



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.

Lesson 5: Historical Examples of Interfaith Cooperation

Module 5.1: Why Does This History Matter?

In this lesson we identify the ways in which knowing historical examples of interfaith cooperation can help interfaith leaders today combat the false notion that religious difference inherently leads to violence and tension.

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

Student Learning Objectives:

- Articulate the purpose of understanding the history of interfaith cooperation for interfaith leadership

Discussion Questions:

- Before taking this course, what would have been the 5 words that best describe interreligious relationships in history? Choose one of these words and explain why you included it on your list.

Additional suggested activities:

- Look through this week's headlines: Which stories fall into Huntington's view of religious interaction? Which stories fall into this alternative view of religious interaction?

Reading required for Canvas version of the course:

- "[Clash of Civilizations](#)" by Samuel Huntington

Additional recommended reading:

- [Nostra Aetate](#)
- "[Leader 1 Resource: Faith Heroes](#)", Unitarian Universalist Association

Module 5.2: Interfaith Cooperation in United States History

This lesson looks at the history of the United States, citing several instances of interfaith bridge-building and cooperation. These examples extend from the early European settlers through the 1960s and into today.

[Video \(13 min\)](#)

Student Learning Objectives:

- Describe 2-3 key moments of interfaith bridge-building in US History
- Select a key moment in US history and explain the importance of that event for shaping your understanding interfaith cooperation
- Critically examine the history of interfaith cooperation presented in this module for who is featured and who is absent

Discussion Questions:

- What are some of the identity groups that are missing from this presented history? Do you know any key figures from these identity groups who could be considered interfaith leaders?
- Describe the two historical moments of bridge building that most inspire you as you develop your own approach to interfaith cooperation.

Additional suggested activities:

- Identify one figure from one of these groups from US history whose work could also be framed as Interfaith Leadership.
- Have students fill in a historical timeline on a Google Doc or other shared course document. They should include figures from the video but also figures and movements not included in this brief overview.
- Washington reads a letter from the Hebrew Congregation and rephrases it, noting that the United States gives bigotry no sanction and persecution no assistance. What does this example suggest about the capacity of ordinary citizens to make a difference?
- Compare the countries of origin and percent of immigrants in the population in 1965 with the same information in 2014 (or the latest figures you can find.) How does this shift impact other social movements in the United States?

Reading required for Canvas version of the course:

- *Interfaith Encounters in America* by Kate McCarthy; chapter 2: Strange Bedfellows: Multifaith Activism in American Politics
- *Religious Pluralism in America* by William Hutchison; Chapter 8: Protestant-Catholic-Jew: New Mainstream, Gropings Toward a New Pluralism

Additional recommended reading:

- Selections from Dorothy Day, Jane Addams, and Sojourner Truth
- [“The story behind the letters between Moses Seixas and George Washington”](#) & [“The Letter from Seixas to Washington”](#) & [“The letter from Washington to Seixas”](#) from Facing History
- [“The Bloody Tenet of Persecution, for Cause of Conscience”](#) by Roger Williams
- Lyndon B. Johnson’s [Remarks at the Signing of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965](#)
- [Barack Obama’s first inaugural address](#)
- [“World Parliament of Religions \(1893\)”](#), Boston Collaborative Encyclopedia of Western Theology
- [“Celebrating Dorothy Day”](#), *America*

Module 5.3: Who are your Interfaith Heroes?

Through a series of short interviews, young professionals in different fields share stories of their own interfaith role models, contributing to students' knowledge of historical examples of interfaith cooperation and identifying ways in which these precedents have been useful to their own interfaith leadership.

[Video \(14 min\)](#)

Student Learning Objectives:

- Identify an interfaith role model for yourself

Discussion Questions:

- Identify someone that you look up to as a leader. Are there aspects of their leadership that relate to interfaith cooperation?
- Describe (and include a link to) a specific example of a reading or film or work of art or music that has inspired you to become an interfaith bridge-builder.
- Respond to another student's post in answering either of the above two questions.

Module 5.4: Historical Interfaith Cooperation summary and Reflection

In the final module of this lesson, we will summarize the key ideas presented in this lesson and elaborate on how this rich history of cooperation has set the stage for the growing interfaith movement today.

[Video \(1 min\)](#)

Student Learning Objectives:

- Reflect on this history of interfaith cooperation and identify something that strikes you as particularly important for interfaith leadership today

Discussion Questions:

- Return to the 5 words you listed in your earlier discussion post (module 5.1) about interreligious relationships in history. After studying this lesson, which words, if any, would you keep? Why? And which words would you suggest as alternatives? Why?
- How can the examples portrayed in this lesson be applied to a current issue that you care about (i.e. fracking, climate change, #BlackLivesMatter, gun control)? Respond to the comment of at least one other student.

Additional suggested activities:

- Using primary sources (quotes, speeches, written material), have students compose a brief explanation how interfaith cooperation and religious diversity influence the U.S. ideals of freedom, liberty, and justice.
- Role-play key moments of history, including potential negative instances of interreligious relationships to examine moments when interfaith cooperation was not achieved, or not achieved for everyone.
- How do we engage with or respond to native examples from United States history?

Additional recommended reading:

- Selections from *Peace Be Upon You: Fourteen Centuries of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish Conflict and Cooperation* by Zachary Karabell