

# The Home School

## Emotional Healing Within a Safe Online Community, Syllabus, Fall 2015

Welcome to Emotional Healing Within a Safe Online Community! I enjoyed meeting you all so much at orientation this past week at the campus in Eastern Long Island. It was fun to get to know each other as a group in person, wasn't it? My experience is that we all did a lot of work to establish trust and social safety – and peace – between us.



As you know, your group, the Young Adult group, is going to stick together as you progress through the Home School, even though we will be in different classes in different places around the globe. We will continue our work of emotional healing together, but now we're going to do it within an online community. I believe the work we do together in this course will change our lives – for good – forever!

The most important thing we'll be learning together – the primary objective – is *to collaboratively create, participate in and maintain a socially and emotionally safe online support group*. I'll be with you as we form our group for this mini-course, which lasts about five weeks. You will all go on from there, keeping your group together, and I'll pop in once in awhile to see how everything is going. When you've all matriculated and left the Home School, you may continue as a group in another format if you wish. I expect you'll decide that as you go along.

I know you are aware that this class is a prerequisite for every other class at the Home School, because that is the whole point, isn't it? To begin so we can continue our work of healing together. You each started out on your own individual plan, or modality, of healing, with your own support structure. Now we're going to go on with each other as another support structure, what we used to call way back in the 1970s a *support group*. Our group will support each other's growth within a community of emotional and social safety, learning to do so online.



**Grading:** This course will be graded like many video games: you will gain points for every part of the course you complete correctly. You'll start with zero, but you'll be able to accumulate points by completing assignments according to this rubric [\[provided later\]](#). If you try an assignment but don't complete it, or complete it incorrectly, you may fail that assignment but you'll be able to try it again until you do complete it correctly – and earn those points! The whole course will be worth 100 points, and there are five modules, so each mod will be worth up to 20 points. How the points break down further is explained next.



The goals, or objectives, for the modules are listed here, along with their respective points:

**Primary Objective of Emotional Healing Within a Safe Online Community:** *to collaboratively create, participate in and maintain a socially and emotionally safe online support group.*

**Supporting Objectives:**

<u>Module 1: What is Online Safety?</u>	<u>Points</u>
Navigate and utilize the Course Management System discussion board and dropbox	4
Practice Netiquette (online etiquette) in introductory posts	4
Describe what brings you here and your healing modality	4
Self-reflect on the first level of Bloom's Affective Domain	4
Post reflections on online safety	4
<u>Module 2: What is Social Safety?</u>	
Describe what social safety means to you	4
Describe your understanding of social and emotional learning	4
Self-reflect on Bloom's second level, Affective Domain	4
Analyze experiences on discussion board re: social safety	2
Recommend suggestions for greater online social safety	2
<u>Module 3: What is Emotional Safety?</u>	
Discuss what emotional safety means to you	4
Summarize social and emotional learning	4
Self-reflect on Bloom's third level, Affective Domain	4
Discuss emotional safety at home program or THS	2
Synchronous discussion: Recommendations for safety:	2
<u>Module 4: What is Healing?</u>	
Discuss what healing means to you	4
Reflect on how the brain and heart work together	4
Self-reflect on Bloom's fourth level, Affective Domain	4
Analyze how your healing modality is working	2
Recommend suggestions for improving healing modality	2
Discuss science behind stresses and joys of learning	4
<u>Module 5: Feeling and Healing: What is Fun?</u>	
Discuss if there's any fun on healing journey!	4
Reflect on fun and computer games and application to learning	4
Self-reflect on Bloom's fifth level, Affective Domain	4
Discuss whether you feel safe and supported in synchronous disc.	4
Create with multimedia a 5-minute recorded project combining Fun, feelings, and healing – or not!	<u>12</u>

Total points: 100

Don't worry about the repetitive nature of some of these objectives – this class will be anything but boring, I promise you! And if it is, my contract with you is that we *will fix it!*

**Learning Contract:** You heard me say *contract*? Well, this is the deal. You have already entered into a contract with The Home School. You signed up, arranged for payment, and registered with the school; and had already done the most important thing in our book: made a commitment to your own emotional healing. In return, The Home School has made a commitment to you, to facilitate your emotional healing within a supportive social structure and compassionate curriculum.

Now I would like us in this class to have a learning contract together, which consists of this: The second most important thing in our book is *Vegas Rules: What happens in our class stays in our class*. The success of our entire program depends on us all keeping everyone's deep personal expressions – and identities – private. And then, you do your work, express your thoughts and feelings, commit to upholding everyone's privacy, rack up your points, and learn how to have a socially safe online community together, and I will do my very level best to facilitate you doing so, and to have a rich, emotionally healing, trusting, and exciting class doing it. I will give you lots of feedback and will ask you for lots of feedback in return. Because we are growing this group; we are engineering it, creating it from scratch, starting *right now*.

I will sign this contract in the space below; if you agree to these terms, please also sign and date the contract, printing your name underneath the line. If you have changes you'd like to make, go ahead and add your own language, sign your initials in the margin of the page where you made your additions, and send it to me. If I agree with your modifications, I'll initial the changes, too, sign my name to it, and get a copy back to you. Thanks!

