



ACADEMY  
*for* JEWISH  
RELIGION

# **SENIOR HANDBOOK**

**ACADEMIC YEAR**

**2020 / 2021**

**5781 / תשפ"א**

**28 Wells Avenue**

**YONKERS, NEW YORK 10701**

**AJRSEM.ORG**

Dear Senior,

Congratulations on reaching this stage in your years of study at AJR! You have worked hard to accomplish so much. This year will be full of transitions and the accompanying emotions. There will be relief as you envision the reality of attaining your goal. There will be a powerful awareness that you are experiencing each aspect of the school year for the last time as a student. There may be some anxiety as you head out the academic door to assume your place as a fully ordained member of the clergy. It is an exciting, tender, thrilling, sentimental, vulnerable and extraordinary year ahead.

We know that we are living in strange times, and that you didn't imagine that your senior year would be during a pandemic. All of us on staff will do our best to make your senior year a positive experience and your ordination memorable.

This Handbook contains important and detailed information about your status as a senior and your obligations as an ordinee. Please read it carefully as there is information that is helpful and essential. It is important that you adhere to the information and the dates outlined and that you sign and return the Letter of Agreement (last page) to the AJR office by Monday, October 19, 2020.

We are dedicated to making this year, your ordination, and your transition into the field meaningful and stress-free. Your cooperation will contribute to making that a reality. *Mazel tov* as you embark on this year. We are proud of you.

*Kol tuv*, The AJR Staff and Administration.

## A Personal Welcome from ARC

Shalom AJR Friends,

I am so pleased to be invited to write these words of welcome and support to you – as you embark on your final year of studies to formally become a rabbi or cantor for the Jewish people. At this point in time, you have had many experiences as you have made your way through the maze of study of Talmud and Torah, *nusah* and trope, the history of our people, the dynamics of our communities, the healing power of presence and prayer, and the wonderful rhythm of our Jewish year. You will be putting the finishing touches on Master's Projects and recitals. You will be checking off those final ritual skills from your lists. Your congregations or communities of your student placement will be preparing to celebrate with you. In the process, you have become a better listener – to the people around you and, hopefully, to yourself.

Listen carefully as you make your way through the coming year. What is important to you? What will you carry with you into your future? And how can the Association of Rabbis and Cantors be a resource to you? Each of our members has stood where you stand at this time. Each of us has looked ahead and thought – OMG, this is for real! Please know that we are here to help you with your questions and concerns as you think about what your future can hold.

Upon your ordination, we hope that you will consider joining ARC and receiving the benefit of our continued community, support and professional offerings, including a pension plan and opportunities for continuing education. Membership in ARC has eased the way for many members to participate in local and state

rabbinical boards and receive their benefits as well. Of importance for most members is that only the AJR alumni who are ARC members are eligible for continued placement services.

The other focus of our alumni and professional association is on the Academy and its students. ARC seeks to support and further the interests of AJR through financial contributions, through gifts and services for students and through participation in committees and task forces at AJR.

Dues for the first year after your ordination are \$100. Full membership, including placement privileges, is \$360 a year for subsequent years. Upon joining, you will be given access to the reserved sector of our website [www.thearconline.org](http://www.thearconline.org).

I stand with more than 120 members of the ARC as we hold out our hands in friendship and support and encouragement to each of you, wishing you much success in the coming year.

Please feel free to contact me if I can be helpful in any way.

*Kol Tuv,*

*Enid*

Rabbi Enid C. Lader  
Former President, ARC

[eclader@aol.com](mailto:eclader@aol.com) 216-407-1306

## SENIOR STANDING FOR ORDINATION STUDENTS

### A. Requirements for Senior Standing

Upon entering the senior year, students must have fulfilled all but 28 credits, completed their proficiency exams, have significant work done on their Master's Projects, and be in good standing financially.

In addition, each student must meet criteria of personal suitability for the cantorship or rabbinate. Our program of training culminates with institutional *semikhah* conferred upon the candidate by the Academy in the presence of a witnessing *Beit Din*. In order to be able to ordain a candidate, the Academy must feel certain that the candidate's ways of interaction with others are safe and well-balanced. This decision will be informed by:

- the manner in which a student interacts within the AJR community;
- feedback from AJR faculty and advisors;
- feedback from colleagues and congregants at worksites; and/or
- direct discussion with the student.

