



SMU is rooted in the Christian tradition of Methodism and celebrates religious belief and practice that nourishes the life of the mind and spirit. As spring unfolds, many religions observe holy days that bring the community of faith together. We wanted to remind you of University religious observance policies 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. Ideally, notification is at least two weeks prior to the absence. The unique circumstances for this year's Good Friday, however, may have made a two-weeks' notice less feasible. Faculty are encouraged to work with students 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 upcoming holy days:

- **Christianity:**
  - **Good Friday/Easter:**
    - Most Western Christian traditions will be celebrating Good Friday on April 2 and Easter on April 4.
    - Orthodox (Eastern) Christians will be celebrating Good Friday on April 30 and Easter on May 2.
    - You can anticipate requests from students who plan to attend services on Good Friday, which can take place throughout the day.
- **Islam:**
  - **Ramadan:**
    - The anticipated dates for Ramadan are April 12-May 12, culminating with the Eid al Fitr holiday on May 13. 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). They eat a substantial meal (suhoor) before dawn and break the fast (iftar) with a feast at sunset.
    - Late afternoon exams may be challenging for students who are fasting.

- This year, exams fall during the final ten most auspicious days of Ramadan. 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 exams may be challenging for students who participate in these rituals.
- You can anticipate requests from students with early morning or late afternoon exams seeking to reschedule. Sheri Kunovich can provide proctored Zoom spaces for an 11:30 a.m. exam period on the same day that your exam is scheduled. [Please send emails to [academicsuccess@smu.edu](mailto:academicsuccess@smu.edu) for additional information].
- **Eid-al-Fitr**
  - While Eid-al-Fitr is expected to begin at sundown on May 12 – and families will be celebrating the full day of feasting on May 13 – there is a possibility that Eid could begin at sundown on May 11. Some students with exams on May 12 may request to take their exams earlier to ensure that they can celebrate the holiday with family.
- **Judaism:**
  - **Passover:**
    - The Jewish community is currently celebrating Passover until April 4.
    - This year, the first two nights and the last two nights, the traditional times for family seders fall on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.
    - Request to miss class for Passover may be minimal.

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