

HON

393: The

History

of

Holidays

HON 393-04: History of Holidays

Location: College Hall Honors Center; Time: 2:00 pm-3:15pm T/F

Instructor: Jessica Mercurio; Email: mercurij3@hawkmail.newpaltz.edu; Phone:

Office Hours: By appointment

Office Location: TBD

Catalog Description: Exploration of some of the history of the popular and historic holidays that are celebrated in the United States.

Extended Description: What is a holiday? Why is one holiday more important than another? This class examines the history of many American holidays. We will dive into the origins of where these holidays come from. We will explore how these holidays expanded to what they are today. Some holidays have variations in them. For example, Columbus Day and Indigenous People's Day. Then there are holidays celebrated around the same time of year but have no direct connection to each other. Students will be able to differentiate between the two. In this class, traditions will be explored, both traditions from society and from classmates.

Learning Outcomes:

During this semester students will learn, listen, write, discuss

1. Reflect on holiday traditions at home
2. Understand the different holidays
3. Be able to explain how some relate to one another
4. Understand the tension and cultural significance of the holidays

Schedule: (subject to change)

Feb 1- end of add/drop; March 30 – last day for course withdrawal; Apr 29- last day for students to elected Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory option for full semester courses

Day	Activities for the day	Readings/Assignments Due
Jan 19 (T)	Introductions, syllabus, what is a holiday	Syllabus
Jan 22 (F)	Labor Day	Labor Day; US Department of Labor History of Labor Day

Jan 26 (T)	Halloween	History of Halloween; The Fascinating History of Halloween; Britannica- Halloween
Jan 29 (F)	Halloween	The History of Trick or Treating; 15 Spooky Halloween Traditions
Feb 2 (T)	Memorial Day	Memorial Day Facts, Meanings & Traditions; Memorial Day History
Feb 5 (F)	Veteran's Day	History of Veterans Day; Veterans Day Facts
Feb 9 (T)	Earth Day	History of Earth Day; Earth Day 2021 Descriptive Essay Due
Feb 12 (F)	Valentine's Day	The Gory Origins of Valentine's Day; The Dark Origins of Valentine's Day
Feb 16 (T)	Mardi Gras	Mardi Gras New Orleans; A Brief History of Mardi Gras; Mardi Gras History and Traditions
Feb 19 (F)	Hanukkah	The Miracle of Chanukah; Hanukkah
Feb 23 (T)	Mind, Body, Spirit Day - No Class	
Feb 26 (F)	Hanukkah	The Most Important Hanukkah Traditions; Hanukkah Traditions That Make the 8-Night Holidays Special

Mar 2 (T)	Kwanzaa	The History, Principles, and Symbols of Kwanzaa
Mar 5 (F)	Kwanzaa	Kwanzaa Traditions for Kids and Families; 8 Kwanzaa Traditions to Celebrate the Holidays
Mar 9 (T)	Christmas	History of Christmas; Origins of Christmas; A History of Christmas in America
Mar 12 (F)	Christmas	How 25 Christmas Traditions and Their Origins; 20 Regional Christmas Traditions From Across the US; 25+ Best Christmas Traditions
Mar 16 (T)	New Years	New Year Festival; New Years
Mar 19 (F)	Saint Patrick's Day	History of Saint Patrick's Day; The True History of Saint Patrick's Day
Mar 23 (T)	Passover	Passover; What is Passover Compare and Contrast Essay Due
Mar 26 (F)	Passover	The History of 7 Passover Traditions; 20+ Best Passover Dinner Menu Ideas 2021

