

2006-2007 ACADEMIC YEAR CALENDAR OF RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

A summary prepared by Equity & Human Rights Services

The Ontario *Human Rights Code* (the “Code”)

When an individual’s religious beliefs conflict with a requirement, qualification or practice, the Code imposes a duty to accommodate. That duty is based on the needs of the group of which the person making the request is a member. As such, you must look to the accepted religious practices and observances that are part of a given religion or creed. However, personal religious beliefs, practices or observances are protected by the Code **even if they are not essential elements of the creed**, provided they are sincerely held.

The duty to accommodate is limited to the steps that may be required to accommodate, short of undue hardship. The factors to consider when determining undue hardship are cost, health and/or safety requirements. The concept of undue hardship is a relative one, determined by the number of people making the request, the cost of the request and the size of the institution. The burden for proving undue hardship lies with the person responsible for the accommodation. Note that, in the opinion of the Ontario Human Rights Commission (“the Commission”), administrative inconvenience will not constitute undue hardship.

To view the Commission’s policy on Creed and the Accommodation of Religious Observances, please contact Equity & Human Rights Services or visit the following website:

www.ohrc.on.ca/english/publications/creed-religion-policy.shtml

The Calendar of Religious Accommodation lists the dates which are commonly recognized as days upon which individuals belonging to the various faiths cannot work. We recognize that there will be dates or faiths not included in the attached calendar. For this reason, we have reproduced below the rights and responsibilities of the person requesting accommodation and the person responsible for providing accommodation according to the Commission. This structure should be followed when an individual makes a request for religious accommodation that is not listed in the calendar.

Person Requesting	Person\Organization Responsible
Take the initiative to request accommodation	Respect the dignity of the person seeking accommodation
Explain why accommodation is required	Assess the need for accommodation based on the needs of the group of which the person is a member
Provide notice of request in writing, and allow a reasonable time for reply	Reply to the request within a reasonable time
Explain what measures of accommodation are required	Grant requests related to the observance of religious practices
Deal in good faith	Deal in good faith
Be flexible and realistic	Consider alternatives
The individual may request details of the cost of accommodation if undue hardship may be a factor	If accommodation is not possible because of undue hardship, explain this clearly to the person concerned and be prepared to demonstrate why this is so

The Commission does acknowledge that, at times, it may not be possible to completely resolve the conflict without causing undue hardship to the person responsible for providing the accommodation. A measure of accommodation may be acceptable if it meets the needs of the person, to the greatest extent possible, short of undue hardship, and if it respects the dignity of the person requiring the accommodation.

The University of Western Ontario is committed to recognizing and valuing religious diversity. To view Western's policy on Religious Holidays, found in the Academic Calendar, please see the following link:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/religious.pdf>

For further assistance, please feel free to contact Equity & Human Rights Services at 661-3334 (or ext. 83334).

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION CALENDAR

SOME NOTES ON THE CALENDAR

1. Equity & Human Rights Services has made every effort to confirm the information and dates shown on the Religious Accommodation Calendar with an authoritative representative from each faith. We wish to express our gratitude to those who have extended their kind assistance.
2. BAHÁ'Í FAITH DATES:
 - i. During the Bahá'í 19-day Fast, Bahá'ís are required to abstain from eating and drinking from sunrise until sundown.
 - ii. Bahá'í holy days begin and end at sundown.
3. CHRISTIAN DATES:
 - i. Sunday is the weekly Christian holy day.
 - ii. Religious accommodation may be required, if requested, for the days over the Great Triduum (Christian) or Triduum (Eastern Orthodox) periods.
 - iii. Orthodox Churches are autocephalic, meaning that each church is independently headed by a bishop. Each bishop is free to set their own feast days depending on the calendar they use (Gregorian or Julian). As such, there may be some legitimate deviation from the dates provided.
4. HINDU DATES:
 - i. Hindu dates are based on a lunar calendar guided by a solar constraint and, thus, may vary depending on the sighting of the moon.
5. ISLAMIC DATES:
 - i. Islamic holy days are based on the Islamic lunar calendar. Therefore, the dates shown on the calendar are tentative and may change depending on the sighting of the moon.
 - ii. Islam requires five obligatory prayers daily (dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and evening). These prayers may be performed individually or in congregation at home, work, school, outdoors etc.
 - iii. Friday is the Muslim holy day. An obligatory weekly Friday noon congregational prayer is held at a mosque.
 - iv. During Ramadan, Muslims are required to abstain from eating and drinking from the break of dawn until sunset daily.

