Academic Profile 2026-2027

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Acting Head of School: Natalie Stothart
Director of College Counseling: Ann Leslie
Dean of Teaching & Learning: Katherine Macro

Independent day & boarding school for college-bound girls

#1 Best Private High School in the Buffalo area

MISSION STATEMENT

Buffalo Seminary prepares a diverse group of young women to be engaged scholars and citizens, proud to shape society rather than be controlled by it, and ready to live and lead with honor, courage, and confidence.

Buffalo Seminary is a selective, nonsectarian, independent day and boarding school for college-bound girls. Founded in 1851, it is a school steeped in traditions and simultaneously forward thinking.

Enrollment in grades 9 though 12 is 140: 133 day and 7 residential students. 100% of graduates are accepted to four-year colleges. 54% of students receive need-based financial aid. 75% of faculty hold advanced degrees.

Our vibrant international community includes students from Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Germany, Kenya, Rwanda, and Spain. International students are fully immersed in our academic and extracurricular program; therefore, we do not require students to enroll in an ENL program, though we do provide academic and social support.

SAT/ACT Scores: In light of the test optional policy adopted by the majority of colleges and universities, Buffalo Seminary is not reporting aggregate student scores.

SEM PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Science Curricular Sequence: Beginning in fall 2025, SEM launched a new high school science pathway designed to give students a strong foundation across all major scientific disciplines — biology, chemistry, and physics — by graduation. Central to this program was a new, interdisciplinary 9th grade course, Integrated Biology/Chemistry, which is required for all incoming students. This innovative course sets the stage for advanced science opportunities at SEM and beyond. In 10th and 11th grade, students choose from a range of intermediate or AP-level science courses, including electives. The pathway reflects SEM's commitment to academic rigor and science literacy, with a graduation requirement of three years of lab science plus three additional trimesters of math or science.

Capstone Program: Before she graduates, each SEM student devotes herself to a self-directed project of her own design. With a foundation of research skills, each SEM junior spends a trimester reflecting on her passions and talents, narrowing down her research question and planning the details of her Capstone project, all under the guidance of a multidisciplinary team of faculty. As a senior, guided by a faculty mentor, she will complete and share her project, which includes a research-based piece of academic writing and a curated body of original work demonstrating a nuanced understanding of her topic to be presented in an academic symposium.

Harkness Learning: As a college preparatory program, Harkness discussions are a vital part of our teaching and learning. Each of our humanities classrooms contains a classic Harkness table to facilitate a true discussion: a seminary-style, student-led exploration of ideas through open-ended questions and multiple perspectives. Seated at a Harkness table, no girl is unheard and a lifetime of civil discourse is nurtured.

SEMFlex: Stemming from the varied interests and wide talents of SEM students, our vision is focused on reimagining when, where, and how learning happens in order to design a personalized, challenging, and transformational learning environment. From the arts to athletics to specialized internships, students competing at a high level in their chosen field need the flexibility to access their academics in an alternative way. SEMFlex meets that need by a unique program that affords our students the most flexibility in their schedule while continuing to provide rigorous academic instruction that allows them to graduate with a SEM diploma.

Advanced Placement Policy & Scores: Students who are enrolled in an AP class are required to sit for the AP exam. Students must receive either teacher or department chair approval to enroll in an AP and/or honors course. We cap the number of AP courses a student can take at 3 per year unless the student has received special permission from the Dean of Students. In May 2026, 76 students sat for 121 total exams.

Class of 2026: 46 students
11 AP Scholars with Distinction, 7 AP Scholars with Honors, 14 AP Scholars

Course Designations: AP (Advanced Placement); H (Honors) - Courses designed to provide more intensive study for students of superior ability and interest. These courses are weighted. No Letter Designation - College Preparatory course.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

English - 4 years
History - 3 years (must include U.S. History)
Foreign Language - 3 years (through advanced level)
Mathematics - Students must complete 3 consecutive year-long mathematics courses in high school.
Science - 3 years of lab sciences, including Integrated Biology/Chemistry and either Intermediate or AP Physics
+ An additional 3 trimesters of either math or science; does not have to be a lab science
Fine Arts - 5 classes

- Students need a minimum of 77 credits to graduate.
- SEM is on a trimester system.
- All attempted courses appear on a student's transcript.
- English electives, with the exception of AP English Language & Composition and Foundational Junior English are open to all juniors and seniors.
- Students are required to volunteer 10 hours of community service per year.
- SEMFlex and Transfer students' requirements may differ.

