

# A Faculty-Wide Request: Fall 2018 Jewish Holidays

Tom Romero, Assistant Provost for IE Research & Curricular Initiatives

Sarah Pessin, Interfaith Chair & Director, Center for Judaic Studies

In Partnership with: Office of Teaching and Learning; AHSS Inclusive Excellence Committee; Office of Diversity and Inclusion; Campus Life & Inclusive Excellence; IRISE; Undergraduate Student Government; Graduate Student Government; DULCCES; Academic Planning Committee, Faculty Senate; Center for Judaic Studies; Urban Studies; Latin America Center; Joint PhD Program in the Study of Religion

The first two days of Fall quarter (Sept. 10-11, 2018) will fall on the Jewish high holiday of Rosh Hashanah. As such, some of our **colleagues and students will miss the first days of classes (and, due to travel associated with the holiday, some will also miss additional days that week).**

Towards **more inclusive outcomes**, we hope you might consider the following strategies for the first day of classes this Fall:

**1)** Please be **generous** in accommodating students:

- Because we are talking about the **1<sup>st</sup> day** of class, a student **might not reach out to you in advance** to ask for accommodation; please accommodate them anyway (even if you normally hold students accountable for reaching out to you in advance).
- To **alleviate your students' concerns about this sooner rather than later**, please contact your class/es well in advance of day 1 to **let them know that you are aware** that classes start on a Jewish holiday, that you support religious accommodations, and that students will not be penalized for missing the 1<sup>st</sup> day.
- Furthermore, if you adopt any of the recommended strategies in the next column for the 1<sup>st</sup> day of classes, please let your students know the details **in advance of the 1<sup>st</sup> day** (on Canvas or by email) so that those who do plan to miss the 1<sup>st</sup> day can put their minds at ease.

While we strongly encourage a Religious Accommodation Policy on your syllabus, this Fall that might not be enough! Please find some more ideas here...

**2)** While **1<sup>st</sup>-day activities** (like reading through a syllabus) work in our favor (i.e. it will be easy for students who miss the 1<sup>st</sup> day to read the syllabus on their own), other “1<sup>st</sup>-day activities” are very hard to make up and can leave students who miss out feeling disconnected for the remainder of the quarter.

In the spirit of inclusivity, we ask you to **please consider deferring** class-wide co-construction of ground-rules, class-wide ice-breakers, class-wide inclusivity exercises, and other “1<sup>st</sup>-day activities” designed to create a welcoming and inclusive classroom space *until after the Jewish holiday so that all students can be included.*

**3)** As part of a “flipped classroom” strategy or otherwise, please consider **recording all or part your 1<sup>st</sup> day of class**, and posting the video as well as any other materials from the 1<sup>st</sup> day (e.g. PPTs, handouts, etc.) on Canvas so that students can easily catch up. (If you treat this as a flipped classroom format, then students who miss the in-class portion will admittedly miss important conversations, but at least they will be able to quickly catch up on other key elements). *You can contact the Office of Teaching and Learning for ideas or support with this approach.*

As we work together to build a more inclusive DU, please also

- adopt these or other relevant suggestions in your classroom(s) for other religious holidays.
- consult an interfaith calendar throughout the year; to transform your everyday online calendar into an interfaith calendar, visit [www.du.edu/ahss/cjs/interfaith](http://www.du.edu/ahss/cjs/interfaith).
- visit the “Inclusive Teaching Practices Canvas Portal” by Dr. Valentina Iturbe-LaGrave (Associate Director for Inclusive Teaching Practices): <https://canvas.du.edu/courses/64014>