6. JUDAISM DATES:
 - i. The Jewish Sabbath is held weekly from sunset on Friday until sunset on Saturday. Jews may not work, travel, etc on the Sabbath.
 - ii. Jewish holy days start the previous evening at sundown and continue through the following day(s).
 - iii. During Sukkot, religious accommodation may be required, if requested, particularly on the first and second days of Sukkot.
 - iv. The holy days of Shimini Atzeret and Simchat Torah may require accommodation, if requested.
 - v. During Pesah (Passover), religious accommodation may be required, if requested, particularly on the first, second, seventh and eighth day of Pesah.

7. Individual students may require accommodation in addition to the dates set out in the Religious Accommodation Calendar as a result of their personal religious beliefs. For further information, please contact Equity & Human Rights Services at 661-3334 (or ext. 83334).

8. Further information and an extensive listing of all religious holy days and festivals may be found in the Multifaith Calendar, produced by Ontario Multifaith Council. Each year, Equity & Human Rights Services, provides a limited number of these calendars to individuals and departments. Please contact Equity & Human Rights Services for further information.

2006-2007 ACADEMIC YEAR CALENDAR OF RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

Below is a list of major holy days for the following religions:

Bahá'í Faith Buddhism Christianity (Western and Eastern Orthodox) Confucianism Hinduism	Islam Jainism Judaism Paganism/Wicca Sikhism Zoroastrianism
--	--

The following calendar is intended as a resource. Note that the dates typed in **bold** are commonly recognized religious holidays which will require members of those religions to be absent from the University. The scheduling of exams/tests, conferences, meetings etc. should be avoided on these dates. Requests for accommodation on the other dates may or may not be made.

More information on the following holy days can be found in the 'Brief Explanations of the Major Holy Days' section.

SEPTEMBER 2006

6	Anata Chaturdasi	Jainism
7	Ullambana	Buddhism
7	Nisfu Shaban	Islam
7	Ghost Festival	Confucianism
22	Mabbon (Fall Equinox)	Paganism/Wicca
23	Rosh Hashanah	Judaism
23-OCT 1	Navarati	Hinduism
24-OCT 23	Ramadan	Islam
28	Confucius' Birthday	Confucianism

OCTOBER 2006

2	Dassehra	Hinduism
2	Yom Kippur	Judaism
6	Mid Autumn Festival	Confucianism
7	Pavarana	Buddhism
7-13	Sukkot *	Judaism
14	Shimini Atzeret **	Judaism
15	Simchat Torah **	Judaism
19	Lailat-ul-Qadr	Islam
20	Birth of the Báb	Bahá'í
21	Diwali	Hinduism Jainism Sikhism
24	Eid-al-Fitr	Islam
27	Jnana Panchmi	Jainism
31	Samhain	Paganism/Wicca

* Refer to Note 6(iii)

** Refer to Note 6(iv)

NOVEMBER 2006

5	Birth of Guru Nanak Dev Ji	Sikhism
12	Birth of the Bahá'u'lláh	Bahá'í
24	Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji	Sikhism
26	Day of the Covenant	Bahá'í
28	Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá	Bahá'í

DECEMBER 2006

1	Maunajiyaras	Jainism
16-24	Chanukah	Judaism
21	Yule	Paganism/Wicca
25	Christmas	Christian
26	Death of the Prophet Zarathrustra	Zoroastrianism
26-Jan. 1	Kwanzaa	W. African festival
31	Eid-al-Adha	Islam

JANUARY 2007

1	Temple Day	Buddhism
5	Birth of Guru Gobind Singh Ji	Sikhism
7	Christmas	Eastern Orthodox
13	Maghi	Sikhism
20	Hijra (Islamic New Year)	Islam
23	Vasant Panchami	Hinduism
29	Aashura	Islam

