

SUMMARY OF RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS JAN. — DEC. 2009

JANUARY

Jan. 5	Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh	Sikhism
Jan. 6	Epiphany	Christianity
Jan. 6	CHRISTMAS – ARMENIA	Christianity
Jan. 7	NATIVITY OF OUR LORD	Coptic & Eastern Orthodox Christian **
Jan. 7	ASHURA	Islam △
Jan. 8	Synaxis of the Virgin Mary	Eastern Orthodox Christian **
Jan. 9	Feast of St. Stephen	Eastern Orthodox Christian **
Jan. 12	Seijin no hi	Shinto
Jan. 13	Lohri	Hinduism, Sikhism
Jan. 14	New Year (St. Basil's)	Coptic & Eastern Orthodox Christian **
Jan. 19	Timkat / Theophany	Coptic & Eastern Orthodox Christian **
Jan. 26	NEW YEAR, China, Buddhist Hong Kong, Taiwan	Buddhism
Jan. 26	TET, Vietnam	Buddhism
Jan. 27	LOSAR (New Year)	Tibet
Jan. 31	Basant Panchami	Hinduism

FEBRUARY

Feb. 2	Imblog	Wicca
Feb. 15	Meeting of the Lord	Eastern Orthodox Christian **
Feb. 23	Shivratri	Hinduism
Feb. 25	Ash Wednesday, Lent begins	Christianity
Feb. 26- Mar. 1	Intercalary Days	Bahá'í Faith*

MARCH

Mar. 2	Great Lent Begins	Coptic & Eastern Orthodox Christian **
Mar. 2- 20	Alá (19 day fast begins)	Bahá'í Faith*
Mar. 9	Eid-Maulad-un-Nabi	Islam △
Mar. 10	Purim	Judaism*
Mar. 11	Holi	Hinduism, Sikhism
Mar. 12	Hola Mohalla	Sikhism
Mar. 16- 20	Ghambar Hamaspathmaedem	Zoroastrianism
Mar. 19	Chetra Navratras	Hinduism
Mar. 20	Eostre	Wicca
Mar. 21	NOW RUZ (New Year)	Bahá'í, Islam, Ismaili, Zoroastrian, Afghanistan, Iran
Mar. 25	Annunciation	Christianity
Mar. 26	Birthday of Prophet Zarathustra	Zoroastrianism

APRIL

Apr. 3	Ram Navami	Hinduism
Apr. 5	Palm Sunday	Eastern Orthodox Christian**

(CAPITALIZED DAYS ARE THE HOLIEST AND SOME MAY ABSTAIN FROM WORK.)

* Begins at previous sundown ** based on the Julian Calendar △ dates are subject to sighting of moon

The University of Windsor accommodates students, staff and faculty who observe other religious holidays by exempting them from working or attending classes on such days. Please refer to your collective agreement for a list of paid holidays.

This information was obtained and is "used with permission" from the Creative Cultural Communications

