

# COURSE SEQUENCE GRANTS

## Request for Proposals from Interfaith Youth Core

IFYC is pleased to offer grants of up to \$5,000 to colleges and universities to support the development of undergraduate course sequences – such as a major, minor, concentration, certificate, or a set of courses within the core curriculum - that engage interfaith themes and pedagogies (see below for more detail on what this encompasses).

Grants will be awarded for curricular development work to be conducted during the 2020-2021 academic year. Grant Proposals are due on **March 16, 2020, with decisions being announced by May 6, 2020**. Grant implementation will take place from **June 1, 2020 – June 1, 2021**. **Final materials submitted to IFYC should be the proposal submitted to your institution's governing body or academic officer that approves sequences.**

Questions about the grants or application process are welcome and should be addressed to **Calvin Taylor**, Program Manager, at [calvin@ifyc.org](mailto:calvin@ifyc.org), or 312.376.4786.

### Interfaith Studies: A Growing Field to Address a Diverse 21<sup>st</sup> Century

As religious and worldview diversity continues to play a prominent role in public affairs in the United States, many institutions of higher education are looking for holistic ways to foster interfaith cooperation and pluralism on campus. One of the central discussions is how interfaith engagement can be addressed in academically rigorous ways in college and university classrooms. Scholars invested in these discussions are claiming a new interdisciplinary field called Interfaith/Interreligious Studies.

IFYC offers the following working definition of “interfaith studies”<sup>1</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

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.<sup>2</sup>

Thanks to generous support from the Mellon Foundation, IFYC partnered with the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion to conduct 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, case studies, interfaith dialogue, religious literacy, professional relevance, personal journey and reflection, interdisciplinarity, intersectionality.

IFYC seeks grant proposals that both build upon and expand the definition of interfaith studies and integrate these themes within the articulation of program structure, objectives, and courses. Our intention is to support and work directly with faculty committed to building this field by leveraging these grants to build upon an existing community of scholars who engage this area of inquiry from across a variety of disciplines and institutional settings, and that the construction of these programs will bring grantees and IFYC into a mutually enriching conversation that further establishes the contours of this growing field. In keeping with the collaborative nature of the project, IFYC staff members are open to discuss proposals and offer feedback prior to submission.

## Grant Logistics

### *Definition of a “Course Sequence”*

For the purposes of these grants, IFYC defines a “course sequence” to be a minimum of three independent courses that jointly contribute to cumulative student learning objectives within the field of interfaith studies. Proposals should articulate these student learning objectives, how they fit within the field of interfaith studies, and corresponding assessment methods over the scope of the course sequence curriculum. Course sequences may function in the overall curriculum as either a major, minor, concentration, or certificate. While preexisting or modified existing courses can be incorporated into proposed course sequences, please take extra care to articulate how these courses contribute to the overall learning objectives of the course sequence in interfaith studies.

### *Use of Funds*

IFYC makes grants toward a range of programs at different financial levels. We expect that the entirety of the funds from IFYC grants under \$10,000 will go directly to project expenses. For

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

grants of \$10,000 or more, IFYC will approve up to 10% of the grant to go towards overhead costs. Please direct any questions about this practice to Calvin Taylor, [calvin@ifyc.org](mailto:calvin@ifyc.org).

### *Final Deliverable:*

The final deliverables to IFYC will be:

- The program proposal submitted to either your institution's curricular governing body or the academic officer that is responsible for approving the program;
- All syllabi that comprise the interfaith studies course sequence;
- Completion of a final evaluation of grant program.

## Project Overview and Eligibility

Overview: IFYC is offering grants of up to \$5,000 to be used to develop undergraduate course sequences- a major, minor, concentration, certificate, or a set of courses within the core curriculum.

Proposal Requirements: Applicants must complete an online form located at <http://bit.ly/ifycsg2020>. **We will begin accepting applications January 15, 2020, and the deadline is March 16, 2020.** Upon applying, applicants are required to submit the following materials **as a single package** to be considered for this grant:

### **1. A narrative that addresses the following (2-3 pages):**

- Your understanding of interfaith studies and, if applicable, how this relates to your institution's identity and mission;
- An assessment of your institution's existing interfaith curricula;
- The department in which the sequence is housed;
- A description of the process for how academic programs are approved;
- A description of the sequence itself, including a list of specific courses that will comprise the sequence;
- A description of how this sequence will be presented in promotional and marketing materials;
- A preliminary plan for identifying and assessing student learning objectives over the scope of the course sequence;
- Identification of at least four of the eight interfaith studies themes outlined above that courses in the sequence engage;
- An indication of any co-curricular interfaith programming on your campus that may be integrated as an element in your course sequence;

- A plan for the evaluation of the sequence at the end of the grant period;
  - Personal goals or objectives the project team has for incorporating this sequence into the curricular;
  - Any additional information that is pertinent to your application and institution.
- 2. A project information page that includes the following (1 page):**
- Project leaders, including the name and contact information of the principal project manager, as well as additional faculty members, administrators, and staff who will carry out the project (be sure to include their official job title);
  - Budget that describes how grant funds will be used. If applicable, the budget should also include any financial support offered by your institution for the project.
- 3. Letter of Support:** Applicants must include a letter of support from the academic officer responsible for approving the program. Applicants should also submit any additional letters of support from key administrators and/or faculty figures related to the project.

Eligibility: Faculty members at an accredited U.S. college or university. The principal project manager should be a full-time faculty member.

## Grant Terms and Expectations

### *Disbursement of Grant Funds*

IFYC will disperse grant funds after the grantee signs and returns the Memorandum of Agreement and attends a required orientation session.

### *Expectations*

If awarded a Course Sequence grant, the institution will first and foremost agree to work toward the establishment of an interfaith studies course sequence at their institution. Institutions will further agree to:

- Maintain communication with IFYC via email and individual phone calls;
- Whenever possible, attend remote networking opportunities with representatives of other grantee campuses in order to help create a network of institutions engaged in this field;
- Share all syllabi that comprise the interfaith studies course sequence with IFYC;
- Submit the proposal that will be submitted to your institution's governing body or academic officer that is responsible for approving the program;



- Attend **one** orientation session that will be scheduled at the beginning of the grant period with other grantees (principal project manager), **one** check-in session to be held toward the middle of the grant period (late winter 2021) (principal project manager), and schedule **one** 1-1 call with IFYC at any point during the grant period (inviting your institution's entire project team)

### *Questions*

IFYC staff members are available for consultation and feedback during the development of your proposal. Please contact **Calvin Taylor**, Program Manager, at [calvin@ifyc.org](mailto:calvin@ifyc.org) or 312.376.4786.

## 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.