayo commemorates the May 5, 1862, *Batalla de Puebla* (Battle of Puebla) in which the Mexican troops under General Ignacio Zaragoza defeated the French forces under Napoleon III.

Día de los Muertos: Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) is a Mexican celebration to remember and prepare special foods in honor of those who have departed this life. It is believed that the spirits of the dead come to visit their families on October 31 and leave on November 2.

Diwali (Divali, Dewali): Diwali is a five-day Hindu festival that occurs on the 15th day of Kartika in the Hindu calendar. Diwali means “rows of lighted lamps,” and the celebration is often referred to as the Festival of Lights. The celebration means as much to Hindus as Christmas does to Christians.

Easter: Easter celebrates the resurrection of Jesus, the most joyous occasion in Western Christianity. It also marks the end of Western Lent. The date varies and is the Sunday following the full moon on or after the vernal equinox.

Eid al-Adha (Id al-Adha): Eid al-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice) is the most important feast of the Muslim calendar. It concludes the pilgrimage to Mecca. Id al-Adha lasts for three days and commemorates Ibrahim’s willingness to obey God by sacrificing his son.

Eid al-Fitr (Id al-Fitr): The joyous celebration at the end of Ramadan is Eid al-Fitr or the “festival of breaking the fast.” The celebration lasts three days, although the main festivities occur on the first day.

Epiphany (Western Christian): Epiphany for Western Christians commemorates the presentation of the infant Jesus to the Magi, or the “three wise men,” and is celebrated on the Sunday that falls between January 2 and 8. It somewhat resembles The Presentation of the Lord (Eastern Christian), which commemorates the circumcision of Jesus in the Temple at Jerusalem the eighth day after his birth, according to the Law of Moses.

Good Friday: Good Friday occurs between March 20 and April 23 — on the Friday before Easter. It commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus. In Eastern Orthodox churches, the observance is known as Great Friday.

International Mother Language Day: Originated as the international recognition of Language Movement Day. The day has been commemorated in Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) since 1952, when the East Pakistani police and army in Dhaka killed a number of Bangladeshi university students.

Kwanzaa: Kwanzaa from the Kiswahili word meaning “first fruits,” is an African American cultural festival beginning on December 26 and ending January 1. The festival was the creation in 1966 of Dr. Maulana Ron Karenga, who sought to establish a holiday that would facilitate African American goals of building a strong family, learning about African American history, and developing unity.

Las Posadas: Las Posadas is a traditional Mexican festival that reenacts the journey of Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem and their search for a “room at the inn.” Each Christmas season, celebrants form a procession and carry a doll representing the Christ Child and images of Joseph and Mary riding on a burro. They walk through communities and stop at selected homes to ask for lodging.

Lent: Also called “the Great Fast,” Lent lasts 40 days (including Sundays in the Eastern churches, excluding Sundays in the Western churches). It is the period of time preceding the Christian Holy Week, which culminates in the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus. From the Old English *lengten* or “spring,” it is a time of spiritual cleansing through prayer, fasting, and repentance.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day: In 1983, the 98th Congress passed Public Law 98-144 to honor the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. This was first celebrated as a federal legal holiday on January 20, 1986, and since then has been observed on the third Monday of January. Congress’s intention was that the holiday “serve as a time for Americans to reflect on the principles of racial equality and nonviolent social change espoused by Martin Luther King Jr.” (36 USC, Section 169j.)

Mawlid al-Nabi: A celebration of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam. The day is fixed at the 12th day of the month of Rabi al-Awwal in the Muslim calendar. Muhammad was born about 570 AD and died in 632 AD.

Memorial Day: First observed on May 30, 1868, it is a legal holiday observed annually on the last Monday in May in the United States in honor of the men and women of the nation’s armed services killed in wartime. Traditionally marked by parades, memorial ceremonies, and the decoration of graves with flowers and flags.

National Founding Day: Kenkoku, which is Japanese for “national founding,” is celebrated on February 11 and commemorates the anniversary of the mythical foundation of Japan. It is based on the myth that the first Japanese emperor, Jinmu, ascended to the throne on that day and created the Japanese state.

New Year’s Day: New Year’s Day is celebrated on January 1 in the Gregorian calendar. It is a time of renewal; many people resolve to break bad habits and begin good ones.

Palm Sunday: Palm Sunday occurs on the Sunday before Easter Sunday in the Western Christian liturgical calendar. It signals the upcoming end of Lent and the beginning of Holy Week. The day commemorates the spreading of palms and clothing in Jesus’ path as He entered Jerusalem prior to His crucifixion.