Copyright © 2008

APRIL CONT.		
Apr. 7	Feast of the Annunciation	Eastern Orthodox Christian **
Apr. 7	MAHAVIRA-JAYANTI	Jainism
Apr. 9	Holy Thursday	Christianity
Apr. 9-16	Pesach (Passover)	Judaism*
Apr. 10	GOOD FRIDAY	Christianity
Apr. 12	EASTER	Christianity
Apr. 13	BAISAKHI	Hinduism, Sikhism
Apr. 13	SONGKRAN (New Year), Cambodia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand	Buddhism
Apr. 16	Holy Thursday	Coptic & Eastern Orthodox Christian **
Apr. 17	HOLY FRIDAY	Coptic & Eastern Orthodox Christian **
Apr. 18	Great and Holy Saturday	Eastern Orthodox Christian **
Apr. 19	PASCHA (EASTER)	Coptic & Eastern Orthodox Christian **
Apr. 21	Yom ha-Shoah	Judaism*
Apr. 21-May 2	THE FEAST OF RIDVAN	Bahá'í Faith*
Apr. 27	Akshaya-Tritiya	Jainism
Apr. 30	Gahambar Maidyozaem	Zoroastrianism
MAY		
May 1	Beltane	Wicca
May. 9	WESAK	Buddhism
May 21	Ascension of the Lord	Christianity
May 23	The Declaration of the Báb	Bahá'í Faith*
May 28	Ascension of the Lord	Coptic & Eastern Orthodox Christian **
May 29	THE ASCENSION OF BAHÁ'U'LLAH	Bahá'í Faith*
May 29-30	Shavuot	Judaism*
May 31	Pentecost	Christian
JUNE		
June 7	Pentecost	Coptic & Eastern Orthodox Christian **
June 16	Martyrdom of Guru Arjun Dev	Sikhism
June 21	Litha	Wicca
June 21	National Aboriginal Day	Canada
June 29-Jul. 3	Gahambar Maidyoshem	Zoroastrianism
JULY		
July 7	Nativity of John the Baptist	Eastern Orthodox Christian **
July 7	Wassa/Wassana	Buddhism
July 9	The Martyrdom of the Báb	Bahá'í Faith*
July 12	Feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul	Eastern Orthodox Christian **
AUGUST		
Aug. 1	Lugnasad	Wicca
Aug. 13-22	Fravardeghan	Zoroastrianism
Aug. 14	JANMASHTAMI	Hinduism
Aug. 15	Assumption	Christianity & Eastern Orthodox Christian
Aug. 17	PARYUSHANA-PARVA	Jainism
Aug. 19	Transfiguration of the Lord	Eastern Orthodox Christian **
Aug. 22-Sept. 19	Ramadan	Islam △
Aug. 23	NAW RUZ (Shenshai)	Zoroastrianism
Aug. 23	Ganesh Chaturthi	Hinduism
Aug. 23	Dashalakshani-Parva	Jainism
Aug. 23	Samvatsari	Jainism
Aug. 28	Dormition of the Virgin Mary	Eastern Orthodox Christian **

(CAPITALIZED DAYS ARE THE HOLIEST AND SOME MAY ABSTAIN FROM WORK.)

* Begins at previous sundown ** based on the Julian Calendar △ dates are subject to sighting of moon

The University of Windsor accommodates students, staff and faculty who observe other religious holidays by exempting them from working or attending classes on such days. Please refer to your collective agreement for a list of paid holidays.

If you have any questions or require further clarification, please contact the
Employment Equity Office (519)253-3000 X2057 or acarrick@uwindsor.ca

SEPTEMBER		
Sept. 1	Parkash	Sikhism
Sept. 3	Ananta-Chaturdasi	Jainism
Sept. 4	Ksamavani	Jainism
Sept. 11	Meskerem (New Year)	Coptic Christian
Sept. 12-16	Gahambar Paitishahem	Zoroastrianism
Sept. 19	Navratri	Hinduism
Sept. 21	Nativity of the Virgin Mary	Eastern Orthodox Christian **
Sept. 21	EID-UL-FITR	Islam △
Sept. 22	Mabon	Wicca
Sept. 24	Durga Puja	Hinduism
Sept. 25	Saraswati Puja	Hinduism
Sept. 27	Exaltation of the Cross	Eastern Orthodox Christian **
Sept. 28	YOM KIPPUR	Judaism*
Sept. 28	Dussehra	Hinduism
Sept. 30 – Oct. 1	ROSH HASHANAH	Judaism*
OCTOBER		
Oct. 3-9	Sukkot	Judaism
Oct. 4	Pavarana	Buddhism
Oct. 8	Karva Chauth	Hinduism
Oct. 10	Shemini Atzeret	Judaism*
Oct. 11	Simchat Torah	Judaism*
Oct. 12-16	Gahmbar Ayathrem	Zoroastrianism
Oct. 14	Protection of the Virgin Mary	Eastern Orthodox Christian **
Oct. 17	DIWALI	Hinduism, Sikhism
Oct. 17	Mahavira Nirvana	Jainism
Oct. 20	The Birth of the Báb	Bahá'í Faith*
Oct. 31	Samhain	Wicca
NOVEMBER		
Nov. 2	Kathina	Buddhism
Nov. 2	Guru Nanak's Birthday	Sikhism
Nov. 2	Lokashah Jayanti	Jainism
Nov. 12	The Birth of Bahá' u 'lláh	Bahá'í Faith*
Nov. 21	Feast of the Archangel Michael and all Angels	Eastern Orthodox Christian **
Nov. 24	Martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur	Sikhism
Nov. 26	Day of the Covenant	Bahá'í Faith*
Nov. 26	Day of Hajj	Islam △
Nov. 28	EID-UL-ADHA	Islam △
Nov. 28	The Ascension of Abdu I-Bahá	Bahá'í Faith*
Nov. 29	First Sunday of Advent	Christianity
DECEMBER		
Dec. 4	Presentation of the Virgin Mary	Eastern Orthodox Christian **
Dec. 12-19	HANUKAH	Judaism*
Dec. 13	St. Andrew's Day	Eastern Orthodox Christian **
Dec. 18	1st Muharram-Islamic New Year	Islam △
Dec. 19	St. Nicholas' Day	Eastern Orthodox Christian **
Dec. 21	Yule	Wicca
Dec. 25	CHRISTMAS DAY	Christianity
Dec. 26	DEATH OF PROPHET ZARATHUSTRA	Zoroastrianism
Dec. 26	Kwanzaa	African-American/Canadian
Dec. 31-Jan.4	Gahambar Mailyarem	Zoroastrianism

