

SINGLE COURSE DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Request for Proposals from Interfaith Youth Core

IFYC is pleased to offer grants of up to \$1,000 to fund the development of undergraduate courses that engage interfaith themes and pedagogies (see below for more detail on what this encompasses). IFYC's intention is to support and work directly with scholars across a variety of disciplines who seek to engage the emerging field of interfaith studies.

Grants will be awarded for course development and/or revision work to be conducted during the summer of 2020. We will begin accepting applications **January 15, 2020**. Applications are due **March 16th, 2020** and grant implementation will take place from **May 6st, 2020 – August 28th, 2020**.

Questions about the grants or application process are welcome and should be addressed to Calvin Taylor, Program Manager, at calvin@ifyc.org, or 312.376.4786.

Interfaith Studies Courses

IFYC offers the following working definition of “interfaith studies”¹:

Interfaith studies is an interdisciplinary field that examines the multiple dimensions of how individuals and groups who orient around religion differently interact with one another, and the implications of these interactions for communities, civil society, and global politics.²

Educators across the country have already established hundreds of courses and dozens of academic programs that focus on interfaith studies. Scholars in religious studies and theology have often spearheaded these efforts, but faculty across the humanities, social sciences, and hard

¹ We have found that some higher education institutions prefer to use the term “interfaith,” while others prefer “interreligious.” While it could be argued that these terms carry distinct connotations, Dr. Oddbjørn Leirvik notes that these terms are often used interchangeably (see his 2014 text *Interreligious Studies: A Relational Approach to Religious Activism and the Study of Religion*). IFYC tends to use “interfaith studies” as a shorthand phrase.

² Eboo Patel, “Toward a Field of Interfaith Studies” *Liberal Education* 99 (2013), accessible online at <https://www.aacu.org/liberaleducation/2013/fall/patel>.

sciences – as well as pre-professional programs such as business, pre-health, social work, and education – are increasingly building interfaith studies curricula.³

Thanks to generous support from the Mellon Foundation, IFYC and the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion conducted research in classrooms across the country on pedagogies for teaching interfaith studies. Out of this research, the following eight themes emerged as significant pedagogies and/or areas of intention for this field of teaching and learning.

- **Experiential Learning:** Interfaith studies courses often stress the value of learning *alongside* and *among* individuals who orient around religion differently, rather than *about* them exclusively in a classroom setting. This concretely manifests as site visits to houses of worship, service-learning requirements, or presentations in class from leaders and members of religious communities and/or communal interfaith organizations.
- **Case Studies:** Case studies that deal with religion in the civic context are an excellent way to help students explore the challenges of religious diversity and find avenues for constructive interfaith action. As a pedagogy, case studies promote concrete skill building while encouraging complex analysis, critical thinking, and the development of civic orientation.
- **Interfaith Dialogue:** This type of dialogue includes multiple religious and ethical voices; attends to both shared values and real differences; pushes students to self-reflect on their own dispositions and biases; and asks students to think about their skills for leading dialogue. Interfaith dialogue requires intentional space and the classroom can be a laboratory for practicing this valuable civic skill.
- **Religious Literacy:** Equipping students with information about religious and philosophical traditions is a common and important goal of interfaith studies courses. A baseline understanding of religious traditions (e.g. the five pillars of Islam; the differences between Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism; or historical occurrences in the Hebrew Bible), and the practical implications of this literacy (e.g. the ways in which Muslims express charity; the importance of a vegetarian diet for many Hindus; or the practices that Jews may observe during Shabbat) are considered important competencies for interfaith engagement. The range of topics covered is guided by the goals of each specific course.

³ For more discussion of the emerging field of interfaith studies see *Interreligious/Interfaith Studies: Defining a New Field*, edited by Eboo Patel, Jennifer Howe Peace, and Noah Silverman (Beacon Press, 2018).

- **Professional Relevance:** Interfaith skills and knowledge are relevant for a range of professions including healthcare, business, education, among many others. Interfaith studies courses offer an opportunity to consider how religious and philosophical diversity is present in and relevant to professional and civic spaces. Through internships, interview assignments, or other community-based projects, students gain concrete competencies and skills needed to engage religious and philosophical diversity in a workplace or civic setting.
- **Personal Journey and Reflection:** Students are often given the space to reflect upon their own values and worldviews in interfaith studies courses. These opportunities manifest as journal assignments, reflection papers, or spiritual autobiography essays. Through these exercises, students consider their own capacity for interfaith engagement by reflecting upon their identity in relation to – and in community with – people whose religious and philosophical commitments differ from their own.
- **Interdisciplinarity:** The interaction of people who orient around religion differently implicates a range of academic disciplines; indeed, scholars of psychology, sociology, political science, business, nursing, accounting, religion, and even biology have already contributed to this area of inquiry. In this way, interfaith studies courses often draw upon a variety of disciplinary methodologies, pedagogies, and research findings. Interfaith studies topics are also taught within multiple fields of study.
- **Intersectionality:** Although religious and philosophical identity is especially salient to interfaith studies courses, it is also important to consider religious identity in the context of interconnected and sometimes inseparable social categorizations, such as gender identity, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic identity, and class. Because of this, interfaith studies courses are particularly attentive to the manifestations of religious/worldview identity in specific and varying contexts.

In applying for course development grants, **faculty are asked to choose at least two of these themes** to focus on or engage in their proposed course.

Before You Apply: Project Overview and Eligibility

Overview: IFYC is offering grants of up to \$1,000 to be used to revise an existing undergraduate course or create a new undergraduate course that integrates interfaith themes.

