

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

When planning courses, departmental programs, and other activities for the academic year, it is useful to remember the rich mixture of religious and ethnic groups that comprise our student population. The following list includes some religious holy days, civic holidays and festivals that occur during the academic year, variously observed by certain religious and ethnic communities.

This list is not exhaustive, nor does the observance of all the holy days or holidays require absence from class. Please review the Schedule of Classes for additional information about the academic calendar: <http://registrar.indiana.edu/~registra/scheofclass.shtml>.

The IU Religious Observances policy is the result of lengthy faculty discussion about the just and appropriate way to deal with our increasingly diverse student population. The policy attempts to strike a reasonable balance between accommodating religious observances of students and meeting academic needs and standards. This policy requires instructors to make a reasonable accommodation when a student must miss an exam or other academic exercise because of a required religious observance. The policy outlines a procedure that students should follow in requesting an accommodation.

Indiana University's policy on accommodations for religious holy days or holidays for both students and faculty is available at:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~bfc/docs/policies/ReligiousObservances09.pdf>.

Some illustrations:

- Faculty do not have to consider accommodations for the purpose of allowing students to travel away from Bloomington for a religious observance.
- Any student who is unable to attend classes or participate in any examination, study, or work requirement on some particular day(s) because of his/her religious beliefs must be given the opportunity to make up the work which was missed, provided that the makeup work does not create an unreasonable burden upon Indiana University. Upon request and timely notice, students shall be provided reasonable accommodation.
- The University will not levy fees or charges of any kind when allowing the student to make up missed work. In addition, no adverse or prejudicial effects should result to students because they have made use of these provisions.
- Attendance policies allowing for a specific number of dates to be missed without impact on a student's grade should not count absences for religious observance within that number. Making accommodations requires faculty and students to find suitable accommodation to cover the material from the course and complete all required work, including exams. It is not an appropriate accommodation to permit a student to not complete a portion of material from the course, or to miss an exam, and simply reduce that student's grade.
- Students are not required to prove attendance at religious services or events in order to obtain an accommodation for religious observance under IU policy. The students are

requested to give notice early in the semester. Please include this reminder in your syllabus.

- Chairs and supervisors of Associate Instructors and all other instructional personnel have a responsibility to ensure compliance with this policy.

Students seeking accommodations for religious observances can find the necessary form here: <http://www.indiana.edu/~vpfaa/forms/index.shtml>. (Scroll down to “Religious Observances” and click on “Request for Accommodation.”) This form should be filled out and returned to the class instructor as early in the semester as possible.

To assist instructors and students in their planning, the Office for Faculty & Academic Affairs encourages instructors to do the following in the beginning of each semester:

- Announce dates and times for examinations and other major obligations as early as possible.
- Ask students to let the instructor know about conflicts very early in the semester so that accommodations can be made.
- Provide students with information about how to download the accommodation form from the website of the Office for Faculty & Academic Affairs.
- If, after discussion, the instructor and student cannot agree on a reasonable accommodation, either or both should seek the advice of the Vice Provost for Faculty & Academic Affairs.

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