(CAPITALIZED DAYS ARE THE HOLIEST AND SOME MAY ABSTAIN FROM WORK.)

* Begins at previous sundown ** based on the Julian Calendar △ dates are subject to sighting of moon

The University of Windsor accommodates students, staff and faculty who observe other religious holidays by exempting them from working or attending classes on such days. Please refer to your collective agreement for a list of paid holidays.

If you have any questions or require further clarification, please contact the
Employment Equity Office (519)253-3000 X2057 or acarrick@uwindsor.ca

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

The circle and the four cardinal directions are: sacred objects, sacred feathers, sacred herbs and sacred art. Aboriginal peoples' religions represent examples of primal traditions that have existed for some 30,000 to 60,000 years. Due to their migrations across North America over successive time periods, generalizations regarding Aboriginal traditions are difficult to make. Differences amongst hundred of tribal groups with their languages, together with contrasts of geography and climate to which the people have adapted has resulted in specific ceremonies unique to each tribe. In no Aboriginal language is there a term that translates as 'religion' and thus the term 'tradition' is preferable. Basic Aboriginal concepts are grounded in the experience of time and process. Therefore, the seasons of nature are understood in a cyclical manner. They have developed an interrelation with the natural environment and the sacred lore, thus the ending of seasons for activities such as hunting, fishing and agricultural pursuits are celebrated through dance, song and recital of legends, mythical stories and clan histories.



BAHÁ'Í

The nine-pointed star is used to symbolize the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith regarding the oneness of humanity and the oneness of religion.

The Bahá'í Era began in 1844 with the declaration of the Báb (1819-1850) who claimed to be the forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892), the Promised One of all ages and religions. There are over 5 million Bahá'í who come from virtually every ethnic group, culture, profession and social or economic class, and are from more than 235 countries of the world. The Bahá'í World Center is located on Mount Carmel in Haifa, Israel. In the words of Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of their Faith, "The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens."

The Badi' Calendar was established by the Báb. Based on the solar year, each year is divided into nineteen months of nineteen days, each with four intercalary days (five in the leap year). The Bahá'í year begins on March 21 and the Bahá'í day begins at sunset. Fasting season last 19 days beginning March 2. Bahá'í holy days begin at sundown the day before the date listed and end at sundown on the date listed.



BUDDHIST

The eight-spoked wheel represents the Eight-Fold Path which, when practiced together, enables a person to reach a state of equanimity and compassion.

The word buddha means 'one who has woken up'. Siddhartha, the founder was born in India in the 6th century BCE and gained enlightenment at the age of 35. Buddhism teaches that the way to Nirvana is through leading a moral life and meditation on the Eight-fold path. It is based on compassion for all living beings. Buddhists accept belief in reincarnation and karma, the result of good and evil actions. Buddhism coexists with indigenous religious traditions, adapting to local folk religions such as Hinduism, Confucianism, Shinto and Taoism. The three great traditions of Buddhism are distinct historically and geographically: Southern Buddhism, with 100 million followers who live in Sri Lanka, Burma, Cambodia and Thailand; Eastern Buddhism, practiced in China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam; Northern Buddhism covers Tibet, Mongolia, the Himalayas and parts of Soviet Union. There is no single Buddhist calendar and events related to the Buddha are celebrated at different times in different temples.

The full moon is commonly recognized as the most important day for celebration.