FEBRUARY 2007

2	Imbolc (Candlemas)	Paganism/Wicca
15	Nirvana Day	Buddhism
16	Maha Shivaratri	Hinduism
18	Lunar New Year / Chinese New Year	Buddhism Confucianism
21	Ash Wednesday	Christianity
26-Mar 1	Intercalary Days	Bahá'í

MARCH 2007

2 – 20	Bahá'í Fast	Bahá'í
4	Lantern Festival	Confucianism
4	Purim	Judaism
4	Holi	Hinduism
14	Sikh New Year's Day	
20	Malid-an-Nabi	Islam
20	Ostara	Paganism/Wicca
21	Naw Ruz (New Year)	Bahá'í Zoroastrianism
26	Birth of the Prophet Zarathrustra	Zoroastrianism
27	Ramanavami	Hinduism

APRIL 2007

1	Palm Sunday	Christian
2	Lord's Evening Meal	Jehovah's Witness
3-10	Pesah (Passover) ***	Judaism
5	Maundy Thursday °	Christian
5-8	Easter Triduum/Great Triduum	Christian (Catholic)
6	Good Friday °	Christian
6	Holy Friday °	Eastern Orthodox
7	Holy Saturday	Christian
8	Easter °	Christian
8	Pascha °	Eastern Orthodox
13	Vaisakhi/Baisakhi	Sikhism
15	Yom Ha Shoah	Judaism
21	Ridvan (First day)	Bahá'í
29	Ridvan (Ninth day)	Bahá'í

*** Refer to Note 6(v).

°Refer to Note3(ii),

MAY 2007

1	Beltane	Paganism/Wicca
2	Ridvan (Twelfth Day)	Bahá'í
2	Vesak (Buddha Day)	Buddhism
22-23	Shavuot	Judaism
23	Declaration of the Báb	Bahá'í
29	Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh	Bahá'í

JUNE 2007

16	Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji	Sikhism
19	Dragon Boat Festival	Confucianism
21	National Aboriginal Day	First Nations
21	Litha	Paganism/Wicca

JULY 2007

9	Martyrdom of the Báb	Bahá'í
24	Tisha B'av	Judaism

AUGUST 2007

2	Lammas	Paganism/Wicca
11	Lailat-ul Miraj	Islam
27	Ghost Festival	Confucianism
28	Raksha Bandhan	Hinduism

Brief Explanations of Major Holy Days

Aashura

(Islam) Falls on the 10th day of Muharram. The day commemorates the martyrdom of Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh).

Anata Chaturdasi

(Jainism) Regarded as the holiest period of the year. Celebrated by fasting, worship, meditation and confession.

Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

(Bahá'í) Commemorates the date in 1921 when 'Abdu'l Bahá passed away in Haifa, Israel after years of serving his father and the growing Bahá'í community. During his life, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote extensively, interpreting many of his father's writings, safeguarded the unity of the Faith and traveled extensively to visit Bahá'ís around the world.

Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh

(Bahá'í) Commemorates the date in 1892 when Bahá'u'llah, the prophet-founder of the Bahá'í faith, passed away near Haifa, Israel. At the time of his death, he had been a prisoner of the Shah of Persia and the Ottoman Empire for 40 years. The event is usually observed at the actual time of his passing, 3 a.m.

Ash Wednesday

(Christian) The seventh Wednesday before Easter, Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent (which lasts 40 days). Lent is a period of prayer, repentance, and self-denial which leads up to Easter. On Ash Wednesday, a cross of ashes is marked on the forehead as a sign of penitence and mortality.

Bahá'í Fast

(Bahá'í) During this time, an adult believer in good health abstains from food and drink from sunrise until sunset each day.

Beltane

(Paganism/Wicca) Also called May Day. This fertility festival celebrates the conjoining of the infinite potential of the Goddess with the life-sparking energy of the God in a sacred marriage.

Birth of the Báb

(Bahá'í) The Báb (heard of the new age for Bahá'ís) was born this day in 1819. His shrine is located at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa, Israel. Born Siyyid 'Ali-Muhammed in Shiraz, Southwestern, Iran, his title, The Báb, means “The Gate” in Arabic.

Birth of the Bahá'u'lláh

(Bahá'í) Bahá'u'lláh was born Mirzá Husayn 'Ali into one of Persia's leading noble families in 1817. His title means “The Glory of God” in Arabic. He is the founder of the Bahá'í faith.