Space for modification:

**I agree to the terms described in the above Learning Contract:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ruth Virginia, Teacher

\_\_\_\_\_  
, Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Content:**

Readings, Videos: Readings will be articles that you will be able to find online, as with videos, and are for the most part short and sweet.

Video Games: We will be playing some educational video games, too. If you have any suggestions, I would love to stock up my online library!

Most of the content, or the information you will be absorbing and working with further, is in short, doable chunks. Writings will be short and sweet as well. The bulk of your time will be spent on the discussion board, communicating and building a trusting and trustworthy community .

Reflections, Self-Reflections: I will be asking you to think about the content you will be absorbing, and express your thinking to the class. I will also be asking you to feel, and to relate what you learn to your own life, *and then posting much of this writing to the class*. I recognize the risk in expressing feelings and personal information; I also recognize the reward. I will be checking in with you every week to see if you're feeling safe to express yourself online to the class. You and I will be having a continuing dialogue about this social and emotional safety, both individually and collectively. The risk we take in expressing ourselves to each other represents the strength we have as a group together by holding each other's feelings in trust and communicating in trustworthy ways.

Logistically, I expect self-reflections to be about a page long and postings to be a good-sized couple of paragraphs or so. I expect your writing to match the standards for internet writing set up in the forthcoming rubric, which are generally: Use proper Netiquette, spelling and grammar, citing others' work; and give substantive, quality feedback to your other classmates.

The Final Project will be a recorded (filmed, photographed, or audio-recorded) piece of work, about 5 minutes long or the equivalent, that reflects your emotional growth within the context of this class and its socially safe healing community.

The Schedule is pretty straightforward: There are five modules, and every module takes a week that starts on Monday morning at 9:00 and ends on Sunday at midnight (no overnights, please! I want you well-rested!) The exception is the Final Project, which you may carry over into Tuesday of the following week at 9:00 PM. These times are measured as Eastern Standard Time.

One of the beauties of online learning is that you can do a lot of the work at your own pace, as long as you participate in some of the online discussions at set times, so we can all, literally, be on the same page at the same time. Posting on our online discussion group, the *Safety Net*, also has a schedule:

### **Miscellaneous:**

Attendance: While there are obviously no strict attendance policies (as you can basically do your online work whenever it's convenient for you), I am pretty strict about attendance at the synchronous discussions, **which I expect everyone to attend at the same time**. These synchronous sessions are the only ways for us all to communicate together in real time and thus are important. They will be feedback sessions, when we all communicate together about how things are going. **The first one will be at the end of Mod 3, on Friday at 3:00. The second will be at the end of Mod 5 on the last day of class, also on Friday at 3:00.** I expect all of you to be online on our discussion board at those times. If you cannot make it, please let me know **in advance** and we will work it out. **There will be 2 and 4 points respectively for these sessions and, as attendance is mandatory, 5 points each will be taken off your total score if you miss either one without talking to me first.**

Emergency: If it turns out that you experience illness or some other emergency, please call me as soon as you can so we can work out the parameters and make sure you are still able get the most out of this class, and the class can get the most out of you. Everyone in it is precious and necessary!

Class Participation: I expect everyone in class to participate in all elements of the course, of course! If for some reason you cannot participate, please immediately email or call me using the contact info at the end of this syllabus. **Most modules have two posts a week, and these have definite deadlines: Tuesdays and Thursdays at 11:00 AM.** This is so everyone is "on the same page" at approximately the same time!

Late or Missing Assignments: I expect assignments to be handed in on time; however, I realize (from personal experience) that we cannot always be on time all of the time. Things happen. Accordingly, **assignments will receive half a point off for every day they are substantially late, meaning late by 12 hours or more.** On the other hand, since our grading system is about building up points and having a chance to try again, I recommend turning it around as quickly as possible and getting in your next try within that 12 hour grace period. If that doesn't work, contact me and we'll figure something out.

Academic Honesty: It turns out that academic honesty is totally as important in online learning as it is in any classroom. And in our class in particular, honesty of all sorts is crucial because it is the only way to build genuine trust. So please contact me if you have any questions about this super-important topic. I expect all of you to honestly deliver your own work. I will call you if I have any questions about your work on this level. I have ways of figuring ziss out!!!



Grading Criteria: Will be enumerated in the forthcoming **rubric**.

Accommodations: I believe everybody in this class understands about sometimes needing accommodations; in other words, needing extra time or a modification of an assignment or some other way of being let off the hook or doing something differently to accommodate differing learning needs. This is why The Home School exists! So if this is what's happening with you, please talk to me. Social and emotional safety has everything to do with having our needs met, and if you feel like you need to communicate with somebody about getting your needs met, please communicate with me. Thanks.

Computer Center: You saw our Computer Center at the campus, right? It is open from 7:00 in the morning until 11:00 at night. You can call them within these hours at **800/555-1212** or email them at [computerhelp@THS.edu](mailto:computerhelp@THS.edu) if you need any help at all with all this online learning stuff.

**My Contact Info:** Ruth Virginia, [Ruth@PeaceWorx.net](mailto:Ruth@PeaceWorx.net), 631/555-1212, 9-9.

**Emergency Contact Info:** Psychological Support: 800/555-1212. Please call me immediately if you are experiencing any overwhelming challenges.

