

September 2017

To: Members of the Faculty
From: Jill Dolan, Dean of the College
Re: Religious Observances, Fall Term 2017-18

Religious
Observances
9-8-17
Page | 1

Throughout the year, students may ask faculty for permission to reschedule academic obligations so that they may observe their religious holidays. We ask you to honor such requests and to work with students to plan the most effective ways for them to make up their work.

I realize many of you might also observe one or more of these holidays. Please let your students know if you plan to reschedule one of your class meetings to accommodate your own observances. They should be as graceful with your religious needs as we encourage you to be with theirs.

This fall, a number of students will observe one or more of these holidays after the term begins:

- *Rosh Hashanah* (Jewish) – Wednesday (sunset), September 20, through Friday (nightfall), September 22
- *Yom Kippur* (Jewish) – Friday (sunset), September 29, through Saturday (nightfall), September 30
- *Sukkot* (Jewish) – Wednesday (sunset), October 4, through Friday (nightfall), October 6
- *Shemini Atzeret* (Jewish) – Wednesday (sunset), October 11, through Thursday (nightfall), October 12
- *Simchat Torah* (Jewish) – Thursday (sunset), October 12, through Friday (nightfall), October 13
- *Diwali* (Hindu, Jain and Sikh) – Thursday, October 19
- *Birth of the Báb* (Baha'i) – Friday (sunset), October 20 through Saturday, October 21

Students who observe the Jewish holidays in a traditional way are unable to write or use a computer or complete assignments on Shabbat and holidays. Their observance restricts them from doing any work at all from sunset of the first night of the holiday through nightfall of the last night. The holidays that end on Friday at nightfall go directly into the Sabbath observance. For the more religious students, they will not be able to use electronics or write from Wednesday sundown until Saturday sundown for three out of the first four weeks of classes.

Additionally, observant Muslim students are expected to pray individually five times a day, on a specific schedule, as well as once a week in a group session on Friday afternoons. While there is some flexibility in the daily prayers, so that they can usually be



accommodated around regular class meetings, the weekly group prayer session on Fridays from 1:15 to 2:00 p.m. in Murray-Dodge Hall requires attendance on a fixed schedule.

Because the Friday prayer session overlaps with 12:30 and 1:30 classes, it would be helpful if Muslim students who request rescheduling could enroll in classes, precepts, drill sections, and labs that meet at times other than Friday afternoon.

Since most of this scheduling happens with the faculty members in charge of these courses, rather than through the Registrar's office, I want to alert you that you should expect to receive some requests for rescheduling from observant Muslim students. I hope you'll do everything you can to accommodate them.

This list of holidays isn't exhaustive. If you need information about other religious holidays that students may bring to your attention, please contact the Office of the Dean of Religious Life. You may also contact the Dean of Religious Life and the Chapel, Dr. Alison Boden, directly at aboden@princeton.edu or at 609-258-6244.

And, of course, feel free to contact me in the Dean of the College Office at jsdolan@Princeton.edu or 609-258-3040.

Thanks very much for your help. I wish you all a smooth beginning to what I hope will be a rich and rewarding semester.

Jill Dolan
Dean of the College

cc: Academic Department/Program Managers
Office of the Dean of the College
Office of the Dean of Religious Life and of the Chapel
Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Students
Office of the Vice President for Campus Life
Residential College Deans and Directors of Studies
Registrar's Office