Birth of Guru Gobind Singh Ji

(Sikhism) Guru Gobind Singh was the tenth guru (1666-1708 CE) and the final master who created the Sikh Brotherhood, the Khalsa and declared the Scriptures, the Adi Granth, to be the Sikh's Guru from that time on.

Birth of Guru Nanak Dev Ji

(Sikhism) Guru Nanak is the Founder of Sikh religion (born 1469). He was an accomplished poet and 974 of his hymns may be found in the Sikh scriptures, the Guru Ganth Sahib.

Birth of the Prophet Zarathustra

(Zoroastrianism) Founder of Zoroastrian faith.

Chanukah

(Judaism) Chanukah celebrates religious freedom and commemorates the historic victory of the Jews 2000 years ago which followed a 3-year long uprising against the Syrian-Greek regime that had imposed strict sanctions against Jewish religious practices and values. Eight candles are lit (one each day) in commemoration.

Chinese New Year/ Lunar New Year

Irrespective of their religion or country, many Chinese, Vietnamese, Koreans of Buddhist and other backgrounds celebrate the cultural aspects of this day. This is the beginning of year 4703 of the Chinese calendar and the Year of the Rooster.

Christmas

(Christian) This day marks the birth of Jesus, the son of God. Orthodox Church religions (ie. Those which follow the Julian calendar) celebrate Christmas on January 7th.

Dassehra / Vijay Dasami / Dasara

(Hinduism) Dassehra celebrates the victory of good over evil - Lord Rama's victory over the demon Ravan, and the Goddess Durja's victory over a demon. It follows the nine-day celebration of Navarati (nine nights) and Durga Puja (worship), when other Goddesses are also worshipped.

Day of the Covenant

(Bahá'í) The eldest son and appointed successor of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, is referred to as the "Centre of the Covenant". The Covenant was established by Bahá'u'lláh to safeguard the unity of the Bahá'í community. It was 'Abdu'l Bahá's wish that the Covenant be celebrated rather than his birth date.

Death of the Prophet Zarathrustra

(Zoroastrianism) Founder of Zoroastrian faith. Believed to have lived in the first or second millennium BCE.

Declaration of the Báb

(Bahá'í) The Bahá'í Faith began in Persia (now Iran) on May 23, 1844. This date commemorates the announcement by Báb, of his mission as a manifestation of God whose purpose was to prepare the world for the coming of a promised manifestation of all religions, Bahá'u'lláh. The Bahá'í calendar dates from this year. This event is usually celebrated two hours after sunset.

Diwali

(Hinduism) Known as the Festival of Lights, it is dedicated to the Goddess Kali in Bengal and to Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth, in the rest of India. Diwali is associated with the destruction of evil by Vishnu in one of his many manifestations. Also called Deepvali.

(Sikhism) Also called Bandi Chhor Divas, which means "the day of the prisoner's release". It commemorates the return of the sixth Guru, Sri Hargobind Ji, to the holy city of Amritsar after his release from detention. Since he was released on the day of Diwali, Sikhs in Amritsar illuminate the city.

(Jainism). Celebrated throughout India, for Jains, Diwali holds special significance as it was the day in 527 BCE that Mahavira gave his last teachings and attained ultimate liberation (Mahavira Nirvana). Some Jains fast for the two days of Diwali.

Dragon Boat Festival

(Confucianism) This event remembers Chu'u Yuan (328-298 B.C.) a Chinese poet and statesperson who drowned himself in the Tungting Lake in protest of corruption within the royal court.

Easter

(Christian) Easter commemorates the resurrection of Jesus. On Good Friday, Jesus was crucified. His body, when taken down, was placed in a cave which had a large stone covering the entrance. On the following Sunday, the cave was discovered empty. Later that day and for days after, Jesus was seen by many people. God had raised Jesus from the dead. This is the most important festival of the Christian religion. Eastern Christian religions refer to this day as Pascha.

Easter Triduum/Great Triduum

(Christian) The centre of the Christian liturgical year, the Great Triduum consists of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, Easter Sunday.

