

Dear Faculty and Staff:

SMU is rooted in the Christian tradition of Methodism and celebrates religious belief and practice that nourish the life of the mind and spirit. As spring unfolds, many religions observe holy days that bring the community of faith together. In this season, we remind you of the University's religious observance policy and religious holy days taking place for the remainder of the semester.

Students who need to miss class for religious observance are expected to notify faculty in advance of their absence and are required to make up any missed work. While students are expected to notify faculty at the beginning of the term if they will need an adjustment to assignment dates or exams we would encourage faculty to continue to work with students in the coming weeks to make proper arrangements for accessing course materials and making up missed work in a timely manner.

Faculty should anticipate requests from students observing the following holy days:

- **Islam:**
  - **Ramadan:**
    - The anticipated dates for Ramadan are March 22-April 21, culminating with the Eid-al-Fitr holiday on April 22. These dates are based on the sighting of the moon and may shift by one day (earlier or later).
    - During the blessed month of Ramadan, observant Muslims fast from dawn to dusk, abstaining from food and beverages (even water). Observant Muslims eat a substantial meal (suhoor) before dawn and break the fast (iftar) with a feast at sunset.
    - Late afternoon classes and tests may be challenging for students who are fasting.
    - The final ten days (April 12-21) days of Ramadan are the most auspicious days. During this time, following the iftar meal, many observant Muslims pray and recite the Quran late into the evening with their religious community. Early morning classes and tests may be challenging for students who participate in these rituals.
  - **Eid-al-Fitr**
    - Eid-al-Fitr is expected to begin at sundown on April 21 – and families will be celebrating the full day of feasting on April 22. The exact date is determined by the sighting of the moon in the last days of Ramadan. Student may request to be excused from class on April 21 to ensure that they can celebrate the holiday with family.
- **Judaism:**
  - **Passover:**
    - The Jewish community is celebrating Passover April 5-13.
    - This year, the first two nights of the Passover Seder celebration fall on Wednesday and Thursday nights, April 5 and 6. The Jewish community

observes April 6 and 7 and April 12 and 13 as holy days, which traditionally one would be unable to attend class or go to work.

- You may receive requests for excused absences on April 6, 7, 12 and 13.

- **Christianity:**

- **Good Friday/Easter**

- Most Western Christian traditions will be celebrating Good Friday on April 7 and Easter on April 9.
    - Orthodox (Eastern) Christians will be celebrating Good Friday on April 14 and Easter on April 16.
    - You can anticipate requests from Orthodox student who plan to attend services on Good Friday, which may take place throughout the day.

Thank you for your commitment to support holistic student growth that nurtures the mind, body and spirit. Each religious tradition is diverse, and the summary above does not speak to every variation you may encounter. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact the [Rev. Lisa Garvin](#), Chaplain and Minister to the University or the Office of the Chaplain and Religious Life at [chaplain@smu.edu](mailto:chaplain@smu.edu).



Lisa Garvin, Chaplain and Minister to the University



Sheri Kunovich, Associate Provost for Student Academic Engagement and Success