



## The Origin of Christmas



In the Western world, the birthday of Jesus Christ has been celebrated on December 25<sup>th</sup> since AD 354, replacing an earlier date of January 6<sup>th</sup>. The Christians had by then appropriated many pagan festivals and traditions of the season that were practiced in many parts of the Middle East and Europe, as a means of stamping them out. There were mid-winter festivals in ancient Babylon and Egypt, and Germanic fertility festivals also took place at this time. The birth of the ancient sun-god Attis in Phrygia was celebrated on December 25<sup>th</sup>, as was the birth of the Persian sun-god, Mithras. The Romans celebrated Saturnalia, a festival dedicated to Saturn, the god of peace and plenty, that ran from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> of December. Public gathering places were decorated with flowers, gifts and candles were exchanged and the population, slaves and masters alike, celebrated the occasion with great enthusiasm.



In Scandinavia, a period of festivities known as Yule contributed another impetus to celebration, as opposed to spirituality. As Winter ended the growing season, the opportunity of enjoying the Summer's bounty encouraged much feasting and merriment. The Celtic culture of the British Isles revered all green plants, but particularly mistletoe and holly. These were important symbols of fertility and were used for decorating their homes and altars. New Christmas customs appeared in the Middle Ages. The most prominent contribution was the carol, which by the 14th century had become associated with the religious observance of the birth of Christ.

In Italy, a tradition developed for re-enacting the birth of Christ and the construction of scenes of the nativity. This is said to have been introduced by Saint Francis as part of his efforts to bring spiritual knowledge to the laity. Saints Days have also contributed to our Christmas celebrations. A prominent figure in today's Christmas is Saint Nicholas who for centuries has been honored on December 6<sup>th</sup>. He was one of the forerunners of Santa Claus. Another popular ritual was the burning of the Yule Log, which is strongly embedded in the pagan worship of vegetation and fire, as well as being associated with magical and spiritual powers.

Celebrating Christmas has been controversial since its inception. Since numerous festivities found their roots in pagan practices, they were greatly frowned upon by conservatives within the Church. The feasting, gift-giving and frequent excesses presented a drastic contrast with the simplicity of the Nativity, and many people throughout the centuries and into the present, condemn such practices as being contrary to the true spirit of Christmas. The earliest English reference to December 25<sup>th</sup> as Christmas Day did not come until 1043.



Information provided by Alan Williams at <http://www.christmas-time.com/cp-hist.html>



### Winter Holiday Cultural Celebration



Come enjoy free food, great presentations, and other fun-filled activities at the Winter Holiday Cultural Celebration. Join the diverse cultures at this event to celebrate the various ways the winter holidays are observed throughout the world. The celebration starts:



**November 28th in the  
Russell Union  
Commons from 11:00  
am to 2:00pm.**



### Got Housing?

#### Returning Student Sign-Up 2008-2009 University Housing: Your Place to Live!

We are currently accepting applications for fall 2008-2009 for returning students on our website at [www.gsuhousing.com/signup2008](http://www.gsuhousing.com/signup2008) If you would like the opportunity return to campus for the 2008-2009 year, **you must complete a returning student application by January 31, 2008** in order to participate in the room selection process.

The actual room selection process will occur between February 13, 2008 and February 17, 2008. During this time, you will be able to select your room on-line as well as your roommate/roommates.

## Career Corner

The Career Services staff would like to extend holiday greetings to you! Soon you will have a break between semesters. To make the most of your break, it is recommended that you consider shadowing a professional and/or volunteering in an area of interest. Volunteering can help you in choosing a career, and for those of you who have majors, it provides a great way to get relevant experience and build your resume. You can also obtain part-time jobs that are relevant to your future career. Take any opportunity you can to invest in your future. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Career Services at 681-5197.



## Death by Cell Phone

Most people -- certainly business people -- would agree that cell phones have revolutionized our way of life by adding convenience, swift responses and an ability to continue working uninterrupted by travel time. But the sad fact -- despite the protests from all those who don't wish to have their new-found convenience limited -- is that cell phones, when used by drivers, have also revolutionized one of our ways of death, too. This is why some U.S. states, such as New York, have already made it illegal to use a hand-held cell phone while driving.



