



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 2.2: Models of Religious Diversity

This module lays the groundwork for understanding the potential influence of interfaith leadership in today's world. We clarify the difference between diversity and pluralism, and discuss common responses to increasing diversity, including positive, negative, and apathetic. We also share a three-step process for transforming diversity into pluralism – the ultimate goal of interfaith leadership.

[Video \(10 min\)](#)

Student Learning Objectives:

- Explain some of the different ways people respond to increasing diversity
- Define both diversity and pluralism and explain their differences
- Define relativism and distinguish between pluralism and relativism
- Name the three necessary elements for building pluralism from diversity

Discussion Questions:

- Have you seen these different responses to diversity in your own life?
- In your experience, have you found that cooperation with people of other religious traditions has changed you? If so, how?

Activities required for Canvas version of the course:

- Return to the article you identified in the previous module. Which response to diversity (bunkers of isolation, barriers to difference, religious extremism, indifference, bridge-building) do you see here?

Additional suggested activities:

- Return to the identity-wheel you completed in Lesson 1. What are some actions that stem from these identities?
- Reflective Essay: We heard that the first part of being a bridge-builder is to respect identities. Are there identities that don't deserve respect? Are there identities or communities that fall outside the circle of pluralism? Where do you draw the line?

Reading required for Canvas version of the course:

- *Interfaith Encounters in America* by Kate McCarthy, Chapter 1: Theories of Religious Difference: The "Experts" Map Interfaith Relations

Additional recommended reading:

- Harvard University Pluralism Project, "[From Diversity to Pluralism](#)"
- "[The relationship between pluralism and diversity](#)" by Dr. Victoria S. Harrison
- Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance, "[The diversity of meanings of the term 'religious pluralism'](#)"