



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

Module 7.2: Interfaith Leadership in the Field

In this final series of short interviews, students will hear from a diverse group of young professionals about their role in the interfaith movement, and how they have used interfaith leadership in their professional and personal lives.

[Video \(16 min\)](#)

Student Learning Objectives:

- Identify 2-3 professions benefitting from Interfaith leadership today
- Identify the applicability of interfaith leadership to your intended profession or field of study

Discussion Questions:

- Select 2-3 professions not mentioned in the video and brainstorm how those professions might benefit from interfaith leadership.

Activities required for Canvas version of the course:

- Consider a profession related to your major field of study. First, draft a one-page essay in which you outline how the skills, knowledge and values of interfaith leadership would add value to a person's practice in that profession. Second, share this draft with a professor or advisor in your major field of study and ask them to comment on what you have proposed. Finally, upload the draft and summarize your professor/advisor's response in a sentence or two.

Additional suggested activities:

- Using an online job search engine, identify 3-4 job listings where candidates would benefit from Interfaith Leadership vision, knowledge, and skills. These jobs do not need to explicitly involve religion in their description. Write a short paragraph explaining the benefits of interfaith training for each.
- Scan the undergraduate bulletin/catalog at your own college or university. Identify 3-4 academic majors/disciplines/fields of study in which you think students would benefit from interfaith leadership vision, knowledge, and skills. Write a short paragraph explaining the benefits of interfaith training for each.

Additional recommended reading:

- "[CI: Faith, Inc. and Criminal Justice Reform](#)", *Prison Legal News*
- IFYC [Common Knowledge Podcasts](#) on Interfaith + Professions
- IFYC resource [Professional Applicability of Interfaith Skills and Competencies](#)
- Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding [resources](#) on religious diversity in the workplace

Module 7.3: Creating Spaces for Interfaith Cooperation

In the same way that an earlier lesson explored building relationships through dialogue, this lesson offers students insight into how to successfully create spaces and opportunities for interfaith cooperation. This lesson includes suggestions and best practices for determining interfaith-friendly projects, and encourages students to determine means of assessment for any event through which they hope to build interfaith cooperation and pluralism.

[Video \(6 min\)](#)

Student Learning Objectives:

- Drawing on the course principles, design one interfaith event for one's campus or community
- Identify possible resources for interfaith work from your campus or community
- Identify a way of measuring the intended impact of an interfaith event

Activities required for Canvas version of the course:

- Complete the attached Asset Map for interfaith engagement or a specific interfaith cooperation-building event on your campus or in your community
- Use the included template to draft an initial design for an interfaith event for your campus or community including plans for measuring its intended impact.

Additional suggested activities:

- Have the class determine a collective rubric by which they can evaluate one another's event proposals, and use that to determine which one of the designed events they want to implement on their campus.
- Attend an interfaith event of some kind in your area; observe, what went well? What did not? Do you have any ideas as to why it was effective or ineffective? What did the organizers mean to accomplish? Did they succeed at meeting their goals? What advice would you give the organizers of the next event?

Reading required for Canvas version of the course:

- *Interfaith Encounters in America* by Kate McCarthy; Chapter 3: When the Other is Neighbor: Community-Based Interfaith Work

Additional suggested reading:

- IFYC resource "[Guide to Interfaith Friendly Events](#)"
- IFYC resource "[7 Popular Better Together Events](#)"

Module 7.4: The Interfaith Movement Now Summary and Reflection

In this lesson, students will review the content from this lesson and reflect on how their own interfaith leadership could contribute to the growing interfaith movement.

[Video \(2 min\)](#)

Activities required for Canvas version of the course:

- In one substantial paragraph, reflect on your capacity to engage in the interfaith movement: In which areas do you think you would excel? In which areas do you think you would need support?