SEQUENTIAL COURSE OFFERINGS FOR THE 2026-27 SCHOOL YEAR

GRADE 9

English 1: Community & Self
History 1: Civilizations & Civics
Geometry (*H)
Integrated Biology/Chemistry (*H)
Intro/Intermediate French
Intro/Intermediate Spanish
Fine Arts: Freshman Arts Eye
Health & Leadership
U GO SEM Fitness
Computer Science: Coding
Seminar: Global Citizens, Systems in Engineering

GRADE 10

English II: American Literary Expressions (*H)
History II: United States History (*AP)
Intermediate Algebra (*H)
Intermediate/AP Biology (*H)
Intermediate/AP Chemistry (*H)
Conceptual Physics/Intermediate Physics
Biology
*Integrated Biology/Chemistry (*H)
Intermediate/Advanced French
Intermediate/Advanced Spanish
Fine Arts Electives
Computer Science Electives
Health & Leadership
U GO SEM Fitness

*For the class of 2028 only

GRADE 11

English III: Exploring the Literary World
AP English Literature & Composition
History III: The World-Patterns of Change
AP World History
AP Human Geography
Pre-Calculus (*H)
Intermediate/AP Biology (*H)
Intermediate/AP Chemistry (*H)
Conceptual/Intermediate/AP Physics
Advanced French/French Electives
AP French
Advanced Spanish/ Spanish Electives
AP Spanish
Junior Capstone
Fine Arts Electives
Computer Science Electives
Health & Leadership
U GO SEM Fitness

GRADE 12

English IV: Electives
History IV: Electives
AP Government
AP Human Geography
AP African American Studies
Introduction to Calculus
AP Calculus AB
AP Statistics (OSG)
Science Electives
AP Chemistry
AP Biology
Conceptual/Intermediate/AP Physics
Foreign Language Electives
AP French
AP Spanish
Senior Capstone
Fine Arts Electives
Computer Science Electives
Health & Leadership
U GO SEM Fitness

*(*H) Course is also offered at the Honors level*
Students who are language exempt are placed in a year-long learning support course.
Students have the opportunity to take additional courses through One Schoolhouse at any grade level.

ELECTIVE COURSES 2026-27

English: Autobiography, Existential Literature, Femininity in Literature, Ghosts in Literature, Greek Drama, Harlem Renaissance Literature, History of Pop Culture, Literature of the World Wars, Modern & Contemporary Poetry, Monsters in Literature, Science Fiction & Society

Computer Science: Computer Science, Computer Science: App Design, Computer Science: Web Design, Cybersecurity, Python Programming, OSG course options

Foreign Language: Arte y Memoria Histórica - Art History, Cinema Latinoamericano - Latin American Culture in Movies, La Actualidad - Current Events, Bon Appetit, L'Actualite - Current Events, La Culture Francophone au Cinema - French Culture in Movies

Science: Astronomy: Solar System, Astronomy: Space Missions & Aliens, Women in Science & Math Who Changed History, Agronomy 1: Genetics and Agricultural Efficiency, Agronomy 2: Sustainability and Agriculture, Agronomy 3: Food Science and Agriculture

Visual Arts: Advanced Drawing, Art & Activism 1, Basic Painting, Foundations in Abstraction, Foundations: Women in Art, Graphic Print & Design, Illustration, Intro to Drawing, Intro to Photography, Mixed Media Mash-up, Print Making, Portrait Drawing, Public Art: Community Mural (full-year course), Representations in Art

