



SENIOR HANDBOOK

ACADEMIC YEAR

2023 / 2024

תשפ"ד / 5784

28 Wells Avenue

YONKERS, NEW YORK 10701

ajr.edu

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.

This Handbook contains important 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 Thursday, September 28, 2023.

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,

AJR Staff and Administration

A Welcome from ARC

Shalom,

Welcome to this year of major transitions and transformations, completing the next step of your spiritual journey as leaders in the Jewish community. It is a process. Those who have gone before you will tell you that it is one that continues beyond ordination. This is the year to not only check off the required skills, exams, classes, and Master's projects, but to prepare for the new way you will be perceived by others.

This is the year to reflect upon your journey thus far and to think about the next stop along your path. It is an opportunity to identify what you already have in your toolbox and what still needs to be acquired. It is the time to ask yourself how you wish to be seen as a leader and teacher, making use of all the knowledge and wisdom you have acquired along the way to this moment. Take some time in the busy year ahead to reflect.

We at ARC, The Association of Rabbis and Cantors, look forward to welcoming you. A membership organization of rabbis and cantors, we offer collegiality, support, and continuing professional learning, as you continue your journey as fully ordained rabbis, cantors and *kol-bos*.

As I mentioned, the journey does not end with ordination. So many of us, particularly in these last few years, have been faced with unexpected challenges. ARC will be here for you as a resource and a source of support.

We provide resources and support in a number of ways and are currently in the process of expanding what we can offer AJR alumni.

ARC does many things. There is an extremely active online ARC discussion list. The work we do is challenging and we have developed a collegial support system, including ARC retreats. These provide an opportunity to both refresh the spirit and learn together. The learning continues with *Y'mei Iyun*, opportunities for collegial collaborations, learning opportunities and guest speakers.

We are also a presence in the larger Jewish community, as we support both learning and social justice initiatives. Our objective is to be here for you, so you can bring your best self to the Jewish community.

We look forward to having you join us as you make a difference in the Jewish community. In ARC, the generations of AJR come together, learning, and supporting one another, as we aim to create a strong and diverse Jewish future.

B'Shalom,

Rabbi Linda Shriner-Cahn

President, Association of Rabbis and Cantors

rabbilindasc@congregationtehillah.org

SENIOR STANDING FOR ORDINATION STUDENTS

A. Requirements for Senior Standing

Upon entering the fall trimester of their senior year, students must have fulfilled all but 28 credits (20 credits for those in the Cantors to Rabbis track) for those intending to take a full course load of 14 credits per term. For those students taking classes part-time, the remaining number of credits must be feasible for them to complete during the fall and spring trimesters while engaged in completing any other remaining AJR requirements and other life responsibilities.

incompletes from previous trimesters. In addition, students must have completed their proficiency exams, made significant progress in their Ritual Skills (these must be finished by the end of the fall term), have significant work done on their Master's Projects (if applicable), and be in good standing financially by the beginning of the fall trimester of their senior year. They may also have no more than five existing

All ordinee loan documents and promissory notes must be signed / fully executed and be on file in order for the student to be ordained.

In addition, each student must meet criteria of personal suitability for the cantorship and/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* or *Batei Din* in the case of *Kol-Bo* ordination. 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. Completion of Examinations and 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. All written exams require a proctor. For each of the oral exams for the rabbinic program, the testing time will be approximately 30 minutes for the Codes exam and 45 minutes for the Talmud exam, both in the presence of two testers. The timing for the cantorial program exams (aside from the Liturgical Hebrew exam) will depend on the number of requirements being tested in a given meeting. Please be in touch with Rabbi Matt Goldstone about scheduling the Liturgical Hebrew exam or the rabbinical program exams and with Cantor Michael Kasper for the cantorial program exams.

B. Master's Project

Students who are required to write a Master's Project as part of the M.A. program must follow the guidelines outlined in the section, "Master's Projects & Thesis Guidelines" found in the addendum to this Handbook. A first draft must be submitted by the last week in October and the final draft must be submitted by the end of December. After final editing and approval, the student has the option and is encouraged to present the project before students, faculty and administration. Presentation dates should be arranged with Cantor Michael Kasper.

C. Senior Practicum

Senior cantorial students must present a senior practicum as outlined in the Academic Catalog. While preparations for senior practica 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. Senior practica should be coordinated with Cantor Michael Kasper.

D. Ritual Skills

Ritual Skills requirements must be completed by the end of the fall 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. There is a Ritual Skills group on Populi that includes resources for working on these skills. If you are not a member of this group, please email Linda Ripps (lripps@ajr.edu).

E. Financial Obligations

All financial obligations to the Academy must be settled by Friday, March 1, 2024 (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 (some students engage in external arrangements with advisors to compensate them further).

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 for all graduating seniors, including Cantors to Rabbis and Rabbis to Cantors students.

The dates for Senior Seminar in the Spring of the 5784 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 Rabbi Beth Kramer-Mazer 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 discussed with the Academy for Jewish Religion community.