Application Requirements: Applicants should submit the following materials by **March 16th, 2020** to be considered for this grant:

1. **Online Application:** All applicants must complete an online form located at http://bit.ly/2020_CDG_App. We will begin accepting applications January 15, 2020. This online application asks for the following information:
 - The provisional title of your course and a 3-5 sentence description;
 - The proposed learning outcomes for your new or revised course;
 - The department in which the course is housed and how an interfaith lens informs or changes the focus of the course;
 - Whether your course is required or an elective;
 - How many students you expect to be enrolled in the course;
 - Identification of at least two of the eight interfaith studies themes outlined above that you plan to focus on, include, or engage in your course;
 - Explanation of why you are using and how you will engage your chosen themes to increase or improve interfaith learning and engagement in your proposed course (200 words or fewer);
 - Questions, concerns, or reservations about teaching interfaith topics (100 words or fewer);
 - Personal goals or objectives you have for teaching this course (100 words or fewer)
2. **Requirement for Revised Syllabi:** Applicants seeking to revise a syllabus must also submit the syllabus as it currently exists and give a detailed explanation of the changes they plan to make. Applicants should upload their current syllabus when completing the online application form.
3. **Letter of Recommendation:** In addition to completing the online form, applicants are required to supply a recommendation letter from their Department Chair, Provost, or Academic Dean. In this letter, the recommender should demonstrate their support for the proposed course and offer a provisional timeline as to when the course would be added to the institution's catalogue. Applicants should upload their recommendation letter when completing the online application form or email the letter to calvin@ifyc.org upon completion.

Relevant Dates: Deadlines for grant application and administration are as follows:

- Application Open: January 15th, 2020
- Application materials due: March 16th, 2020
- Award notifications announced: May 6th, 2020
- Final syllabus and feedback survey due to IFYC: August 28th, 2020

Use of Grant Funds: Grant awards are meant to support grantees for the time and energy it takes to create or revise a syllabus. Grantees should view this funding as reportable income. Please note that this grant is not to be used to fund the following activities:

- Routine course revision unrelated to interfaith studies
- Conference attendance or registration
- Other research, writing, or publishing costs

Eligibility: Faculty members, including adjunct faculty, from accredited universities or colleges in the U.S. are eligible to apply.

Resources for Developing Interfaith Studies Courses

The following resources offer concrete examples of interfaith studies courses that already exist, or provide materials that educators can use directly in their syllabi:

[Teaching Interfaith Understanding Resource Library](#)

Created in partnership with the Council of Independent Colleges, this online resource library contains sample syllabi, teaching tactics, and assignment descriptions from undergraduate faculty. While representative of a diverse range of disciplinary perspectives, each resource focuses on interfaith learning. Visit <https://www.ifyc.org/faculty/library> for more information.

[Introduction to Interfaith Leadership Online Curriculum](#)

Thanks to funding from the Henry Luce Foundation, IFYC and Dominican University partnered to create a suite of dynamic short videos, readings, assignments, and assessment tools, comprising an eight-lesson curriculum in Interfaith Leadership for blended and online learning. This curriculum includes lessons on the purpose and value of interfaith leadership, the history of interfaith cooperation in the United States, core skills of interfaith leadership, the work of young interfaith leaders across multiple professions, and more. Visit <https://www.ifyc.org/interfaithleadership> for more information.

[Interreligious/Interfaith Studies: Defining a Field, edited by Eboo Patel, Jenny Peace, and Noah Silverman](#)

The field of interreligious/interfaith studies is flourishing at a remarkable pace. However, as this field becomes more established, key questions and considerations emerge. How is interreligious/interfaith studies distinct from, yet similar to, other fields, such as religious or theological studies? What are the field's signature pedagogies and methodologies? What are its motivations and key questions? In other words, what is the shape of interfaith and interreligious studies, and what is its distinct contribution? These questions are the driving force behind this book. To address them, the editors have compiled an anthology that explores the field's theoretical constructions, pedagogy and classroom practices, challenges and tensions, and applications beyond the classroom. The volume includes work from scholars and practitioners who inhabit a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds.

Grant Terms and Requirements

Disbursement of Grant Funds: IFYC will disperse grant funds in two equal installments:

- The first installment (half the total award) will be sent after the grantee signs and returns the Memorandum of Agreement, submits their personal W9 to IFYC, and attends a required orientation session.
- The second installment (the remaining half of the total award) will be sent after IFYC receives the final syllabus from the grantee, and after the grantee completes a brief feedback survey at the end of the administration period.

Grantee Orientation Session: All grantees are required to participate in one of the following conference call orientation sessions (60 minutes):

- Option 1: Tuesday, May 19th, 2020 from 1:00-2:00pm Central
- Option 2: Wednesday, May 20th, 2020 from 2:00-3:00pm Central
- Option 3: Thursday, May 21st, 2020 from 10:30am-11:30am Central

The goal of this session is to introduce/reacquaint grantees to the work of IFYC, familiarize grantees with resources available for curriculum revision, and to provide the opportunity for grantees to meet one another remotely.

Syllabus Requirements: At the end of the grant period, grantees will submit their new or revised syllabus in lieu of a final report. Final syllabi are due by **August 28th, 2020** and must be submitted as a Microsoft Word document. Syllabi must include the following sections:

- Course Goals and Student Learning Outcomes
- Required Texts and Materials
- Course Assignments and Assignment Descriptions
- Tentative Course Calendar

Publishing Grantee Syllabi: IFYC may wish to post grantee syllabi in its online resource library but will always seek permission before doing so. The author will be given full credit.

Course Offerings: IFYC anticipates that new or revised courses would be taught during the 2020-2021 or 2021-2022 academic year. While there is no formal requirement to teach the course within this timeframe, if you plan to teach your course after the 2021-2022 academic year, please describe your circumstances relating to this delay in the online application.