

Guidelines for Accommodating Religious Observance

As a non-sectarian institution, Allegheny College affirms the variety of religious faiths represented within our community and supports individuals' personal practice and expression of religion. We urge flexibility in allowing time away from work or classes for observance of holy days. We encourage individuals who celebrate or decorate for religious holidays to do so with sensitivity to those who are not religious or whose faith does not lend itself to outwardly visible expression. Common spaces should provide room for representation of a variety of faiths. We support continuing education about religious diversity and awareness of religious seasons that members of our campus community observe.

Suggested actions:

- Contact the Religious Life Office for information about any religious traditions with which you are unfamiliar.
- When scheduling exams, consider whether there may be students in your class observing holy days.
- Whenever possible, accommodate students who miss class, athletic practice, or other obligations for religious observance, and signal your willingness to do so by including a note in the syllabus, schedule, or other statement.
- Attend services and celebrations held by religious groups on campus, such as the 'Id al-Fitr or the Passover Seder.
- Around the winter holidays, do not assume that everyone in your office, department, floor, etc. celebrates Christmas, but invite persons to share stories and customs from their own experience.
- When in doubt, ask: simply asking about people's comfort level in a particular setting can make them feel valued and included.

Religious Calendar for 2009-2010

Please note: Jewish holidays begin on sundown of the first day listed.

Major Holy Days

We discourage the scheduling of any campus-wide events on these days, such as Matriculation, Homecoming, Family Weekend, Visit Days, Honors Convocation, Commencement, or programs or events for the larger campus community.

- Aug. 22: Ramadan begins (Islamic month of fasting; fasting starts each day about an hour before sunrise and ends just after sunset. Fasting generally includes no food or drink.)
- Sep. 16-17: Laylat al-Qadr (Islamic night of prayer, during last 10 days of Ramadan)
- Sep. 18-20: Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year)
- Sep. 21: 'Id al-Fitr (Islamic three-day celebration at the end of Ramadan)
- Sep. 27-28: Yom Kippur (Jewish Day of Atonement)
- Nov. 28: 'Id al-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice; Islamic three-day celebration at the end of the hajj)
- Dec. 25: Christmas (Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus)
- Dec. 26-Jan. 1: Kwanzaa (African American celebration of family, community, and culture)
- Dec. 27: Ashura (Shi'ite remembrance of the martyrdom of Husayn b. 'Ali)
- Mar. 29-Apr. 6: Passover (Jewish week-long celebration of the Exodus from Egypt)
- Apr 4: Easter (Christian celebration of Christ's resurrection: note: Eastern Orthodox Christian Easter falls on Apr. 4, also)

Other Observances

These may be celebrated on campus, but do not have the same level of obligation as major holy days.

- Oct. 2: Sukkot (Jewish week-long Festival of Booths)
- Nov. 1: All Saints Day (Holy Day of Obligation for Catholics: attendance at Mass required)
- Nov. 29: Advent (Christian season of preparation for the birth of Jesus; four Sundays prior to Christmas)
- Dec. 8: Immaculate Conception (Holy Day of Obligation for Catholics: attendance at Mass required)
- Dec. 11: Hanukkah (Jewish eight-day Festival of Lights)
- Jan. 29: Tu B'Shvat (Jewish Arbor Day)
- Feb 17: Ash Wednesday (Christian first day of Lent, 40-day season of repentance)
- Feb. 26: Mawlid al-Nabi (Celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday)
- Feb 27: Purim (Jewish Feast of Lots)
- Mar 28: Palm Sunday (Christian observance of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem)
- Apr. 1: Maundy Thursday (Christian observance of Jesus' Passover meal with disciples)
- Apr. 2: Good Friday (Christian observance of Jesus' crucifixion and burial)
- Apr. 10: Yom Hashoah (Jewish day of Holocaust remembrance)