Mar 30 (T)	Easter	Why Easter is Called Easter; Easter 2021
Apr 2 (F)	Easter	10 Easter Traditions; 30+ Best Easter Traditions
Apr 6 (T)	Independence Day	Fourth of July; 50 Fabulous 4th of July Facts
Apr 9 (F)	Juneteenth	So You Want to Learn About Juneteenth?; History of Juneteenth; What is Juneteenth?
Apr 13 (T)	Columbus Day	Columbus Day 2020; Columbus Day
Apr 16 (F)	Indigenous People's Day	What is Indigenous People's Day; Rethinking How We Celebrate American History—Indigenous Peoples' Day
Apr 20 (T)	Thanksgiving	Thanksgiving 2020; Thanksgiving History
Apr 23 (F)	Thanksgiving	Most Meaningful Thanksgiving Holiday Traditions; Thanksgiving Traditions
Apr 27 (T)	Review, last day of class	Persuasive Essay Due
May 11 (T)	Final	Final Assessment Due

Course Reading Schedule:

January 19: What is a holiday?

Read:

- Syllabus

January 22: Labor Day

Read:

- Labor Day:
<https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/labor-day-1#:~:text=Labor%20Day%20pays%20tribute%20to,a%20federal%20holiday%20in%201894>
- US Department of Labor History of Labor Day:
<https://www.dol.gov/general/laborday/history>

January 26: Halloween

Read:

- History of Halloween:
<https://www.history.com/topics/halloween/history-of-halloween>
- The Fascinating History of Halloween:
<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/holidays/halloween-ideas/g4607/history-of-halloween/>
- Britannica- Halloween:
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Halloween>

January 29: Halloween

Read:

- The History of Trick or Treating:
<https://www.history.com/news/halloween-trick-or-treating-origins>
- 15 Spooky Halloween Traditions:
<https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/58341/origins-15-spooky-halloween-traditions>

February 2: Memorial Day

Read:

- Memorial Day Facts, Meanings & Traditions:
<https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/memorial-day-history>
- Memorial Day History:
<https://www.va.gov/opa/speceven/memday/history.asp>

February 5: Veteran's Day

Read:

- History of Veterans Day:
<https://www.va.gov/opa/vetsday/vetdayhistory.asp>
- Veterans Day Facts:
<https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/veterans-day-facts>

February 9: Earth Day

Read:

- History of Earth Day:
<https://www.earthday.org/history/?gclid=EAlaIqobChMIzsL87ebU7AIVkcDACH3p>

- [SwLcEAAYASAAEgIRZfD_BwE](https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/earth-day)
Earth Day 2021:
<https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/earth-day>

February 12: Valentine's Day

Read:

- The Gory Origins of Valentine's Day:
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/gory-origins-valentines-day-180968156/>
- The Dark Origins of Valentine's Day:
<https://www.npr.org/2011/02/14/133693152/the-dark-origins-of-valentines-day>

February 16: Mardi Gras

Read:

- Mardi Gras New Orleans:
<https://www.mardigrasneworleans.com/history/>
- A Brief History of Mardi Gras:
<https://www.themanual.com/culture/history-of-madi-gras/>
- Mardi Gras History and Traditions:
<https://www.neworleans.com/events/holidays-seasonal/mardi-gras/history-and-traditions/>

February 19: Hanukkah

Read:

- The Miracle of Chanukah:
https://www.jewishhistory.org/the-miracle-of-chanukah/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMIhN7dwbHT7AIVxZ6zCh0yrwonEAAYASAAEglz6vD_BwE
- Hanukkah:
<https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/hanukkah>

February 23: Mind, Body, Spirit

Read:

February 26: Hanukkah

Read:

- The Most Important Hanukkah Traditions:
<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-most-important-hanukkah-traditions/>
- Hanukkah Traditions That Make the 8-Night Holidays Special:
<https://www.rd.com/article/hanukkah-traditions/>

March 2: Kwanzaa

Read:

- The History, Principles, and Symbols of Kwanzaa:
<https://www.interexchange.org/articles/career-training-usa/history-principles-and-symbols-of-kwanzaa/#:~:text=Maulana%20Karenga%2C%20professor%20and%20chairman,Americans%20together%20as%20a%20community.>
- Kwanzaa:
<https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/kwanzaa-history>

March 5: Kwanza

Read:

