



## Introduction to Interfaith Leadership

Interfaith Youth Core and Dominican University are delighted to share this curriculum for the course entitled *Introduction to Interfaith Leadership*. This complete curriculum is available for faculty to use in their classrooms, either through a blended learning cross-institutional course site on Canvas, or through these downloadable resources. There is no fee to use these materials, though we may contact you to learn more about how you are using them, and to measure their strengths and weaknesses. This project was made possible by generous funding from the Henry Luce Foundation.

This curriculum was designed to be adaptable to meet the needs of faculty in diverse disciplines and settings. Each lesson consists of 3-5 modules, each of which includes videos, discussion questions, classroom activities, and readings. We believe that this curriculum functions best when these various components are used together, and therefore strongly encourage you to integrate both video content and associated activities in your classes where appropriate. You are invited to use this curriculum even if you are only using select modules, rather than the curriculum in its entirety. In order to showcase what we believe is the optimal version of this course, we have indicated which activities and readings are required in the Canvas version of the course administered by Dominican University. We have also included a variety of additional suggested and recommended activities and readings throughout the curriculum.

**If you have any questions about content or how to use this curriculum in an upcoming course, please email [Carr@ifyc.org](mailto:Carr@ifyc.org).**

## Module 4.2: What is Appreciative Knowledge?

We define appreciative knowledge of other religious traditions as substantive knowledge and positive inclinations. In this lesson we distinguish between appreciative knowledge and religious literacy, and provide ways for students to develop their appreciative knowledge about other religious and ethical traditions.

### [Video \(5 min\)](#)

#### **Student Learning Objectives:**

- Gain Appreciative Knowledge of 2-3 religious traditions, including (if appropriate) one's own
- Identify three ways to develop appreciative knowledge
- Address the limitations of developing appreciative knowledge as a strategy for interfaith leadership
- Contrast appreciative knowledge and religious literacy

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- Return to your reflections about respecting identities: Has your opinion on this changed since looking at it in a concrete example? How so?
- Why is appreciative knowledge important? How is it distinct from religious literacy?

#### **Activities required for Canvas version of the course:**

- Go to the Pluralism Project's [website](#) and read selections about 2-3 traditions, including (if appropriate) one's own. Try to select traditions that you have identified as being in proximity to yourself. For each tradition, name 2-3 things (e.g., beliefs, practices, and/or exemplary figures) you have come to newly appreciate about each of these traditions.
- In one or two sentences, explain the difference between appreciative knowledge and religious literacy. Give an example that illustrates the difference.

#### **Additional suggested activities:**

- Share stories and/or pictures of family members or friends who are in interfaith marriages. What appreciative knowledge have they developed during their years together? How do they support one another? Did other members of the family oppose the marriage?
- For the traditions you worked with in the first activity, identify what might be the potential challenges to working with these communities as an Interfaith Leader; how might you address them in an appreciative and respectful way?

#### **Readings required for Canvas version of the course:**

- "[Rivers of Faith](#)", Harvard University Pluralism Project

#### **Additional recommended reading:**

- "Chapter 2: Living in a Plurality of Faiths" from *Toward a True Kinship of Faiths* by HH Dalai Lama
- Selections/Introduction to *God is Not One* by Stephen Prothero
- Selections from *Without Buddha I Could Not Be a Christian* by Paul Knitter
- *How to Be a Perfect Stranger*
- "[Appreciative Inquiry and URI](#)", United Religions Initiative
- "[Appreciative Inquiry Model Questions](#)" by Steve Fitzgerald, United Religions Initiative