



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 7: The Movement Now

Module 7.1: Interfaith Cooperation in the United States Today

Building on the earlier lesson spent reviewing important examples of interfaith cooperation from history, this lesson explores the many instances of interfaith cooperation and leadership taking place across the United States today. We will discuss common challenges to the interfaith movement, as well as current trends in interfaith work.

[Video \(3 min\)](#)

Student Learning Objectives:

- Describe 2-3 significant activities being undertaken by interfaith organizations in the United States today
- Describe some of the common challenges interfaith leaders face today

Discussion Questions:

- Identify an interfaith organization and share which projects and activities they are doing that energize you. For examples: <http://pluralism.org/profiles/>

Activities required for Canvas version of the course:

- Analyze the effort described in the “Tri-Faith Neighborhood” article. In one short paragraph, describe what the leaders in the “Tri-Faith Neighborhood” did well. What might they have done differently to be more effective? Do you think it tends toward merging the three Abrahamic faiths to create a new religion, as some critics have alleged?

Additional suggested activities:

- Evaluate Valerie Kaur's statement: "The way we make changes is as important as the changes we make." Do you agree? Relate to your own life's experience.
- Explain the above statement in relation to Valerie Kaur's "pocket group" and/or her grandfather. Relate the statement to your own "pocket group".
- Explore the websites of at least two of the organizations listed below devoted to interfaith work on environmental issues. What connects can you make between what these organizations say about themselves and what you have learned about interfaith leadership? Are there any significant differences between the organizations you have chosen to examine? [The Huffington Post](#) lists 15 faith-based organizations in this area, including the following which are explicitly interfaith:
 - [Green Faith](#)
 - [Interfaith Power and Light](#)
 - [National Religious Partnership for the Environment](#)
 - [The Shalom Center](#)
 - [The Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development](#)
 - [Interfaith Worker Justice](#)
 - [Faith in Place](#)
- Photo elicitation, part II: Revisit the photos and reflections you shared in an earlier lesson and respond to your initial characterizations of interfaith leadership. Take another 2-3 photos of interfaith cooperation and reflect on how these images capture the interfaith movement today.
- Interview, email, or otherwise contact a staff member of the an interfaith organization to learn more about the challenges they face in their work.

Reading required for Canvas version of the course:

- Harvard University Pluralism Project, “An Invitation to a Tri-Faith Neighborhood” [Part A](#) and [Part B](#)

- Harvard University Pluralism Project, "[America's Growing Interfaith Infrastructure](#)"

Additional recommended reading:

- Valarie Kaur 2013 [Stanford University Baccalaureate Address](#) video
- *Cross Currents*, "[From the Margins to the Centers of Power: The Increasing Relevance of the Global Interfaith Movement](#)" by Patrice Brodeur