CHRISTIAN

The Crucifix is a symbol used to represent the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The term 'Christian' was first used in c.35-40 in Antioch, Syria to describe a group of people who demonstrated attachment to 'Christos', a Greek translation of the Hebrew term 'Messiah' used by the Jews. The Christian movement has produced a diversity of expressions, but allegiance to 'Christ', Jesus the prophet-teacher, who began preaching at age 30, is crucial to them all. Jesus proclaimed the coming of the Kingdom of God here on earth and taught that the greatest commandments of the bible are to love God and to love our neighbours as ourselves. Sharpened by geographical isolation, five 'great traditions' of Christianity have developed. These may be identified as Eastern, Oriental, Latin, Northern and African. In most Christian communities, Sunday is the first day of the week, although many minority groups i.e. Seventh-day Adventists and many African churches, insist on a literal observance of the Ten Commandments and the special status of Saturday.

The Gregorian (Western) calendar has been adopted by all Christian Churches of the West. Most Eastern churches, however, continue to use the Julian (Eastern) calendar for religious purposes, though only a few use it exclusively. At the present time, the Julian and Gregorian calendars are approximately 13 days out of the phase.

HINDU



OM expresses the complete nature of God. 'Hindu' is, in origin, simply the Persian word for people of the Indus Valley civilization. The earliest indications are derived from artifacts ? 4000-2200 BCE. Hinduism teaches that there is one ultimate reality or energy behind the universe, called Brahman. The many gods and goddesses are the various manifestations of Brahman. God also takes birth on earth as different Incarnations or Avatars. The same reality exists in human beings, who through reincarnation, or repeated births, try to realize their unity with God. The word 'Hinduism' is used to refer to the complex religious tradition which has evolved in the Indian subcontinent and is represented by highly diverse beliefs and practices of over 500 million Hindus. Hinduism has no founder nor is it prophetic. No particular doctrine, dogma or practice is essential to it. The major scriptures of Hinduism are the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism arose within the Hindu Tradition. Hinduism has been described as a religion of fasts, feasts and festivals. As with pilgrimage, festivals are local, regional and all-Indian.

Festivals are connected with seasons as well as with major gods of Hinduism. Hindu Festivals and holy days are based on a lunar calendar.

ISLAM

(Dates are subject to sighting of moon)



The Islamic crescent symbolizes the new moon that determines the Islamic calendar.

For its followers, Islam is a total way of life. Islam, which in Arabic means 'submission' (to God), proclaims a religious faith and sets forth certain rituals as well as prescribing patterns of order for society in matters of family life, law, business, food, dress and etiquette. There are five fundamental religious duties, called the Pillars of Islam, incumbent upon every Muslim. Muslims believe that God's final message was revealed to Muhammad (born approximately 570 AD) through the angel Gabriel, and is contained in the Qu'ran. With over 700 million Muslims, Islam is the second largest religious group in the world. There are over 72 sects, the major ones being the Sunnis and the Shi'ites. A group called Ismaelites, which arose sometime in the 9th century is led by the Aga Khan. The largest Islamic community is in the Indian subcontinent, followed by South-East Asia and Indonesia; Arab countries; Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan; Sub-Saharan Africa; Russia and China; and Europe (Balkans). The times of observance of annual practices, notably Ramadan and the pilgrimage to Mecca, are determined by the Islamic lunar year of 354 days.

JAIN



The stylized hand is in a gesture of blessing. On the palm is inscribed "Ahimsa" meaning 'non-injury'. The phrase at the bottom of the symbol translates "all life is bound by mutual support and interdependence".

Jainism is one of the oldest religions of the world. Jains take their name from the term 'Jina' which means 'conqueror' and is given to honour the twenty-four great teachers. The founder of Jainism, Vardhamana Mahavira (599-527 BCE) was the last of the great teachers. India's most famous Jain was Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest champion of non-violence. The Jain philosophy encompasses the principal of non-violence, harmony through compassion towards all living beings, tolerance and forgiveness, and following a vegetarian diet. At present, the community includes approximately 10 million Jains (about one-half of one percent of India's population). Because of their philosophy of non-injury towards any living thing, most Jains are members of mercantile and professional classes.

JUDAISM



The "Shield of David", has come to be the symbol of Judaism.

Judaism is based on the covenant, or promise made between God and the Jewish people. The covenant began with Abraham and was completed when God gave the Torah, or sacred law, to the Jewish people through Moses at Mount Sinai around 1300 BCE. The Torah is the first five books of the Hebrew scriptures.