- Kwanzaa Traditions for Kids and Families:
<https://www.verywellfamily.com/kwanzaa-traditions-for-kids-and-families-2765149>
- 8 Kwanzaa Traditions to Celebrate the Holidays:
<https://www.oprahmag.com/life/a34894511/kwanzaa-traditions/>

March 9: Christmas

Read:

- History of Christmas:
<https://www.history.com/topics/christmas/history-of-christmas>
- Origins of Christmas:
https://www.simpletoremember.com/vitals/Christmas_TheRealStory.htm
- A History of Christmas in America:
<https://www.classicalhistorian.com/johns-blog/a-history-of-christmas-in-america#:~:text=In%20the%20United%20States%20of,holiday%20on%20June%2026%2C%201870.&text=December%2025%2C%2020336%2C%20marks%20the,American%20traditions%20have%20pagan%20roots.>

March 12: Christmas

Read:

- How 25 Christmas Traditions and Their Origins:
<https://www.history.com/news/christmas-traditions-history>
- 20 Regional Christmas Traditions From Across the US:
<https://bestlifeonline.com/american-christmas-traditions/>
- 25+ Best Christmas Traditions:
<https://www.countryliving.com/life/g3868/christmas-traditions/>

March 16: New Years

Reading:

- New Year Festival:
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/New-Year-festival>
- New Years:

<https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/new-years>

March 19: Saint Patrick's Day

Read:

- History of Saint Patrick's Day:
<https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.history.com/.amp/topics/st-patricks-day/history-of-st-patricks-day>
- The True History of Saint Patrick's Day:
<https://www.google.com/amp/s/time.com/4261456/st-patrick-day-2016-history-real-saint/%3famp=true>

March 23: Passover

Read:

- Passover:
<https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/passover>
- What is Passover:
https://www.chabad.org/holidays/passover/pesach_cdo/aid/871715/jewish/What-Is-Passover-Pesach.htm

March 26: Passover

Read:

- The History of 7 Passover Traditions:
<https://time.com/5188494/passover-history-traditions/>
- 20+ Best Passover Dinner Menu Ideas 2021:
<https://www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/g4062/passover-recipes/>

March 30: Easter

Read:

- Why Easter is Called Easter
<https://theconversation.com/why-easter-is-called-easter-and-other-little-known-facts-about-the-holiday-75025#:~:text=The%20naming%20of%20the%20celebration,seventh%20and%20early%20eighth%20century.>
- Easter 2021
<https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/history-of-easter>

April 2: Easter

Read:

- 10 Easter Traditions
<https://www.yourathomecare.com/10-easter-traditions-in-america/>
- 30+ Best Easter Traditions
<https://www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/g4062/passover-recipes/>

April 6: Independence Day

Read:

- Fourth of July
<https://www.history.com/topics/holidays/july-4th>
- 50 Fabulous 4th of July Facts
<https://www.livescience.com/14844-50-fabulous-facts-july-fourth-declaration-independence.html>

April 9: Juneteenth

Read:

- So You Want to Learn About Juneteenth?:
<https://www.nytimes.com/article/juneteenth-day-celebration.html>
- History of Juneteenth:
<http://www.juneteenth.com/history.htm>
- What is Juneteenth?:
<https://www.history.com/news/what-is-juneteenth>

April 13: Columbus Day

Read:

- Columbus Day 2020:
<https://www.history.com/topics/exploration/columbus-day#:~:text=Columbus%20Day%20is%20a%20U.S.,a%20federal%20holiday%20until%201937.>
- Columbus Day:
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Columbus-Day>

April 16: Indigenous People's Day

Read:

- What is Indigenous People's Day:
<https://www.history.com/news/goodbye-columbus-hello-indigenous-peoples-day>
- Rethinking How We Celebrate American History—Indigenous Peoples' Day:
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/blogs/national-museum-american-indian/2020/10/12/indigenous-peoples-day-updated2020/>

April 20: Thanksgiving

Read:

- Thanksgiving 2020:
<https://www.history.com/topics/thanksgiving/history-of-thanksgiving>
- Thanksgiving History:
<https://www.plimoth.org/learn/ju>

April 23: Thanksgiving

Read:

- Most Meaningful Thanksgiving Holiday Traditions:
<https://www.rd.com/list/thanksgiving-traditions/>
- Thanksgiving Traditions:
<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/history/thanksgiving-traditions/>

April 27: Review

Read:

May 11: Final

Assignments: Late work will be reduced by 1 point per calendar day late.

