Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) is pleased to announce grants of up to $1,000 for faculty at American colleges and universities to support the development of undergraduate courses that engage the field of interfaith/interreligious studies.

Grants are available during the spring and summer of 2016; fourteen awards total will be offered across these two grant periods. Proposals for spring grants are due on January 15th, 2016, with implementation from February-June 2016. Proposals for summer grants are due on April 29th, 2016, with implementation from May-September 2016.

Questions about the grants or application process are welcome and may be addressed to Kristi Del Vecchio, Academic Initiatives Associate, at kristi@ifyc.org or 312.573.8829.

The Emerging Field of Interfaith Studies
As religious diversity increases on college and university campuses and religion continues to play a prominent role in public affairs, many institutions are looking for holistic ways to foster interfaith cooperation and pluralism on campus. One of the emerging discussions within this work is how interfaith engagement can be addressed within the college classroom and if there might be a burgeoning interdisciplinary field that could be called interfaith studies. If there is indeed a growing field of interfaith studies, what are the learning outcomes of such a field, and what might it look like to develop courses that help students achieve those learning outcomes? How might faculty from disparate fields share theoretical insights and effective pedagogical practices?

In order to explore these questions and help establish this nascent field, IFYC is offering grants to encourage the development and implementation of undergraduate courses that address interfaith and/or interreligious studies. IFYC’s intention is to support and work directly with a community of scholars who engage this area of inquiry from across a variety of disciplines and institutional settings.

Project Guidelines
IFYC is offering fourteen grants of up to $1,000 to be used to create a new course – or revise a current course – that focuses on interfaith and/or interreligious studies. At the end of the grant period, we ask that grantees submit their new or revised syllabus.

For the purpose of these grants, IFYC offers the following working definition of “interfaith studies”:

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.¹

Building upon this working definition, IFYC has worked closely with faculty on a variety of campuses to establish interfaith studies programs. With generous support from the Teagle Foundation, in 2014 IFYC

administered seventeen grants to college and university campuses, who in turn created academic majors, minors, course sequences, and concentrations that centered on interfaith/interreligious studies. A number of these academic programs and their constituent syllabi shared similar student learning outcomes (SLOs), including the following themes:

1. **Religious Literacy**: Most syllabi emphasize the need to study both historical and contemporary religious or philosophical practices, beliefs, and communities. These facts and ideas (e.g. the five pillars of Islam, the difference between Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism, or historical occurrences in the Hebrew Bible) exemplify a baseline understanding of religious traditions.

2. **Experiential Learning**: Providing an opportunity for hands-on learning, a number of syllabi stress the value of learning alongside and among individuals who orient around religion differently, rather than about them exclusively in a classroom setting. This manifests concretely in site visits to houses of worship, service learning, or presentations in class from diverse visitors.

3. **Professional Relevance**: A number of syllabi directly consider the ways in which religious and philosophical diversity is present in professional and civic spaces. Through internships or other community-based projects, students gain the concrete knowledgebase and skillset needed to engage religious and philosophical diversity in a constructive way.

4. **Personal Reflection**: Alongside the desire to learn about and among individuals who orient around religion differently, students are often given the space to reflect upon their own worldview. In this regard, students are able to consider their capacity for interfaith leadership by reflecting upon their identity in relation to others.

5. **Intersectionality**: Although religious and philosophical identity is salient to interfaith studies courses, it is also important to consider its interconnections with race, class, political affiliation, ability, gender, sexuality, and other identity categories.

As the definition and contours of this emerging field continue to evolve, we expect grantee syllabi to both build upon and expand on these ideas. IFYC anticipates that the execution of those courses will bring grantees and IFYC into a mutually enriching conversation that further establishes the direction of this developing field.

For an example of an interfaith studies syllabus, please review the [Interfaith Literacy and Cooperation Sample Syllabus](#) resource located on IFYC’s website.

Please note that grants are not intended to fund the following activities:

- Routine course revision
- Travel (both domestic and international)
- Conference attendance or registration
- Other research, writing, or publishing costs

Faculty members from accredited universities or colleges in the US are eligible to apply for these grants.
Application Deadline and Funding Timeline
There are two grant periods: one that allows for course revision during the spring of 2016, and the other during the summer of 2016. IFYC anticipates that new or revised courses may be taught during the 2016-2017 academic year, but there are no formal requirements per the grant to teach the course within a specific timeframe. Relevant dates for both grant periods are listed below:

Spring 2016 Grants:
- Application materials due: January 15, 2016
- Selections made by IFYC and funds allocated: February 1, 2016
- Syllabus due to IFYC: June 30, 2016

Summer 2016 Grants:
- Application materials due: April 29, 2016
- Selections made by IFYC and funds allocated: May 16, 2016
- Syllabus due to IFYC: September 1, 2016

Application Requirements
Applicants should submit the following materials to be considered for this grant:

1. An online application located [here](http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2341490/IFYC-Curriculum-Development-Grant-Application), where applicants can expect to enter demographic information and answer the following narrative questions (300 words max per question):
   - What are you hoping students will take away from your new or revised course in interfaith studies?
   - What resources, methods, and materials do you find key to teaching interfaith studies? How is this different than a course in religious or theological studies?
   - A common feature of interfaith studies involves genuine opportunities for students to encounter religious or philosophical difference. In what ways would you hope to instill this in your new or revised course?
   - What questions, concerns, or reservations do you have about teaching in this area?
   - What personal goals or objectives do you have for teaching this course? In addition, if you have previous experience teaching interfaith understanding in the classroom, please describe it here.

2. In addition to submitting the online application, we require that applicants supply a letter of reference from their Department Chair, Provost, or Academic Dean. The letter can be uploaded when submitting the online form, or emailed to kristi@ifyc.org upon completion.

3. At the end of the grant period, IFYC requires grantees to submit a copy of the syllabus that has been created or revised. We may utilize these syllabi in our resources or in other IFYC-managed spaces, but credit will always be given to the author.

Questions
IFYC staff members are available for consultation and feedback during the development of your application. Please contact Kristi Del Vecchio, Academic Initiatives Associate, at kristi@ifyc.org or 312-573-8829.