The decision to ordain any candidate will be made by the Senior Administration. Someone who is determined to be unprepared in any of the areas delineated above will not be ordained.

## ORDINATION REQUIREMENTS

### A. Status Interview

During the Spring trimester prior to the anticipated senior year, the student will have a formal interview with a member of the Senior Administration to review status in regard to ordination requirements and readiness for Senior status.

## B. Completion of Examinations & Comprehensives

All examinations and comprehensives must be completed by September 1st of the academic year in which ordination is expected. If a student fails a comprehensive examination, a determination will be made by the Dean as to whether the exam should be retaken or whether alternate coursework should be done in its stead. Retakes of comprehensive examinations must be completed by the first week of January of the expected year of ordination. Based on the results of the exam, the decision may be made that the student will need to put off ordination for a year or more. In extreme cases, if multiple exams are failed, or if exams are failed multiple times, it may be determined that the student is not eligible for ordination.

For each of the written exams four hours will be allowed. Some students find they need all that time and others find they need much less time.

For each of the oral exams, the initial testing time will be 20 minutes in the presence of two testers. Students will be asked to translate and explain passages from anywhere in the texts for that exam. After 20 minutes, the student will be asked to briefly step out to allow the two testers to confer. The student will then either be told that they have passed, have failed, or that another 10 minutes of testing will be required – followed by another brief conference by the testers and a final determination of pass or fail.

## C. Master's Project

Seniors who have not completed their Master's Project as part of the M.A. program must produce a Master's Project as outlined in the section, "Master's Projects & Thesis Guidelines" found in the addendum to this Handbook. Topic and mentor must be chosen and approved by June 15th of the academic year prior to Ordination. The final draft must be submitted to the faculty by Wednesday December 2nd. After final editing and approval, the

student has the option and is encouraged to present the thesis before students, faculty and administration. Presentation dates should be arranged with Rabbi Jeff Hoffman.

#### D. Senior Practicum

Senior cantorial students must present a senior practicum as outlined in the academic Catalog. While preparations for senior practicum are similar to regular student practica, the graduating cantorial student will have forty minutes for the practicum and has flexibility in choosing selections based on a theme or particular subject.

#### E. Ritual Skills

Ritual Skills requirements must be completed by the end of the first trimester of the senior year. Specific ritual skills requirements are outlined in the Ritual Skills Handbook, which also provides a description of the requirements for each skill.

#### F. Financial Obligations

All financial obligations to the Academy must be settled by April 5, 2021 (students on payment plans should make their final payment by this date) and acknowledgment of any debt for student loans must be filed with the administrative office.

Costs related to senior year and ordination are as follows:

Senior Ordination Fee - \$950

Master's Project Mentor Fee - \$300

### **SENIOR SEMINAR**

Senior Seminar explores the process of transitioning from identity as a student to identity as clergy and also considers important issues for new clergy such as self-care, spiritual growth, and setting boundaries. Senior Seminar allows students who are soon to be ordained to share their experiences and ideas with one another. Senior Seminar is also a place where students receive important information about ordination.

Senior Seminar takes place over four half-day sessions and attendance is required.

The dates for Senior Seminar for the 5781 academic year will be determined based upon faculty and student availability.

## **PLACEMENT FOR SENIORS**

During this year, the placement office will work with you to enhance your employment opportunities. Please make an appointment in the Fall with Cantor Michael Kasper to review your resume and credentials and to create a strategy so that you are well positioned for the job search.

## **ORDINATION**

The format and structure of the ordination ceremony will be determined by the Senior Administration. Changes in the customs of the Academy for Jewish Religion ordination ceremony will be fully discussed with the Academy for Jewish Religion community.