Modern religious Jews, whether affiliated with an Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Reform or Liberal synagogue, are members of a faith community, which goes back some 4,000 years.

Today there are nearly 15 million Jews in the world, the biggest concentration being in the USA, followed by Israel and the Soviet Union. The rest are scattered throughout the world, primarily in France, Britain, Canada, South America and South Africa.

The Jewish ritual year is a lunar year of twelve months. Each month begins with the appearance of the new moon. The year begins in late September/early October. Holy days begin at sundown the day before the date listed and end at sundown on the listed date.

SIKH (Old lunar calendar is Bikrami; new solar calendar is Nanakshahi. The dates below are mostly Nanakshahi unless otherwise stated)



The Sikh symbol, known as the "Khanda", represents two basic principles of the faith: the need to balance temporal obligations with spiritual duties, and the duty of every Sikh to first serve those who are poor, oppressed, voiceless or disadvantaged in any way.

Sikhism began in 15th century Punjab - a land that now spans across modern-day India and Pakistan - with the simple message that there is One Creator, and therefore all people, regardless of gender, caste, race, color, ethnicity or religious belief, are equal. Sikhs are unequivocally monotheistic and reject all forms of ritual, superstition and idol worship. They are guided by the teachings of Ten Teachers, the First being Nanak (1439-1539) and the last Gobind Singh (1666-1708). Their compositions, in poetry and set to music, constitute the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh Scripture also revered as the Living Teacher.

The word 'Sikh' literally means 'student' or 'one who is learning'. Sikhs are easily recognized by their turbans. Those who take on the full discipline adopt the five "K's": Kangha (wooden comb); Kara (steel bracelet); Kirpan (sword); Kaccha (pair of shorts); Kesh (long hair). Today, it is the fifth largest world religion with more than 25 million adherents living mainly in Punjab, Hong Kong, Singapore and other Commonwealth countries. Approximately 1.2 million Sikhs now call North America their home. Since 1999, Sikh high holidays have been demarcated in the new solar Nanakshahi Calendar, which does not vary from year to year (as was the case with the traditional lunar Bikrami calendar) and is now in accordance with the western calendar.

SHINTO



The torii is the gateway to a Shinto shrine. The ends of the horizontal bars reach toward heaven.

Shinto means "Way of the Kami", and is the oldest religion in Japan. The Shinto worship all the deities of Heaven and Earth and their belief is that the world is populated by millions of Kami, spirits that inhabit the nature world which is regarded with awe and respect - rocks, trees, heavenly bodies; the guardian deities; souls of ancestors, renowned persons and Buddha incarnations. Shinto ceremonies dedicated to Kami, are held at shrines in homes and processions.

WICCA



The pentacle is the most common symbol used in Wicca. Its five points symbolize Air, Fire, Water, Earth and Spirit, in the circle of eternity.

Wicca is the common term for many different traditions of Neo-Pagan nature religions that celebrate seasonal and life cycles, and revere a Goddess and a God. There are eight seasonal festivals called Sabbats: four equinoxes and four agricultural and herd-farming times. The basic tenets are: worship of the Goddess in her three aspects, Maiden, Mother and Crone; worship of her consort Pan, the Horned God; the use of magic within a definite code of ethics, including the Wiccan rede, "And ye harm none, do what ye will"; reverence for nature and ecological principles; belief that the divine is in everything; that there are multiple deities and many different pathways to the divine; and acceptance of reincarnation. Wiccans are found in Britain, USA, Canada, Australia, Germany and Holland

ZOROASTRIAN



FRAVASHI, the divinity in humanity, is represented by this symbol.

The prophet Zarathustra lived in Persia around 1800 BCE. The Zoroastrians of India are called Parsis and follow the Shenshai calendar. The Zoroastrians in Iran follow the Fasi calendar. Zarathustra in his Gathas or 'verses' declared the sovereignty of the one God, Ahura Mazda "Lord of All Wisdom", and the opposition of good and evil forces. Zoroastrian worship centers around a continually burning sacred fire.

Although prosperous, the community is numerically very small, residing primarily in India, Iran, England, Canada, Australia and the USA.

There are seven obligatory holy days known as the six gahambars and Nowruz ('New Day') which celebrates the beginning of the year and is dedicated to the seventh creation, fire, the symbol of righteousness.