Participation & Preparation – You are expected to have read the week’s assignments, thought about them, and come prepared to participate in our discussions – 10 points

Discussion Board – Add to the discussion board for this class, writing once per week (15 total entries), sharing personal experiences, reflecting on readings, and responding to specific prompts. Due on Sunday at 11:59 pm each week– 15 points -1 per entry.

Paper 1- Describing an Aspect of Halloween (15%)

You will write a 2-3 page paper, double-spaced, that describes in detail one aspect of Halloween that we learned about. Your essay should be descriptive enough for your reader to see images of the holiday in their mind.

Some aspects can include:

- Costumes
- Carving jack-o-lanterns
- Trick or treating
- Going to haunted houses
- Pumpkin picking
- Halloween parties
- Buying candy
- Going to the Rocky Horror Picture Show
- Watching Halloween movies

Sources:

To write this paper, you may use any of the readings and notes that we have studied this far. You do not need additional outside sources, but you may certainly use them. This includes documentaries, books, articles, websites, and any other content you find on the holiday.

Details:

- Please submit the assignment as a Word Document
- Use Times New Roman 12-pt font
- Double-space
- Proofread and check your paper for errors
- Citation: use MLA or APA citation style

Due:

Tuesday, 2/9 at noon via email:

Paper 2- Christmas VS Kwanzaa VS Hanukkah (15%)

Many people believe that Christmas, Kwanzaa, and Hanukkah are the same holiday just for different religions. We learned that this is a misconception. You will write a 4-5 pages double-spaced paper comparing and contrasting the history and traditions of these three late December holidays.

Sources:

To write this paper, you may use any of the readings and notes that we have studied this far. You do not need additional outside sources, but you may certainly use them. This includes documentaries, books, articles, websites, and any other content you find on these holidays.

Details:

- Please submit the assignment as a Word Document
- Use Times New Roman 12-pt font
- Double-space
- Proofread and check your paper for errors
- Citation: use MLA or APA citation style

Due:

Tuesday, 3/23 at noon via email

Paper 3- Which to Celebrate (15%)

People have been fighting to change Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day. Also, many people in the United States celebrate Juneteenth as well as Independence Day. You will choose from these two pairs of holidays, Columbus Day/Indigenous People's Day or Independence Day/Juneteenth. From there your job is to write a persuasive letter to the President of the College convincing him how we should celebrate the pair of holidays you chose.

Clarify which pair of holidays you are choosing from. You can only choose one pair. Your opinion should emerge very clearly from your letter.

Sources:

To write this letter, you may use any of the readings, websites, and notes that we have studied this far. In addition, please use **two outside sources** to bolster your argument. This includes documentaries, books, articles, websites, and any other content you find on these holidays.

Details:

- Please submit the assignment as a Word Document
- Use Times New Roman 12-pt font
- Double-space
- Proofread and check your paper for errors
- Citation: use MLA or APA citation style

Due:

Tuesday, 5/11 at noon; via email.

Final Assessment- Traditions and You

For your final assessment, you will pick 10 out of the 19 that we studied this semester and explain the traditions you will celebrate with each of the holidays you've chosen. You have to explain what traditions you would incorporate into your life. If you wouldn't change any of your traditions in the holidays you learned about, explain then what the old traditions you have now. To present your traditions, you may present your information in a variety of ways. You may choose to write an essay about it. Or you can create a presentation. Or you may create a Prezi.

Other formats are acceptable, please discuss with me. This assignment doesn't require any outside research.