1. Female rabbinical ordinees may choose to use either Rav or Rabbah as their Hebrew title on the *semikhah* documents. All students will use Rabbi as their English title.
2. At present, each ordinee is allotted 2½ minutes after their ordination, which may be used for teaching, musical presentation, or personal remarks. This 2½ minute limit applies to both cantorial and rabbinical ordinees. Seniors must submit the text of their presentation two weeks prior to ordination. Candidates for cantorial ordination must submit the musical selection they will be performing at ordination by January of their senior year.
3. Each senior may choose the four participants in their own ordination. There will be one Presenter and three members of the witnessing *Beit Din*. Three members of this group must be a part of the Academy for Jewish Religion



community – that is members of the faculty (who have taught at AJR within the past five years), alumni, or a current member of the Board of Trustees.

4. The members of the *Beit Din* must have received a rabbinical or cantorial ordination (or cantorial investiture) acceptable to the Academy for Jewish Religion. The *Beit Din* for a rabbinical student must be comprised of rabbis. We encourage cantorial students to choose a *Beit Din* comprised of three cantors. If a student desires, one member of the *Beit Din* for a cantorial student may be a rabbi.
5. The Presenter will introduce the candidate for ordination using formal text prepared by the Administration. This is the ordinee's formal introduction as a Jewish professional and, therefore, this role should be given to someone with standing in the Jewish professional community or in relationship with the Jewish professional community. In our new format, the presenter's introduction will be sung. We urge you to choose someone who will be able to liturgically sing a liturgical text in Hebrew. (That does not mean that they need to sing in a cantorial fashion, but rather just that they will have comfort with the format).
6. Ordination attire consists of a black robe and *tallit*. In keeping with the solemnity of the occasion and to create uniformity, we encourage you to wear the *kippah*, *atarah* and *kanfot* given to you by ARC and the Student Association. In addition, you are encouraged to wear an academic hood from the school you earned your highest degree from. More information on this will be discussed during the Spring trimester.

## **ORDINATION TIMETABLE**

In order to ensure that the ordination process goes smoothly and culminates in the joyful and spiritual event that it should be, it is imperative that the information and documentation outlined below is provided by you and that the deadlines for submission are strictly adhered to.

***The deadline for submitting all information is January 14th, 2021 except where January 4th or another deadline is noted.***

This allows you to take advantage of the Winter break to make the necessary contacts and to gather the information needed. The office and administration need the time to review, format and approve the material for the Ordination Journal. It is recommended that the material be submitted earlier **and January 14th is a firm deadline.**

### **Ordination Journal**

A word about invitations and Journal tributes:

Ordination is a communal event for AJR – for families, students, alumni, the board of trustees, community dignitaries and Jewish leaders. It is a celebratory highlight of the year and it is a time when the talents of our ordinees and the special character of AJR are showcased. We would like to share this experience with as many people as possible and, therefore, it is one of the reasons we stress the importance of your invitation and address lists.

The Ordination Journal is more than simply a program. Above all, it is a keepsake of messages from people who want to pay tribute to you. This past year the journal was a virtual journal with hard copies made only for honorees and ordinees. We will make the decision this year as to whether to continue with a virtual journal this year as well.

The Journal is also one of AJR's most valuable promotional tools. Through the essays written by you and your presenters, people are impressed with the histories of our graduates and with the institution that produces this kind of unique clergy.

Equally important are the much needed funds raised by our collective participation in the Journal. The Journal serves as a vital annual fundraiser for AJR and ordination is your opportunity to contribute to this effort and to help AJR with promotion and pride of place.

In order to reach a wide community of invitees and facilitate the preparation of the Ordination Journal, we need your guest contact information, including email address. Email addresses are used to follow up with reminders as Journal ad deadlines approach. We have extensive experience with how much people appreciate these reminders.

***The following items are due January 4, 2021:***

## **Hebrew and English Names**

Your Hebrew and English names will be on the invitation and on the *semikhah* document. Please submit your Hebrew and English name/s exactly as you wish them to appear on the *semikhah* document and on the invitation. If you want your name to appear differently on the invitation than on the certificate, please note that. The *semikhah* certificates are custom made, so please take the time to confirm the spelling of your Hebrew name.

## **Approved List of Your Beit Din and Presenter**

Please email the list of your *beit din* to the AJR office with the following information for each member of your *beit din* and your presenter: title, name, mailing address, daytime contact number, and email address.