Eid-al-Adha

(Islam) This is the Festival of Sacrifice. It is celebrated to honour Prophet Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Ishmael to God. To commemorate this sacrifice, Muslims sacrifice a sheep or goat and donate the meat or its equivalent value in cash to charity. This is the "minimum" requirement for those who can afford it.

Eid-al-Fitr

(Islam) This festival marks the end of Ramadan.

Ganesh Chaturthi

(Hinduism) This day celebrates the birthday of Ganesh, God of Success. He is worshipped in order to remove obstacles from one's path. Note: This does not appear in this academic calendar as the 2006 celebration is on August 27th, 2006 and the 2007 celebration occurs on September 15, 2007. The 2007 date will appear in next year's calendar.

Ghost Festival

(Confucianism) This festival offers food and prayers for ghosts. These ghosts are harmful spirits (souls that are restless) because of their violent or untimely deaths, ill placed burial sites or neglect by descendants. The festival is an opportunity to appease these ghosts.

Good Friday

(Christian) This is the Friday before Easter. It is a day of mourning in the church as it commemorates the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Eastern Christian religions refer to this day as Holy Friday.

Hijra

(Islam) The Islamic cycle of months begins. Formulas determine holy days based on lunar events.

Holi

(Hinduism) Holi is the colourful festival that welcomes the spring and celebrates the energy and new life of the season. It is also called the “Festival of Colours”. People celebrate by street dancing and throwing coloured powder and water at each other.

Holy Saturday

(Christian) This is the day that Christ’s body lay in His tomb. It should be the quietest day of the Christian year; however, the evening is a time of joy and expectation for Easter.

Imbolc

(Paganism/Wicca) Imbolc celebrates the Goddess of fire, healing and fertility. A fire is lit to celebrate the increasing power of the Sun over the coming months. Rituals and activities associated with this festival include making candles, planting spring flowers, reading poetry and telling stories. Imbolc is also known as Imbolg, Candlemas, Brigantia, The Feast of the Waxing Light, Oimeic.

Intercalary Days

(Bahá’í) These four days (five in a leap year) do not belong to any month. They are days of celebration, gift-giving, hospitality and charitable works.

Jnana Panchmi

(Jainism) The day is referred to as the Day of Knowledge and celebrates Saraswati Devi, the deity of knowledge and learning.

Kwanzaa

Celebrated by those of West African descent in recognition of their African heritage. Candles of a seven-branched candelabrum are lit over the seven-day festival to symbolize unity, self-determination, responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity and faith.

Lailat-ul Miraj

(Islam) Commemorates the ascension of the Prophet Muhammad into heaven

Lailat-ul-Qadr

(Islam) This festival which translated means, The Night of Power, commemorates the night on when the Prophet Muhammad received the first revelation of the Qur'an.

Lammas

(Paganism/Wicca) Also known as Lughnasad, this festival celebrates the grain harvest.

Lantern Festival

(Confucianism) Marking the end of the New Year's celebration, this event features a display of lanterns.

Litha

(Paganism/Wicca) Also called Summer Solstice or Midsummer's Eve. This festival is in celebration of the sun and the divine powers that create life. The Goddess, who took over the Earth from the horned God at the beginning of spring, is now at the height of her power and fertility. For some, the Summer Solstice celebrates the marriage of the God and Goddess and it is that union that creates the harvest's fruits.

Lord's Evening Meal

(Jehovah's Witness) Celebrated each year on the anniversary (or Memorial) of Jesus Christ's death.

Lunar New Year

(Confucianism, Chinese) A celebration offering a period of renewal before the spring agricultural work begins.

Mabbon

(Paganism/Wicca) This celebration, also called the Fall or Autumn Equinox, occurs when day and night are of equal duration. This is a time of reflection on the past season and recognition of the seasonal changes to come.

Maghi

(Sikhism) This is the first day of the month of Magh. This day commemorates a battle in which 40 Sikhs (called the Immortal Ones) laid down their lives for Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

Maha Shivaratri

(Hinduism) This festival is dedicated to Shiva, one of the major Hindu deities. Celebrants fast during the day and hold vigil at night. The festival is also called Shivaratri or “Great Shiva Night”.

Malid-an-Nabi

(Islam) Celebrates the birth of the Prophet Muhammad.