State each holiday and when it is celebrated. State how people celebrate it. What do they do to celebrate it? What foods do they eat? Explain why that holiday is important to you.

Due:

Tuesday, May 11 at noon

Total points 100

GRADE SCALE

100-93=A

92-90=A

89-87=B+

86-83=B

82-80=B

79-77=C+

76-73=C

72-70=C

69-67=D+

66-63=D

62-60=D

59 and below= F

STATEMENT ON ANTI-OPPRESSIVE EDUCATOR PREPARATION

In June 2020, SUNY New Paltz [made a commitment](#) to becoming an antiracist campus. We now find ourselves in a defining moment that is arguably different from that which has come before. We have an opportunity to make explicit the connections between schooling and capitalism, racism, hetero/sexism, ableism, and queerphobia. We have an opportunity to build a different world: a world that puts people before profit and that educates in order to liberate.

The daily work of educator preparation can be either racist or antiracist. As Ibram X. Kendi teaches us, there is no such thing as 'not racist.' There is no neutral position in a society that not only operates but also depends on antiblackness and other forms of oppression. Educator preparation can either remain complicit in amplifying colonial narratives, reproducing systems of policing, and perpetuating educational segregation

and white supremacy -- or we can work to disrupt the historic practice of normalizing anti-black racism in the classroom and beyond.

We make these commitments to you (our students) and to each other:

- § conduct an equity audit on our syllabi in order to investigate how and where antiblackness and other oppressions show up and can be disrupted
- § examine our pedagogical approaches and promote anti-oppressive practices
- § seek out and engage in professional learning opportunities in abolitionist, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive education
- § create opportunities to listen to students, alumni, members of the academic community, and New Paltz community about oppression in systems of education
- § promote and participate in School of Education community fora at the intersection of educator preparation and racism
- § make explicit that today's anti-oppressive struggles build on centuries of resistance to oppression
- § urge the school of education to recruit, hire, and retain Black, Indigenous, and People of Color faculty and students.

Educators hold tremendous power in helping to shape what comes next, and we acknowledge that these commitments are among our actions toward building equitable relationships and connections in the classroom and the world.

#BlackLivesMatterAtSchool

Want to know more about this?

<https://sites.google.com/hawkmail.newpaltz.edu/antiracist-educator-prep/home>

Campus-wide Policy Statements

1. Academic integrity policy statement: Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty in their college work. Cheating, forgery, and plagiarism are serious offenses, and students found guilty of any form of academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action. New Paltz's policy on academic integrity is found at http://www.newpaltz.edu/ugc/policies/policies_integrity.html

Several excellent resources to help with avoiding plagiarism are available on the Sojourner Truth Library's website: <http://lib.newpaltz.edu/assistance/plag.html>

2. Reasonable accommodation of individuals with disabilities statement: Students needing classroom and/or testing accommodations related to a disability should contact the Disability Resource Center (Student Union, Room 210, 845-257-3020) as close as possible to the beginning of the semester. The DRC will then provide students' instructors with an Accommodation Memo verifying the need for

accommodations. Specific questions about services and accommodations may be directed to Deanna Knapp, Assistant Director knappd@newpaltz.edu

3. Veteran and Military Services statement: New Paltz's Office of Veteran and Military Services (OVMS) is committed to serving the needs of veterans, service members and their dependents during their transition from military life to student life. Student veterans, service members or their dependents who need assistance while attending SUNY New Paltz may refer to www.newpaltz.edu/veterans

Call 845-257-3120, -3124 or -3074; or stop by the Student Union, Room 100 South.

4. Computer and network policies statement: Users of New Paltz's computer resources and network facilities are required to comply with the institutional policies outlined in the Acceptable Uses and Privacy Policy <https://sites.newpaltz.edu/csc/policies/acceptable-uses-and-privacy-policy/>

SEI: You are responsible for completing the Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEI) for this course and for all your courses with an enrollment of three or more students. I value your feedback and use it to improve my teaching and planning. Please complete the form during the open period on-line, which runs from April 27 to May 5.