Please confirm with each potential *beit din* member and with your presenter that they are available on the date of ordination. All *beit din* members and presenters will be contacted separately by the AJR office with detailed instructions for the day. The presenter will also be contacted about the piece they will be asked to write for the journal.

***The following items are due by January 14th, 2021:***

## **Mailing List**

Your mailing lists help AJR determine the quantity of invitations needed. AJR will mail any quantity of hard copy invitations.

*Please submit your mailing list in an Excel file only with separate*

cells for titles, last names, first names, street address, city, state, zip, phone number and email address. **The office cannot do this for you**, so please seek assistance if necessary. Please include email addresses so we can send an electronic invitation and Journal reminders. Please indicate invitees who should receive email only invitations, if any.

**Please do not include on your list** any member of the AJR board, alumni, staff, faculty or students as they are already included on the AJR invitation list. Once invitations have been mailed, we recommend that you follow up with several 'spot checks' to confirm invitations have been received. Sometimes there are glitches with postal delivery. Often, people complain that they didn't receive an invitation when it turns out that they just didn't open it.

**Bio, Photo, Pasuk** (AJR has editorial license on all documents.)

Each student is allotted two facing pages in the Ordination Journal. One page is written by the ordinee's presenter and the other page contains the ordinee's bio with a heading consisting of a photo and a *pasuk* from a sacred text. The AJR office will be in direct contact with your presenter.

- The bio should be written by the student in the first person. If you would like to review journals from previous years, you may request one from the main office. Your bio should be submitted electronically in a word document. Bios may be a maximum of 500 words or will be edited to conform to this limit.
- Photo - Please submit a high resolution photo (preferably professional).
- *Pasuk* - Please submit your *pasuk* in Hebrew and English and include the citation.

## **Musical Selections for Cantorial Ordinees**

Cantors must indicate the title of their musical selection by January 14th so that it can be included in the Journal program. The total presentation including music and speaking must conform to the 2 1/2 minutes allotted.

## **Ordination Speech - due April 5, 2021**

During the ordination ceremony, each rabbinical student is allotted 2 ½ minutes to speak. Please submit your talk to the Academic Dean for review by April 5, 2021. It will be timed during the ordination rehearsal.

## **Additional information**

**Robes & Hoods** – *The fee for hoods is included in the Senior Ordination Fee.* All ordinees with graduate degrees are encouraged to wear a hood representing that degree. In order to have the proper robes & hoods on hand, please email the AJR office to indicate whether you have your own robe/hood or hood or if you would like AJR to provide one for you. If AJR is providing a robe, please email your height to the AJR office. More information will be provided during the Spring trimester.

## **Important Dates**

*The Senior Legacy & Blessing Circle will take place during the last week of classes, **please save Monday – Wednesday (Apr. 12- 14) during the lunchtime programming slot. If AJR is not fully remote at this time, then we urge you to attend these events in person if you live at a reasonable distance.***

## **Senior Legacy**

This is the continuing tradition of sharing messages from our future clergy with the rest of the student community. During your time here, you have gained wisdom and perspective in experiencing AJR studies, traditions and culture. You are asked to share some helpful hints or other advice, the “bigger picture” observations that you have gained. At this time, student awards are announced in recognition

of service and achievements.

## **Blessing Circle**

The Blessing Circle is a time for our intimate AJR family to circle our ordinees with the support and friendship we offer as you move forward. Led by the Director of Spiritual Education, Rabbi Jill Hammer, the Blessing Circle ceremony is a unique AJR event, one that will remain in your memory and will help create memories for this class.

## **Ordination Rehearsal**

*The Ordination Rehearsal follows the Blessing Circle.*

The purpose of the rehearsal is to get a feel for the space and to conduct a sound check. This is also when your speech will be timed. It is expected that you will attend the rehearsal. (we need to rewrite this section. It needs to say that some who live far away can't attend.

## **ARC dinner – Date TBD**

Each year the Association of Rabbis and Cantors fetes the ordination class by taking them to dinner.

## **What to Expect at the Ordination Ceremony**

Answers to frequently asked questions.

