

## **Academic Coursework and Religious Observance**

Brandeis is a university that embraces students of a wide diversity of religious traditions. It is the policy of the University that instructors strive to facilitate students' religious observance by allowing absence from classes for such purposes and by trying to ensure that no examinations, written reports, oral reports, or other mandatory class assignments are scheduled for or due on such holy days; and that instructors provide ample opportunities for such students to make up work missed on such occasions without penalty. The following is a list of guidelines developed by the Committee for the Support of Teaching, with the input of the Office of the Chaplaincy, regarding academic coursework and religious observances.

1. In constructing the academic calendar, religious holy days will not be the sole factor in determining days on which classes will be held or suspended. In the academic calendar there are some religious holidays that are traditionally indicated as days when the university is closed (Rosh Hashannah, Good Friday); however, there are many other days of religious importance to the community (Eid) when the university is not closed. Jewish holidays begin at sundown of the previous evening and end at nightfall of the day listed. Therefore, a student may have a legitimate reason for missing a class, whether or not the holiday is formally recognized in the University calendar.
2. Students should review their syllabus at the beginning of each term to determine if there are any conflicts between class time and religious observance. It is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor of these conflicts within the first two weeks of the semester. Students who miss class will be required to complete any work that is missed, and they may be required to submit additional assignments to make up for the missed class time.
3. Should a student need to miss class for religious reasons, the absence should be excused. Missing a class due to travel plans associated with a particular holiday does not constitute an excused absence.
4. If a faculty member wishes to schedule an exam or work due on the day immediately following a religious holiday, this assignment should be listed in the syllabus or be given two weeks in advance of the due date.
5. If an instructor believes that a student's request is not one that can be accommodated, he or she should promptly notify the student in writing or by email. If the student feels that a reasonable accommodation is being denied, he or she should discuss the issue with the relevant Department Chair or Program Chair.
6. If an instructor has questions about the nature of a particular holiday or would like a list of major holidays, he or she should consult either the Office of the Chaplaincy or the Office of Academic Services.