



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.

Module 6.3: Building Relationships across Difference

One of the most important and most difficult skills of interfaith leadership is facilitating dialogue. In this module, students will be introduced to several skills necessary for successful dialogue facilitation and participation, creating safe spaces for diverse identities, and tools for moving dialogue into action. We will also cover what constitutes a good opening question for interfaith dialogue, and how we can use good questions to build relationships with others of different religious orientations.

[Video \(9 min\)](#)

Student Learning Objectives:

- Demonstrate ability to identify shared values between yourself and someone of a different religious or ethical background
- Explain the criteria for interfaith-friendly questions
- Identify two practices for moving dialogue into action

Discussion Questions:

- When and how is it appropriate to address issues of radical difference even within shared values? What is the appropriate balance between acknowledging differences on the one hand and commonalities on the other?

Activities required for Canvas version of the course:

- Recalling the ethics/theologies of interfaith cooperation from video interviews from the previous module, identify 2-3 values that are shared between at least two specific religious or ethical traditions. Explain.
- Craft three interfaith-friendly questions for a dialogue between people from the two traditions you named in the previous question.
- Identify two practices for moving dialogue into action.
- In one paragraph, reflect on a situation when you engaged with someone of a different identity. In retrospect, would you say that you applied what you now understand to be principles of Interfaith Leadership? If not, how might interfaith principles have improved the situation's outcome?

Additional Suggested Activities:

- Role-play dialogue facilitation in which you demonstrate how to identify shared values and use interfaith-friendly questions.
- Reflecting on Rabbi David Rosen's article, can you cite an example of "holy envy" either from your own experiences or dialogue with others, or from what you have studied so far in this course? Why did you select this example? What else from this article advances your own thinking about how best to build relationships across difference?

Reading required for Canvas version of the course:

- *The Im-Possibility of Interreligious Dialogue* by Catherine Cornille; "Hospitality Toward Difference" pp.197-210
- [Dialogue Principles from the Dialogue Institute and the Journal of Ecumenical Studies](#)

Additional recommended reading:

- Rabbi David Rosen, "The Power of Interfaith Dialogue"
- "[Guidelines for Interfaith Dialogue](#)", Religion Communicators
- "Storytelling as a Key Methodology for Interfaith Work" by Eboo Patel, April Kunze, and Noah Silverman, *Interfaith Dialogue at the Grassroots* ed. by Rebecca Kratz Mays, pp. 35-46.