**Events of the Day: Please note, although we all dearly hope that we will be able to celebrate ordination in person this year, we will determine in the spring whether this year's ordination will be in-person or virtual. The following description assumes an in-person event.**

## **Arrival and Robing**

All ordinees **MUST** arrive for robing at least 15 minutes before the *semikhah* signing begins. Please allow enough time for traffic and for gathering family members. Your late arrival impacts on the timing of the day and on the special ambiance for all participants.

## **Minhah**

*Minhah* offers a reflective transition to the next events.

### **The Semikhah Document Ceremony**

The signing of the *semikhah* document is a high point for the ordinee. The ceremony is facilitated by the Director of Spiritual Education and the Cantorial Program Coordinator, who will transition from one ordinee to the next with *niggunim* and words of *berakhah*. The space is set with one table in the middle of the *Beit Midrash* with seats for the *Beit Din*. Signators of the document are the Academic Dean representing AJR, and the three members of your *Beit Din*. People have likened this aspect of the ordination process to the signing of the *ketubah*. This is the time for family embraces and blessings from *Beit Din* members. While the presenter does not sign the document, their role is to ceremonially present it to each grouping.

Space is restricted in the *Beit Midrash*.

### **Line Up Prior to the Ceremony**

You will have the option during line-up at the library to use a quiet room on the side. Some graduates prefer a quiet, meditative space; others prefer the bustle of greeting friends in a public line-up.

Personal items can be left at the AJR building or at the back of the auditorium under the supervision of an AJR volunteer or staff person. They must be reclaimed after the recessional. Someone will be assigned to collect robes & hoods at the exit.

### **The Reception**

With the financial assistance of the Association of Rabbis and Cantors, AJR is pleased to provide ordination guests with a post-ceremony reception that takes place in the library foyer just outside of the auditorium. Traditionally, a light dessert and beverage collation is provided. Many senior classes have chosen to embellish this with a more expanded menu including pastas, salads and fish platters. As a class, you should make this decision in February, to allow time for group discussion and choices of menu and budget with the caterer. Please be in touch with the main office to discuss menu options and make the final order.

## **Photography**

Often AJR may hire a videographer or photographer for publicity purposes. Those who are interested in personal professional photographs should make that arrangement privately, either individually or as a class. If a professional is hired, that person will not necessarily have full access to the ceremony in progress and may not interfere with processional, recessional or movement on or off the stage.

## **Gifts**

The Association of Rabbis and Cantors gifts each ordinee with an *atarah* for your *tallit*. It will be given to you with sufficient time to be able to attach it to your *tallit* of choice. The Student Association has the tradition of offering *kanfot* and a *kippah* to each graduating senior.

There is a longstanding tradition that the Senior Class presents the school with a class gift. Some examples of past gifts are a keyboard, a music stand, laptops, and sets of reference books. The administration is available to make suggestions if you wish to consult with them.

It is customary to offer a token gift to the members of your *beit din* and to your presenter.

## **Documents**

In addition to the *semikhah* document, there are proclamations offered by the Yonkers Mayor and by the State Senator and other officials and state representatives.

## **Reserved Seating**

As a rule, there is open seating for the ordination ceremony. There is a reserved seating section for members of the *batei din*, presenters, dignitaries, board members, faculty, administration, alumni and students. There is a separate section reserved for a limited number of immediate



family/guests whose names have been submitted to the AJR office in advance. Ushers will direct your guests to that section.

It is important to inform the AJR office in advance if you are expecting guests who require special physical considerations in seating or in reaching the venue, specifically if they need help getting from AJR and the *semikhah* signing to the Yonkers Library.

### **Parking**

Detailed directions to AJR and to the Yonkers Library can be found on [the website](#). Encourage your guests to use these directions. In order to reach the AJR building using a GPS, the proper coordinates (not address) are required.

### **Your Connection with AJR After Ordination**

We look forward to your maintaining a connection with the school and community and we hope to see you at our Fall Retreats, Spring Intensives, and other AJR programs. Alumni are also invited to join many lunchtime programs and davening experiences.