A study commissioned by a leading UK insurance company, Direct Line (2003), revealed that talking on *any* cell phone while driving is so mentally distracting that it is as dangerous as driving when slightly over the legal blood-alcohol limit.

The study was carried out over three months, after which a panel of volunteers was tested on a sophisticated driving simulator. The level of driving impairment was tested for the three relevant driving situations: talking on a hand-held cell phone, talking on a hands-free phone, and driving when slightly over the legal blood-alcohol limit. The result was that the drivers' reaction times were thirty percent *worse* when they were talking on cell phones than when they were borderline intoxicated. Compared to normal driving conditions, drivers talking on the hand-held phone were fifty percent impaired. Two of the most visible problems that resulted from this impairment were an inability to maintain a constant speed and an inability to remain a safe distance from the vehicle ahead.

Drivers in the study later admitted that they had actually found it easier to drive while intoxicated (just over the legal limit) than when using a cell phone, whether it was hand-held or hands-free. Drivers using cell phones also missed many more road signs than did the drunk drivers. It should go without saying that hand-held cell phones proved to be even more distracting than hands-free units. Drivers using hand-held cell phones took about half a second longer to react than a driver under normal circumstances, and this was also longer than those who were mildly drunk. In real-life terms, this means for example that at 70 mph a driver on a cell phone would travel an extra 46 feet before even reacting to a danger on the road. And that, in many, many cases, has already proved to be the difference between life and death



Information abridged from an article by Eddie Wren at: <http://www.driveandstayaalive.com/articles%20and%20topics/crash%20causation/cell-phone-dangers.htm>

## FALL 2007 FINAL EXAM SCHEDULE



### Monday, December 3

7:30 am – 9:30 am  
10:00 am – 12:00 pm  
12:30 pm – 2:30 pm  
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm  
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm  
8:00 pm – 10:00 pm

Classes beginning at 8:00 am MWF  
Classes beginning at 10:00 am MWF  
Classes beginning at 12:00 pm MWF  
Classes beginning at 3:30 pm MW  
Classes beginning at 5:00 pm MW  
Classes beginning at 6:30 pm MW

### Tuesday, December 4

7:30 am – 9:30 am  
10:00 am – 12:00 pm  
12:30 pm – 2:30 pm  
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm  
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm  
8:00 pm – 10:00 pm

Classes beginning at 8:00 am TR  
Classes beginning at 9:30 am TR  
Classes beginning at 12:30 pm TR  
Classes beginning at 3:30 pm TR  
Classes beginning at 5:00 pm TR  
Classes beginning at 8:00 pm TR

### Wednesday, December 5

7:30 am – 9:30 am  
10:00 am – 12:00 pm  
12:30 pm – 2:30 pm  
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm  
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm  
8:00 pm – 10:00 pm

Classes beginning at 9:00 am MWF  
Classes beginning at 11:00 am MWF  
Classes beginning at 1:00 pm MWF  
Classes beginning at 2:00 pm MW  
Classes beginning at 8:00 pm MW  
Conflict Exam Period

### Thursday, December 6

7:30 am – 9:30 am  
10:00 am – 12:00 pm  
12:30 pm – 2:30 pm  
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm  
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Conflict Exam Period  
Classes beginning at 11:00 am TR  
Classes beginning at 2:00 pm TR  
Classes meeting on Fri(2:00-4:45 pm)  
Classes beginning at 6:30 pm TR

**One credit hour classes will have their exams on the last scheduled day of classes.**

### Exams for Classes Meeting One Evening per Week:

Scheduled class meeting times as follows:

Monday December 3, 2007 Monday Evening Classes

Tuesday December 4, 2007 Tuesday Evening Classes

Wednesday December 5, 2007 Wednesday Evening Classes

Thursday December 6, 2007 Thursday Evening Classes



**FINALS FEAST**  
12.3.2007  
6PM - 9PM IN THE RU BALLROOM

Come take a break with us while you prepare for Finals Week.

- \* Free Food
- \* Professional Massages
- \* Games
- \* Music
- \* Giveaways



PICK UP FREE EARLY BIRD TICKETS AT THE OFFICE OF STUDENT ACTIVITIES IN THE RUSSELL UNION RM 1096

FOR MORE INFORMATION CHECK US OUT AT [WWW.EAGLEENTERTEINMENTONLINE.COM](http://WWW.EAGLEENTERTEINMENTONLINE.COM)