Pascha: Pascha is the High Holy day of the Orthodox Christian year, marking the end of the Orthodox Lent. The date of Pascha, as defined by the assembly of the entire Christian Church in the year 325, varies each year. It falls on the first Sunday after the vernal equinox, but never before the Jewish Passover, since that was the day Jesus was crucified. From the Hebrew *Pesach* or “passover.”

Passover/Pesach: Passover, or Pesach, is an eight-day observance that begins at sunset on the 15th day of Nisan in the Hebrew calendar. Jews celebrate the flight of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery in the 1200s BCE. The word *Passover* is derived from the 10th plague God placed on Egypt for keeping the Israelites in slavery. According to the Bible, God killed the first-born child in Egyptian homes but “passed over” Israelites’ homes marked with the blood of lambs.

Presidents’ Day: Began with the passage of Public Law 90-363 in 1968, moving the legal observance of George Washington’s birthday from February 22 to the third Monday in February. Since Abraham Lincoln’s birthday came on February 12, many states combine the two into Presidents’ Day.

Ramadan: The most sacred holiday of the Muslim year, mandated by the Qur’an (2:183). It occurs in the ninth month of the Islamic calendar and is the holy month of fasting. Fasting is considered to be the third pillar of religious obligation of Islam. Ramadan is a time of worship, reading the Qur’an, charitable acts, and the purification of individual behavior. Also the time in which the Qur’an was revealed to Mohammad as guidance for the people.

Rosh Hashanah: A solemn celebration of the beginning of the Jewish year. The new year begins at sunset before the first day of Tishri in the Hebrew calendar and lasts two days. However, Reform Jews usually celebrate Rosh Hashanah for one day. The Ten Days of Penitence begin on Rosh Hashanah (Day of Judgment) and end on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement).

Samhain: Samhain is the Celtic Feast of the Dead and is one of the eight sabbats in the Pagan calendar. The modern-day Halloween celebration is a descendent of this ancient festival. The Celtic celebration signaled the end of the harvest (fruits, nuts, and souls) and the beginning of winter. The Celts believed that, during Samhain, “the barriers between humans, ancestors, gods, and fairies are overthrown, and they can visit others’ realms.”

Shavuot: Shavuot, meaning “weeks,” is one of the three pilgrim festivals — along with Passover and Sukkot — in the Jewish calendar. It falls on the sixth day of Sivan, beginning at sunset the night before, and celebrates the Ten Commandments, the foundation of Jewish law. Shavuot also is known as the Feast of Weeks because it occurs seven weeks after the first day of Passover.

Simchat Torah: Simhat Torah (Tishri 23) literally means “rejoicing in the Torah” and represents the culmination of Sukkot and Shemini Atzeret. It is a joyous celebration that concludes the annual cycle of the reading of the Torah.

Sukkot: Sukkot, also known as the Feast of the Booths or Feast of Tabernacles, begins at sunset the day before the 15th day of Tishri in the Hebrew calendar and continues for seven days. Only the first two days are celebrated as full holidays. Sukkot means “booth” and recalls the time that the Israelites wandered in the desert during their journey to the Promised Land and lived in the sukkots. Sukkot also signifies a thanksgiving for the harvest.

Thanksgiving: The first recorded observance of Thanksgiving in America was in 1619. In 1789, George Washington proclaimed November 26 as a “day of public thanksgiving and prayer.” In 1939, President Franklin Roosevelt changed the date to the fourth Thursday in November.

Winter Solstice: The day when the distance between the Tropic of Capricorn and the sun is the shortest. Because of the earth’s tilt, the Northern Hemisphere is leaning farther away from the sun than at any other time of year.

Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day): Occurs on 27 Nisan in the Hebrew calendar. The holiday was established by the Israeli Knesset and is observed worldwide as a memorial to the six million Jews killed by the Nazis during the Holocaust. On 27 Nisan, 1945, Allied Forces liberated the concentration camp at Buchenwald, Germany.

Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement): Beginning at sunset on Tishri 9 and lasting until three stars appear after Tishri 10, Yom Kippur is the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. The observance also is known as the Day of Atonement since the events of Yom Kippur focus on asking and granting forgiveness for one’s transgressions. Yom Kippur falls at the end of the Ten Days of Penitence that begin with Rosh Hashanah, the Day of Judgment.

Diversity Resource Office

Appreciation of religious, ethnic, and civic observances fosters an inclusive learning and working environment. With that in mind, we encourage you to display this calendar. And we invite you to join us for workshops that address diversity issues for faculty, staff, and students.

Campus Mail



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Calendar of Religious, Ethnic, and Civic Observances Academic Year 2009–10