



BELONG TOGETHER

OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Religious Festivals/Observations and Ramadan at EMU

March 20, 2023

Dear EMU Community,

The month of March 2023 is a special time for many members of our community. It is a time of religious festivals and observations. Hindus celebrate Holi, also known as the festival of colors or sharing love. Holi represents the arrival of spring and the triumph of good over evil.

Sikhs celebrate Hola Mohalla by demonstrating their martial skills in simulated battles. The festival is a reaffirmation of brotherhood, fraternity, and courage.

Muslims observe Ramadan. The Ramadan start date for 2023 begins the evening of March 22. During the holy month of Ramadan, Muslims fast from dawn to dusk and spend time in prayer and contemplation to commemorate the first revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad. Ramadan concludes with a celebration, ***Eid-al-Fitr, observed on sundown of Friday, April 21st and ending at sundown on Sunday, April 23rd.*** To learn more about Ramadan in our EMU community we invite you to read this [EMU news piece](#).

We ask that you acknowledge this special time and be mindful of what Muslim members of our community--students, faculty, and staff--may be experiencing during this time of prayer and fasting by providing appropriate accommodations.

If you would like support during this time, please reach out to any of the following: [Trina Trotter Nussbaum](#), Associate Director Associate Director - CIE, [Shannon Dycus](#), Dean of Students and Vice President of Student Affairs, [Celeste R. Thomas](#), Director, Multicultural Student Services, [Brian Martin Burkholder](#), University Chaplain, or [Jacqueline Font-Guzman](#), Executive, Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

The Center for Interfaith Engagement and the office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion will be hosting an *iftar* for Ramadan on **Friday, March 24 in the Campus Center Greeting Hall at sundown (around 7:30pm)**.

Note that the *iftar* will take place after the International Food Festival. If you are observing Ramadan or Fasika you are also welcomed to fill a take-out container with food from the International Food Festival.

Jackie

Jacqueline N. Font-Guzmán, MHA, JD, PhD

She/Her/Ella

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See below for ways of supporting Muslim Colleagues during Ramadan

SUPPORTING MUSLIM COLLEAGUES DURING RAMADAN

What is Ramadan?

Ramadan is a time for spiritual purification achieved through fasting, self-sacrifice, reflection and prayer. During Ramadan, extra time is spent performing prayers, reflecting on oneself and sacrificing worldly desires to strengthen the soul. Muslims around the world will fast from pre-dawn to sunset. Fasting is one of the five pillars of Islam and requires abstinence from food, drinks, and sexual intimacy while fasting to practice self-control.

Say Ramadan Mubarak or Ramadan Kareem

It's a common greeting that means "have a blessed Ramadan!"

Educate Yourself

Don't be afraid to ask your Muslim colleagues about Ramadan and its importance to them. Remember, everyone's experience is going to be different. Refrain from comments like "You're so strong- I could never do that!" and "Not even water?!".

What is Eid-ul-Fitr?

Eid-ul-Fitr is a special holiday that marks the end of Ramadan. Eid starts with a prayer in the morning followed by time spent celebrating with family and friends. Since celebrations can last several days, allow flexibility in taking time off. Feel free to say Eid Mubarak!

When is Ramadan?

Ramadan begins on March 23, 2023 to April 22, 2023. Dates may vary by one day depending on individual's religious school of thought.

Check In Time to Time

Ask your colleagues from time to time how they are doing and how you can support them. While they may be able to manage their workload, checking in with them goes a long way to show them you care about them.

Be Accommodating

Ask your colleagues what accommodations they need. That might include providing a space to pray, being flexible in scheduling meetings, allowing flexible work hours or even remote work. You do not need to hide your food from your Muslim colleagues or apologize for eating in front of them but allow them to excuse themselves during lunch or break if they'd like. Try not to schedule meetings over lunch or coffee. Refrain from playing music.

Not All Muslims Fast

There are many reasons why someone may not be fasting, from medical to personal reasons. For example, women do not fast while they are on their menstrual cycle or an individual who has to take frequent medications may not be fasting. Those who are unable to fast can still benefit spiritually in other ways.