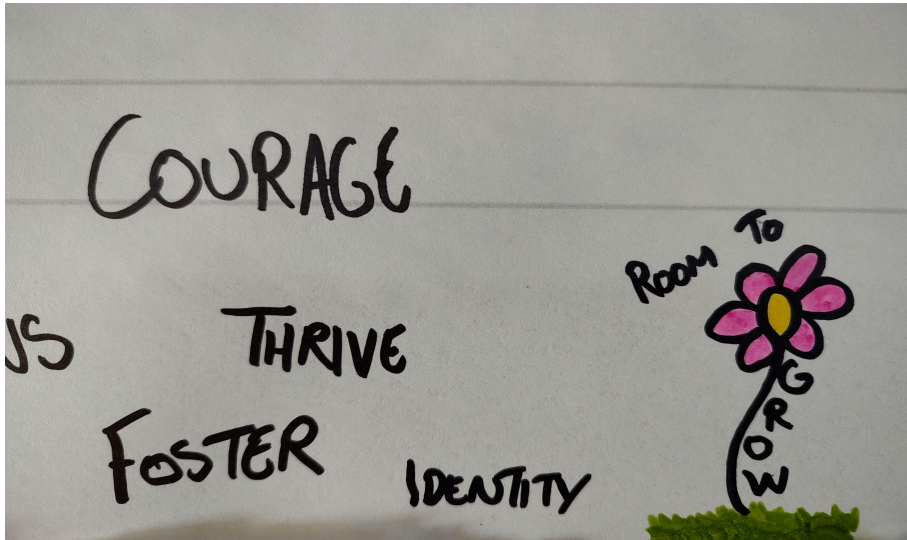


## Introduction to Dare To Be Me - 2024-2025: Syllabus



*Art by Megan Cane (2023-24 DTBM cohort)*

**Instructor:** Ms. Anja Pfeffer ([she/her](#))    **Assistant Instructor:** Solomon Lew ([he/him](#))  
**Community Partner:** Amy Rosenthal ([she/her](#)) and her dogs Lewis & Ruthie  
**Email:** [apfeffer@ossu.org](mailto:apfeffer@ossu.org), [slewraskin@ossu.org](mailto:slewraskin@ossu.org)    **School Phone:** (802) 472-6511 x2707  
**Office Hours:** Support Block or by appointment after school    **Website:** [www.daretobeme.org](http://www.daretobeme.org)

### **Course Description:**

Dare To Be Me (DTBM) is a pedagogical philosophy and practice that invites students to embark on a personal and educational journey of courage, growth, belonging, and expression. It aims to foster *aliveness* through exploration and dialogue grounded in deep connection to place, to each other, and to one's full self. Students engage in a process of self-discovery and empowerment centered on holistic wellbeing so they can expand their comfort zones and become the best version of themselves.

As its title suggests, the focus of DTBM is on being rather than doing. By blending time in Nature with physical exercise, mindfulness, quiet introspection, meaningful reading, in-depth conversations and creative writing, students learn to understand themselves better and develop the courage to lean into who they want to become. DTBM addresses the whole heart-body-mind system, therefore growing students' ability to be present, curious, grateful, compassionate, adaptable and resilient even in times of adversity. Simultaneously, students learn to find and own their voice, identify their passions, advance their emotional literacy, and begin to articulate and embody their values. As a result, they leave this class with essential life and transferable skills that will complement and enhance their learning in all other academic subject areas.

**Guiding Question:** *How can I become my best self both as a learner and as a person?*

**Course Format:** The class will run for one quarter of the school year during Block 6. Lots of time will be spent walking on the Hazen trails and engaging in a mixture of indoor and outdoor activities that are designed to make students come alive, build character, and grow their sense of overall wellbeing. At the

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same time, they will engage in courageous conversations about relevant topics and learn to express themselves reflectively and creatively. The four cornerstones of the Dare To Be Me philosophy and practice - Self-Expression, Belonging, Growth, and Courage - will guide us as we aim to answer the guiding question “*How can I become my best self as a learner and as a person?*” both individually and collectively.

### General Course Outline & Topics of Discussion and Reflection:

Time Period	Theme	Key Questions
Weeks 1 - 3	Self-Expression (“Me”)	1. Where do I come from? / What is my story? 2. What matters the most to me?
Weeks 4 - 5	Belonging (“Be”)	1. When and where do I feel like I belong? 2. On whose shoulders do I stand?
Weeks 6 - 7	Growth (“To”)	1. Whom do I admire, and why? 2. What kind of person do I want to be?
Weeks 8 -9	Courage (“Dare”)	1. What are issues (local and/or global) that I care about? 2. How can I expand my comfort zone in order to make a positive difference?

*Disclaimer: This course outline is preliminary and subject to change based on the needs of the class and the discretion of the teacher.*

### Proficiencies

(Adapted from: [Vermont Portrait of a Graduate](#))

The following proficiencies will be addressed and evaluated throughout this course:

#### LEARNER AGENCY:

I develop my own voice and the ability to use it in a variety of settings.

#### GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP:

I recognize that the world is increasingly complex and interdependent.

#### ACADEMIC PROFICIENCY:

I acknowledge my growth and identify possibilities for continued learning.

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## WELLBEING:

I develop strategies and interpersonal skills to manage stress, promote mental health and cultivate positive relationships.

## CRITICAL THINKING & PROBLEM-SOLVING:

I participate in a collaborative problem-solving and decision-making process.

## COMMUNICATION:

I communicate effectively using oral, written and nonverbal strategies and take into consideration multiple points of view.

## **Student Responsibilities & Assessment:**

The grading for this course will be **proficiency-based** (1-4).

### **1. Daily Class Work (60% of your grade)**

You are expected to participate in all activities, discussions and projects with a curious mind and an open heart. You will reflect regularly on your effort, progress, and risk taking, while also tracking your skills learned and overall takeaways from each learning opportunity. These reflections will serve as the foundation for a 1:1 consultation with me to decide which grade is an accurate reflection of your work at the end of the trimester.

### **2. Summative Project (40% of your grade)**

Throughout the trimester, we will be working on one main project called “Life is a Gift Box” (developed by Anja Pfeffer). This project is a culmination of the four major DTBM themes and will allow you to creatively dive into the key questions mentioned above. If you are absent from a class (no matter whether it is an excused or unexcused absence), it is your responsibility to make up any missed work (see Schoology). The project will be graded on completion, creativity, thoughtfulness, and effort.

## **Classroom Materials**

Please bring the following to each class:

- Weather appropriate clothing (Please see me if you need anything. Also, you are welcome to keep an extra pair of dry shoes in my classroom. )
- Water Bottle
- Writing Utensils (pen, pencil, colored pencils or markers)
- Journal (will be handed out at the beginning of the school year)
- Computer
- *If you have a medical prescription: Epi-pen and/or Inhaler (Please let Ms. Pfeffer know.)*

## **Additional Words of Caution:**

With the amount of time we will be spending in the woods, there is a good chance of encountering ticks, especially as the seasons change. Please **do a thorough tick check when you get home every day!!**

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## PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN:

My parents / guardians and I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understood this course outline for the Introduction to Dare To Be Me (DTBM) class. I hereby agree to abide by all the policies.

I can be included in photographs and videos. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

I can participate in all outdoor activities. \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student / Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent / Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent / Guardian

## Primary Parent/Guardian Contact Information:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address

Preferred Contact (please circle one):

Phone

Email

ParentSquare