History: History of Pop Culture, Muckrakers, The World Wars

Performing Arts: Absurdist Drama, Dead Playwrights, Intro to Acting Shakespeare, Living Playwrights, Playin' with a Playwright, Puppetry, Theatrical Production, Composing/Song Writing, Elements of Music, Ensemble, Foundations in Film Music, Glee, Intro to Ukelele, Voice, Women in Music

Mathematics: Financial Algebra (A,B,C)

GRADING SCALE

A+ 97-100	B+ 87-89	C+ 77-79	D 65-69
A 93-96	B 83-86	C 73-76	F 64>
A- 90-92	B- 80-82	C- 70-72	

Merit Roll:

Earned by students averaging 3.33 (B+) or greater (with no grade lower than C+)

Honor Roll:

Earned by students averaging 3.67 (A-) or greater (with no grade lower than B)

High Honor Roll:

Earned by students averaging 4.33 (with no grade lower than A-)

*16% of students earned Merit Roll: 37% of students earned Honor Roll: 8% of students earned High Honor Roll

Students are only awarded these honors at the end of the year based on their final grades. For this purpose alone, grade point averages are calculated on a 4-point scale, with added weight given to Honors and Advanced Placement courses. By policy, SEM students are not ranked.

COLLEGE MATRICULATION

Over the five-year period from 2022-2026, students of the Buffalo Seminary have matriculated at the following colleges:

University of Alabama
University of Alaska, Fairbanks
University at Albany
Allegheny College
American University
Amherst College
Bard College
Barnard College
Bates College
Bennington College
Bentley University
Binghamton University
Boston College
Boston University
Brandeis University
Brown University
Bryn Mawr College
University at Buffalo
UC, Irvine
UC, Riverside
Canisius University
Case Western Reserve University
Chapman University
College of Charleston
Chatham University
Cleveland Institute of Art
Colby College
Colgate University
University of Colorado, Boulder
Colorado School of Mines
Columbia University
University of Connecticut
Cornell University
Daemen University
University of Dayton
Drexel University
Duquesne University
D'Youville University
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
Emerson College
Fordham University
George Washington University
Georgia State University
University of Georgia
University of Guelph
Hamilton College
Hobart and William Smith Colleges
Howard University
Ithaca College
Jacksonville University
John Carroll University
Johnson & Wales University
Kenyon College
Keuka College
Lafayette College
Lasell University
Loyola University, Chicago
Marist University
McDaniel College
Mercyhurst University
Michigan State University
University of Michigan
MIT
Morgan State University
Mount Holyoke College
Muhlenberg College
New York University
Niagara College
Niagara University
Northeastern University
Norwich University
Nova Southeastern University
Oberlin College
Paul Smith's College
Pennsylvania State University
University of Pittsburgh
Pratt Institute
Regis College
RIT
Roberts Wesleyan College
University of Rochester
Rutgers University
Saint Joseph's University
Sarah Lawrence College
University of Scranton
Seattle University
Skidmore College
University of Southern California
St. Bonaventure University
St. John's University
St. John Fisher University
St. Lawrence University
St. Louis University, Madrid
St. Michael's College
SUNY Brockport
SUNY Buffalo State
SUNY Cortland
SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
SUNY Fredonia
SUNY Geneseo
SUNY New Paltz
SUNY Oswego
SUNY Plattsburgh
SUNY Purchase
SUNY Stony Brook University
Swarthmore College
Syracuse University
Temple University
University of Tennessee, Knoxville
University of Toronto
Towson University
Trinity College, Dublin
Tulane University
University of St Andrews
Utica University
Vassar College
University of Vermont
Villa Maria College
Villanova University
University of Virginia
Virginia Tech
University of Waterloo
Wellesley College
Western New England University
Williams College
University of Wisconsin
Wittenberg University
Wofford College
Xavier University
Xavier University of Louisiana

ACCREDITED BY: NYSAIS

MEMBER OF: ICGS, The Association of Boarding Schools, TABS, SBSA, NAIS