

College Seminar for the Class of 2026

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Welcome to the College Counseling Seminar! We are looking forward to working with you this semester. While the early phases of your college search process will involve individual meetings with your college counselor, the seminar complements these conversations by addressing important topics that are relevant to the entire junior class. The seminar will meet once per 6-day cycle in January, then pause and resume after spring break in April.

The College Seminar is a course, we take attendance, please be on time. If you have to miss your assigned session, please speak to your college counselor (in advance) about attending another section. Each section of college seminar is taught by one of the college counselors, not necessarily your individual counselor. On occasion another counselor might sub in. We are all here to help you, even if your individual counselor has a deeper understanding of your specific process.

Our goal is for the seminar to be engaging, interactive, and—most of all—helpful to you. With those goals in mind, we ask that you embrace the following habits:

- ❖ **Be CURIOUS:** We hope you approach the college process with an inquisitive spirit and a wish to learn about the many exciting options that are available to you.
- ❖ **Be OPEN-MINDED:** Please be ready to change your mind and challenge your assumptions.
- ❖ **Be RESOURCEFUL:** We will introduce you to a wide range of excellent tools that will help you gather good information and navigate thoughtfully throughout the college process.
- ❖ **Be ENGAGED:** We hope you invest fully in the experience and feel as if you are in charge of your college process.
- ❖ **Be SUPPORTIVE:** We hope that the seminar provides a space where you can both offer and ask for your classmates' support.
- ❖ **Be ORGANIZED:** Do your best to stay organized during the College Seminar and throughout your college search! Your college counselor will gladly advise you. All handouts (including this one) will be available in 2025 College Counseling Google Classroom.

(next page for topics by session and dates)

Overview of Each Junior Seminar Session

Session 1:

January 7-14

Welcome to College Seminar! What will you have accomplished when you complete your college search? How will you get there? The first session highlights the major steps of the college search (self reflection, researching schools, building a thoughtful list, completing college applications, selecting a college) by acknowledging the end goal and recognizing the steps needed to get there. We examine many of the terms used in the college search process. Students learn the significance of features such as different sizes and types of schools, as well as the variety of college curriculums.

Session 2:

January 15-23

In Session 2 students begin outlining individual college criteria. We also introduce the idea that a college's goals for admitting and enrolling new students varies by the type of institution, its mission and goals. We talk about tools and methods for researching colleges and understanding how to make a list. Utilizing Scoir, college websites, and additional resources, students learn what options are available to determine if a college meets their personalized criteria.

PAUSE - No Seminar from late January through spring break. We resume when we return.

Session 3:

March 31 - April 7

What matters to colleges in their admission process? If the previous session is about how students determine if a college is a good fit for them, then this session is about how colleges determine if a student is a good fit for the school. Students will learn about what counts in college admissions and why. Emphasis and understanding is placed on the parts of the search process students control: essays, demonstrating interest, interacting with colleges, etc.

Session 4:

April 8-15

How do colleges make decisions? Students take part in a case study, reviewing sample applications and role-playing as an admission officer. Students see the impact of each part of the application.

Session 5:

April 16-23

How does this apply to me? This session reviews how each seminar session relates to the steps of the college search and the end goal. Students will reflect on the admissions committee exercise from the previous session then explore steps to connect what matters to you individually, with ways to express who you are to colleges but before you apply and when you apply.

- How do I pursue opportunities to “know colleges” (to inform my research and applications
- What steps can I take to help colleges “know me”?
- How to use the personal essay and other writing in applications to convey who you are.
- What steps should I complete this spring to be on track in my college search?