Martyrdom of the Báb

(Bahá’í) At age 31, the Báb was put to death by firing squad in the market square of Tabriz, Persia in 1850. This event is observed at noon.

Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev Ji

(Sikhism) Arjan was the fifth Guru of the Sikhs and the first Sikh Martyr. He built the Harimandir (Temple of God) in Amritsar. Arjan also contributed to and compiled the Sikh Scriptures.

Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji

(Sikhism) Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji was the ninth of the Ten Sikh Gurus. He is remembered for his defence of the Sikh faith, Hinduism and religious liberty.

Maunajiyaras

(Jainism) This is a day of fasting, silence and meditation on the five holy beings: monks, teachers, religious leaders, Arihants (Jinas, enlightened masters) and Siddhas (liberated souls).

Maundy Thursday

(Christian) The day of the Last Supper, when Jesus washed the feet of his disciples and established the ceremony called the Eucharist.

Mid Autumn Festival

(Confucianism) Focussing on the moon, this celebration is centred on popular deity, Ch’ang O. People go to the countryside, eat moon shaped cakes and enjoy the holiday spirit.

National Aboriginal Day

(Canadian) A celebration of the diverse cultures and rich contributions made by the First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples.

Navarati

(Hinduism) This is a nine-day festival celebrating the victory of good over evil. Also called Durga Puja or Dusserah.

Naw Ruz (New Year)

(Bahá'í) Bahá'ís celebrate New on the first day of spring. The celebration is usually held during the evening.

(Zoroastrianism) On the Fasli calendar, this is the first day of the Zoroastrian and Persian year. It is a time of religious observance preceded by 10 days of remembrance of the dead. It symbolizes the renewal of the world after the winter. Zarathrustra received his revelation on this day.

Nirvana Day

(Buddhism) Usually held on the second Sunday in February, this day commemorates the date of Shakyamuni Buddha's death and passing into Mahaparinirvana (complete extinction of ego-self and reunification with the universe).

Nisfu Shaban

(Islam) Night of Forgiveness or Repentance in preparation for Ramadan. It begins in the evening.

Ostara

(Paganism/Wicca) Ostara, also called the Spring Equinox, is a celebration of the renewed life of the Earth that accompanies the spring. Changes in the seasons are attributed to the God (The Green Man) and Goddess (Mother Earth) who reawaken the seeds within the earth. It is celebrated with day and night are of equal duration (like the Fall Equinox).

Palm Sunday

(Christian) Palm Sunday begins Holy Week which culminates in Easter or Pascha. This day commemorates Jesus Christ's triumphant arrival in Jerusalem.

Pascha

(Eastern Orthodox) Christian feast day of the resurrection of Lord Jesus Christ.

Pavarana

(Buddhism) Pavarana marks the end of the Rains Retreat (Vassa). This is also Founder's Day in Canada, marking the introduction of Buddhism into Canada in 1905 and the first assembly of Canadian Buddhists in Toronto in 1980.

Pesah (Passover)

(Judaism) Also known as the "Festival of Freedom", Pesah commemorates the ending of the Jews bondage in Egypt. It is also known as the "Holy Day of Spring" because it is celebrated in the spring – beginning with the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Nisan (April). It is also known as the "Festival of Matzah" because a special form of unleavened bread, called matzah, is eaten. First Seder is on the evening of April 23rd.

Purim

(Judaism) Purim celebrates victory over an oppressive ruler, as related in the Book of Esther.

Raksha Bandhan

(Hinduism) A festival honouring the loving ties between brothers and sisters in a family.

Ramadan

(Islam) Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. All Muslims who are physically able fast during this period each day from dawn to sunset.

Ramanavami

(Hinduism) The day of birth of Lord Rama, the 7th incarnation of God Vishnu.

Ridvan (pronounced rez-vahn)

(Bahá'í) Bahá'ís observe the first, ninth and twelfth days of this period (ie. April 21st, 29th, and May 2nd). It was during this period that Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í faith, declared his mission as the most recent messenger of God. The actual declaration took place in a garden, can Ridvan (paradise) in Baghdad, Iraq in 1863.

Rosh Hashanah

(Judaism) This is the Jewish New Year. Rosh Hashanah is also known as the Day of Remembrance and the Day of Judgment.