In addition, there is the *Staying Connected Series* designed as a response to alumni who were seeking ways to continue learning with their AJR *hevra* and to maintain AJR contacts and were challenged by distance and demanding schedules. About three or four times per year, AJR invites a faculty member to teach a *shiur* on site for those alumni ready to travel to us. The *shiur* is available via our Distance Classroom for those who cannot join us here. It has become a special way for our alumni to re-experience the AJR classroom, network and schmooze. The *shiur* runs for approximately one hour.

## ***Addendum I***

### **Master's Project Guidelines**

A Master's Project represents the ability of a student to work with academic books and articles toward the creation of a project that applies these in a practical and functional, educational way. Students who wish to create a scholarly study as their Master's Project must demonstrate mastery of the primary sources in their original languages. Students will choose an appropriate mentor with the help of the Master's Projects Advisor. Such a mentor – who must have the necessary expertise for the particular project – may be chosen from the AJR faculty or from the general community. A \$300 mentor's fee will be collected by AJR and the mentor will be paid by AJR. The Academic Dean and the Master's Projects Advisor may not serve as mentors.

The Master's Project as part of the AJR M.A. in Jewish Studies fulfills the Master's Project requirement. Students who have earned an M.A. in Jewish Studies at another institution are exempt from the requirement of the M.A. in Jewish Studies at AJR. If their M.A. from another institution included a Master's Thesis then they are exempt from the Master's Project requirement at AJR. If their M.A. did not include a Master's Thesis then they are required to produce a Master's Project as outlined in the sections below.

Topic and mentor must be chosen and approved by the second week of June of the academic year prior to Ordination. The final draft must be submitted to the faculty by November 30th. After final editing and approval, the student has the option and is encouraged to present the thesis before students, faculty and administration. Presentation dates should be arranged with Rabbi Jeff Hoffman.

### **Master's Project Guidelines**

The Master's Project should address a topic that has been a focus of your thoughts and a point of challenge and curiosity over a substantial period of time. The following description and timeline may assist you in the allocation of your time in planning and in producing a quality work. AJR students who have already

earned an M.A. in Jewish studies for which they wrote a thesis are exempt from the Master's Project requirement.

## **Master's Project Description & Requirements**

Please remember that a Master's Project takes time and attention. You should approach the project as if you were preparing a document for publication. You are encouraged to submit projects of excellence for publication to respected journals either prior to or after ordination.

A Master's Project consists of the development of an idea or concept that will offer a usable contribution to your community of rabbinical, cantorial and educator colleagues. Master's Projects must have a serious academic research component as well as be reflective of dynamic imagination and creativity.

They should be heavily footnoted from source materials, both primary and secondary. An extensive bibliography should accompany the work. Your project should be in proper English and/or Hebrew, both grammatically correct and fluent. A careful outline will help you to develop a cohesive thought and content pattern. Your project can be in essay form, appear as a developed curriculum or take the form of an instruction manual or guide. Master's Projects typically vary in length from 35 to 100 pages.

Master's Projects should directly address at least three of the M.A. Program Goals, one of which must be the fifth goal ("Students will demonstrate competence [including library skills] in order to produce and present graduate-level academic, practical, or educational work"). For a list of the other Goals of the M.A. Program, see the M.A. "Program Overview" above or the AJR website (<https://ajrsem.org/about/mission/ma-program-goals/>).

Seniors may choose to present their projects to the AJR community during a lunchtime program. Oral presentations may take the form of frontal teaching, sample teaching or a creative format to be approved by your project sponsor and the Director of Master's Projects, Rabbi Jeff Hoffman.

Keep in mind that, when you present your Master's Project to your fellow students, you must have summarized and abstracted segments of your materials and offer a clear presentation of

your core ideas and how they can be used in the field.

As you proceed with your project you may find that what you thought would be one chapter may evolve into an entire paper. You may renegotiate the topic when this occurs. If you think that the project could lead to a substantial book size text, view the project as a publishable article that could act as the forerunner to such a text.

### **Master's Project Time Line**

The time line that is provided below begins the April before the last year of school. It is recommended that you begin thinking about your topic and consider writing the Master's Project the year before your last year as there are the comprehensive exams and ritual skills requirements that also need to be completed prior to ordination. The time line should give you an idea of how much time you need to allot to this project.

