



# DEI Initiative on Jewish Life and Antisemitism at U-M Presents... Fall Jewish Holidays on campus at U-M 2023

## Shana Tova - Happy New Year!

During the fall semester, Jewish students, faculty, and staff will observe a series of holidays that mark the new year of 5784 in the Jewish calendar. Here's how you can support them and promote a more inclusive campus community.



### 1. What are the fall Jewish holidays?

The High Holidays begin with **Rosh Hashanah (9/15 – 9/17)**- the Jewish New Year - a celebratory time with religious services and holiday meals. **Yom Kippur (9/24 to 9/25)**- the most solemn day of the Jewish calendar - is a day of atonement, prayer, and reflection, during which many Jews fast and attend religious services. These are the most widely observed Jewish holidays. They are followed by **Sukkot (9/29 -10/6)**- a week-long holiday centered around a Sukkah - a temporary dwelling in which people eat meals. The first two days of **Sukkot (9/29 - 10/1)** and the concluding holidays of **Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah (10/6 - 10/8)** are considered holy days, during which observant Jews abstain from work.

### 2. How are these holidays observed?

All of these holidays begin at sundown on the first date listed and run through to sundown on the last day listed. Many Jews prepare and partake in festive meals with family and friends and attend religious services. For Yom Kippur, Jews of different observance levels will fast from sundown to sundown. Traditionally observant Jews refrain from all kinds of work (including using anything electronic, riding in cars, writing or typing) on Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, the first two days of Sukkot, Simchat Torah, and Shemini Atzeret.

### 3. How does this affect the University of Michigan?

Thousands of our community members will endeavor to balance their academic and religious obligations throughout this period. Asking for an accommodation may be one of the first interactions a student has with their professor. Before the holiday begins, many will need time to prepare; some students may return to their home communities. Common concerns include conflicts with: exam/class schedules, required meetings, social gatherings, and professional and academic opportunities (such as networking and recruitment events).

### 4. How Can I Be Supportive?

#### Be Aware:

Mark these dates on your calendar. Let students know in your syllabus and at the beginning of the semester that you are aware that some may be observing these holidays and invite them to approach you about accommodations.

#### Be Inclusive:

Offer holiday greetings (Shana Tova or Happy New Year). Recognize that requests from differently observant students may vary. Avoid scheduling exams, meetings, or assignments during these times.

#### Be Accommodating:

Understand that students may need to make alternative arrangements to turn in assignments or to fulfill class responsibilities. Faculty and staff should work with students to find accommodations if conflicts arise.

#### Resources:

Hillel and Chabad are campus resources for those who are seeking information or ways to celebrate the holidays.