Samhain

(Paganism/Wicca) This is the most important date in the Pagan calendar. It celebrates the Celtic New Year. The dying God returns to the womb of the Goddess in preparation for rebirth at Yule. At Samhain, loved ones who have died are remembered and their souls are invited to join in the feasting and celebration. This is also the third and final harvest.

Shavuot

(Judaism) “The Holy Day of the Giving of the Torah”. Shavuot commemorates the giving of the Torah to the Israelites and the completion of the God's purpose to create a special people.

Shimini Atzeret

(Judaism) A day to “hold on” a little longer with God after a whirlwind several weeks of significant holy days.

Simchat Torah

(Judaism) “Rejoicing in the Law”. This is the beginning of the synagogue's annual Torah reading cycle. Reform Jews celebrate it with Shmini Atzeret.

Sri Krishna Jayanti

(Hinduism) Also known as Janmashtami. Celebrates the birthday of Krishna. Krishna was the eighth incarnation of the God Vishnu. His purpose was to destroy the demon Kansa who was responsible for the increase of evil in the world. Note: This does not appear in this academic calendar as the 2006 celebration is on August 16th, 2006 and the 2007 celebration occurs on September 4, 2007. The 2007 date will appear in next year's calendar.

Sukkot

(Judaism) Sukkot is a pilgrimage feast and a time of thanksgiving celebrating God's presence in creation and among the Jewish people. The eighth day, Shimini Atzeret is a distinct festival.

Tisha B'av

(Judaism) This day commemorates the destruction of the first and second temples in Jerusalem.

Ullambana

(Buddhism) The day on which offerings are made to Buddha, the Dharma/Teachings, the Sangha/Monastic Community on behalf of ancestors. Also called Happy Buddha Day.

Vaisakhi / Baisakhi

(Sikhism) The most important holy day of the year for Sikhs. On this day in 1699, Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru, created the Khalsa Panth, the Brotherhood of the Pure. Khalsa brothers are given the name Singh (lion) and sisters are named Kaur (princess).

Vasant Panchami

(Hinduism) This festival is dedicated to Saraswati (Goddess of learning).

Vesak / Visakha Puja / Wesak (Buddha Day)

(Buddhism) Celebrated on the first full moon day in May (except in leap years, where the festival is held in June), Vesak is the major Buddhist festival of the year. It celebrates the birth, enlightenment and death of Buddha on the one day.

Yom Ha Shoah

(Judaism) Commemorates the Holocaust during which 6 million perished.

Yom Kippur

(Judaism) Also known as the Day of Atonement. It is the most solemn day on the Jewish calendar. To reestablish oneness with God, Jews ask forgiveness and forgive others. Then they confess their sins and ask God's forgiveness. Yom Kippur begins at sundown the previous day.

Yule

(Paganism/Wicca) Also called Winter Solstice, Yule marks the birth of the God. It is a time for looking forward to spiritual development of the coming year.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & SOURCES

EQUITY & HUMAN RIGHTS SERVICES ACKNOWLEDGES AND EXTENDS SINCERE GRATITUDE TO ALL INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS WHO ASSISTED OUR OFFICE IN PREPARING THIS CALENDAR. SPECIAL THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING PERSONS:

REV. MICHAEL BECHARD, DIRECTOR/OFFICE OF CAMPUS MINISTRY, KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO

RABBI MORDECHAI SILBERBERG, CHABAD HOUSE

J.D. HAN, KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

JOSEPH ROMAIN, DIRECTOR, THE MULTIFAITH LIBRARY, ONTARIO MULTIFAITH COUNCIL

Sources:

Multifaith Calendar, provided by the Ontario Multifaith Council. Available for purchase at: www.omc.ca

Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care. 1995. *Multifaith Information Manual*, Toronto: Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care.

"Interfaith Calendar 2006" and "Interfaith Calendar 2007",
www.interfaithcalendar.org/2006.htm
www.interfaithcalendar.org/2007.htm

"Important Islamic Religious Dates in North America", www.moonsighting.com

"The Bahá'í Community of Canada: Bahá'í Holy Days",
www.ca.bahai.org/main.cfm?sid=62

"Sikh Calendar", www.sikhs.org/dates.htm