Proposal      Last week of April to the second week of June  
(year prior to anticipated Ordination)

Your Master's Project topic should be chosen, formally submitted in writing with goals and methodology clearly delineated and approved with a mentor selected and invited to work with you.

The topic for your project and your mentor must be approved by the Rabbi Jeff Hoffman who will consult with the Academic Dean before approving the Master's Project. Approval should be confirmed before approaching the mentor in order to avoid embarrassment if the mentor or topic is not approved.

Mentors do not have to be from the AJR faculty but should be respected as experts in the area chosen. Please note that a proposal consists of:

A title

A one - two sentence synopsis of the specific question that the paper will answer or the specific issue that the paper will investigate

Background and additional information – several paragraphs

Outline      First week of August

Submit an extensive outline of your project, citing several of the sources on which you will be drawing as well as your proposed meeting schedule with your chosen mentor. The submission of this outline assumes that you have done substantive reading and have acquired enough sources to write an informed outline.

First Draft Last week in October

Submit the first draft of your paper to the Director of Master's Projects and to your mentor for review and comment.

Second Draft Last week in November

Submit the second draft of the project. This should be a polished draft. The date of submission will give your mentor and the Director of Master's Projects substantial time to review the work.

Final Editing December

December is set aside for editing and final revisions. Oral presentations will take place during several lunch sessions between January and April. Your presentation time is one-half hour.

### **Mentor Guidelines**

It is assumed that your Master's Project Mentor is an expert in your chosen subject area and a guide who will help you through this process. Please consider these guidelines prior to beginning your project and after your mentor has been approached and has accepted their role:

Arrange an extended meeting to brainstorm your ideas and your proposed methodology.

Take notes on suggested materials and references.

Arrange a timeline including dates by which you will submit segments of your project to your mentor and dates by which they will be returned to you for emendations and editing. While each segment is being edited, you should continue your research and writing.

*For an M.A. Project rubric see the Academic Catalog, Section XXI:D:v.*

## Rabbinical Comprehensive Exams

For each of the written exams four hours will be allowed. Some students find they need all that time and others find they need much less time.

For each of the oral exams, the initial testing time will be 20 minutes in the presence of two testers. Students will be asked to translate and explain passages from anywhere in the texts for that exam. After 20 minutes, the student will be asked to briefly step out to allow the two testers to confer. The student will then either be told that they have passed, have failed, or that another 10 minutes of testing will be required – followed by another brief conference by the testers and a final determination of pass or fail. In order for students to be ordained they must take the following exams:

### Hebrew

Part 1: Modern Hebrew exam including grammar, reading comprehension and composition without the use of a dictionary.

Part 2: A translation of liturgical texts. A dictionary is allowed.

### Bible

Part 1: Students must pick up hard copy preparatory material from the AJR office so they can open and study it 3 days (72 hours) before they take the exam. The exam itself will be taken at AJR, and will include translations and questions with a Hebrew *Tanakh* and *Miqra'ot Gedolot* (Rashi font).

Part 2: Using unseen texts, students will be asked to translate and answer questions. A Hebrew *Tanakh* and a dictionary are allowed.

### Talmud

Part 1: Oral examination will involve the student's reading and explication of selections from original sources. The student must choose to be tested on one of the three selections of *sugyot* found in the Comprehensive Examination Study Packet and must inform AJR which selection has been chosen at the time the testing appointment is made. The test will utilize the Steinsaltz (Hebrew) edition only. The student is responsible to prepare the Talmud text and it is recommended that s/he use the commentaries of Steinsaltz and Rashi in order to properly understand the structure and logic of the *sugya*.

Part 2: Written examination including questions requiring short and long answers based on the secondary readings and a selection from the terms to be defined and explained found in the Comprehensive Examination Study Packet. The material in the packet may not be consulted during the exam, nor may any other study aid or informational materials be utilized. Material from secondary readings or original sources may be included in the written exam as material from which questions will be asked. The relevant citations will be made available as part of the exam.

## **Codes**

Part 1: Oral examination for which the student must be prepared to read and explicate any selection from Rambam included in the Comprehensive Examination Study Packet. The student will be tested on texts (without translation) from the vocalized edition of the *Mishneh Torah* that are included in the study packet.

Part 2: Written examination including questions requiring both short and long answers based on the secondary readings and a selection from the terms to be defined and explained found in the Comprehensive Examination Study Packet. The material in the packet may not be consulted during the exam, nor may any other study aid or informational materials be utilized. Material from secondary readings or original sources may be included in the written exam as material from which questions will be asked. The relevant citations will be made available as part of the exam.

Comprehensive Examination study packets for the Talmud and Codes exams are available in electronic form from the AJR administrative office. The Talmud packet includes a list of basic terms, secondary readings from the Encyclopedia Judaica, 2nd Edition, as well as Talmudic *sugyot*. The Codes packet includes a list of terms, selections from Rambam's *Mishneh Torah* and secondary readings from works in English that discuss *Halakhic* topics.

The examinations must either be taken at AJR or offsite with a proctor secured by the student and approved by the Academic Dean. Each of these exams, including parts of the same subject matter, may be taken separately.

# Cantorial Final Comprehensive Examinations

All Cantorial students must pass the examinations below by the end of the summer prior to their senior year in order to graduate. It is also possible to take the comprehensive exams as you progress through your program.

## Hebrew

Part 1: Modern Hebrew exam including grammar, reading comprehension and composition without the use of a dictionary.

Exam time: 4 hours

Part 2: A translation of liturgical texts. A dictionary is allowed.

Exam time: 4 hours

## Nusah HaTefillah

Students are expected to *daven* portions of the liturgy selections directly from the *Sim Shalom* Siddur and/or *Mahzor* without the use of notated music. You will be asked to chant any of the following worship services: *Shaharit*, *Minhah*, and *Arvit* for Weekday, Sabbath, Festivals or High Holidays services.

## Scriptural Cantillation

Students will be asked to prepare 25 *p'sukim* directly from the Torah. The Comprehensive examiner will assign those verses 2 days in advance. In addition, you will be asked to chant, on sight, 10 verses from: the Book of the Prophets, Lamentations, Ruth-Ecclesiastes-Song of Songs, Esther, and High Holiday Torah readings.

## World Jewish Repertoire

Drawing from the Sabbath, Festival, High Holiday liturgy, Piyutim, Art Song, and the breadth of World Jewish Music, students will be asked to perform at least three compositions of their own choosing. Students will be evaluated on their mastery of phrasing and interpretation and on their ability to incorporate the composer's musical style. Students will be expected to briefly discuss each composer, musical style and influences, as well as the composition's form and harmonic analysis.

## Life Cycle

Students will be asked to chant musical selections from any and all of the following life cycle events: *Brit Milah*, *Simhat Bat*, Funeral, Healing Service, Wedding, *Birkat HaMazon*, and Shabbat Home Celebration.



**Checklist of items to collect & submit:**  
*AJR has editorial license for all written material.*

**Due on or before January 4, 2021:**

- Hebrew & English names exactly as they are to appear on the invitation and *semikhah* document
- Approved list of your *Beit Din* & presenters with contact info

**Due on or before January 14, 2021:**

- Mailing List(s) - for Ordination invitations, Excel file only including separate cells for title, last name, first name, phone, street address, city, state, zip, email address
- Indicate whether you are using *Rav* or *Rabbah*
- Bio - 500 words max in a word document
- Photo - high res jpg
- *Pasuk* - Hebrew and English
- Approved musical selection for cantorial ordinees

**Due on or before Friday January 29, 2021:**

***Please make sure your presenter is aware of this deadline!***

- Presenter piece - 400 words max in a word document

**Due on or before April 5, 2021:**

- Ordination Speech for approval - 2 1/2 minutes max.



## Letter of Agreement

*Due in office on or before Monday, October 19, 2020*

By signing this document I confirm that I have read and am responsible for the contents of the information provided in this Senior Handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
Today's Date

**Please return via email or hard copy to the AJR office by Monday, October 19, 2020.**

**info@ajrsem.org**

ajrsem.org