1. Ordinees can choose between being called *Rav* or the newer feminine form *Rabbah* as their Hebrew title on the *semikhah* documents. All students will use Rabbi as their English title.
2. Each ordinee is allotted 2½ minutes after their personal ordination during the Ordination Ceremony, which may be used for teaching, musical presentation, or personal remarks. This 2½ minute limit applies to both cantorial and rabbinical ordinees; *Kol-Bo* ordinees have a slightly longer time limit. Candidates for cantorial ordination must submit the musical selection they will be performing at ordination by January 5, 2024 to ensure that it can be included in the Ordination Journal.
3. Each senior may choose the four participants (or seven in the case of *Kol-Bo*) in their own ordination. There will be one Presenter and three members of the witnessing *Beit Din*, or two *Batei Din* in the case of *Kol-Bo* (the presenter should not be on the *Beit Din*). Three members of this group (or six in the case of *Kol-Bo*) 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. **All presenters and Batei Din members must be approved in advance by Dr. Ora Horn Prouser prior to reaching out to them to offer this honor.**
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. For *Kol-Bo* students, one *Beit Din* should be comprised entirely of rabbis and the other entirely of cantors (for a total of three rabbis and three cantors). A *Beit Din* member who is both a rabbi and a cantor may count as one or the other for the purposes of the ordaining *Beit Din*.

5. The Presenter will introduce the candidate for ordination with one sentence during the Ordination ceremony. This is the ordinee's formal introduction as a Jewish professional with their new title and, therefore, this role should be given to someone with standing in the Jewish professional community or in relationship with the Jewish professional community. Please note that the presenter writes a longer introduction for the ordinee that is included in the Ordination Journal, but during the Ordination ceremony the presenter *only recites a one sentence formula* along the lines of the following, "It is my great pleasure to present Rabbi/Cantor _____."

6. Ordination attire consists of a black robe (provided by AJR) and a *tallit*. In keeping with the solemnity of the occasion and to create uniformity, we encourage ordinees to wear the *atarah* (gifted to our ordinees by ARC), as well as the *kippah* and *kanfot* (gifted to our ordinees by the Student Association). In years when AJR is awarding Master's Degrees, you are encouraged to wear an academic hood from the school you earned your highest degree from. We will provide hoods for those earning a Master's Degree from AJR. 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 Friday January 5th, 2024 except where 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. January 5th 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. The Journal is made available online with a limited number of print copies for those attending Ordination in-person.

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.

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. AJR will provide a template for you to use to input guest information and it is requested that you use the provided template in order to facilitate processing.

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

Prior to reaching out to potential presenters and *Beit Din* members, please email the list of your *Beit Din* (or *Batei Din* for *Kol-Bo* ordination) to Dr. Ora Horn Prouser with the following information for each member of your *beit din* and your presenter for approval: title, name, mailing address, daytime contact number, and email address.

Once you have been notified that your presenter and *beit din* have been approved, 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.

Mailing List

Your mailing lists help AJR determine the quantity of invitations needed. AJR will mail any quantity of hard copy invitations. Please use the template that AJR provides for submitting your mailing list. Please make sure that you include email addresses so we can send an electronic invitation and Journal reminders. Please indicate invitees who should receive invitations in-person, 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. Please note that all bios will be proofread and are subject to editing to ensure proper grammar, spelling, and that they are suitable for the Journal.
- 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 5th 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 (or slightly longer in the case of *Kol-Bo* ordination).

Ordination Speech – due March 12, 2024

During the ordination ceremony, each rabbinical student is allotted 2 ½ minutes to speak (or slightly longer in the case of *Kol-Bo* ordination). Please submit your talk to the Academic Dean for review by March 12, 2024. It will be timed during the ordination rehearsal.

Additional information

Robes & Hoods – AJR will provide hoods for those earning a Master's Degree from AJR. In years when AJR is awarding Master's Degrees, all other ordinees are encouraged to wear the hood you received from the school at which you earned your highest degree. AJR will provide a robe for all ordinees, *batei din* members, and presenters.

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, April 8 – 10. We strongly urge you to attend these events in person and to plan to come in early for Ordination if you live at a distance. It is especially important that all seniors be present in person for the Blessing Circle.

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 takes place at the location of Ordination. 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.

What to Expect at the Ordination Ceremony

Answers to frequently asked questions.

Events of the Day:

Arrival and Robing

All ordinees **MUST** arrive for robing at least 30 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 Dean of Cantorial Studies, who will transition from one ordinee to the next with *niggunim* and words of *berakhah*. Signators of the document are the Academic Dean representing AJR, and the three members of your *Beit Din*. *Kol-Bo* ordinees will receive two separate *semikhah* documents.

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. Please note that space is limited and this ceremony is restricted to ordinees and their immediate family members. Although the room in which this ceremony takes place has steps, there is an accessible area from which the ceremony can be viewed without descending the steps.

Line Up Prior to the Ceremony

Personal items can be left 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 in the robing area.

The Reception

AJR is pleased to provide ordination guests with a post-ceremony reception. Traditionally, a light dessert and refreshments collation is provided. Many senior classes have chosen to embellish this with a more expanded menu. 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. The Senior Director of Administration will be in touch with you to discuss the group's options and decision.

Photography

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. The Senior Director of Administration

will be in touch with you to discuss these items, and your preference for your *kippah*, either regular or Bukharan.

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 2023 / 5783 Senior Class created a scholarship fund, which is another option to consider. 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. 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.

Parking

Information about location and parking will be provided in advance to those guests who are invited and register to attend the ceremony in person.

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 davenning 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 who were challenged by distance and demanding schedules. About three or four times per year, AJR invites a faculty member to teach a *shiur* on Zoom for our alumni community. 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 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 in an area of Jewish Studies then they are exempt from the Master's Project requirement at AJR. If their M.A. did not include a Master's Thesis in an area of Jewish Studies 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 version must be submitted to the faculty by the end of December. 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 Cantor Michael Kasper.

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.

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 50 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 in academic research [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://ajr.edu/programs-of-study/masters/>).

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 advisor and Dr. Matt Goldstone.

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 Timeline

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.

AJR now strives to offer an MA Project Workshop each year, beginning in the late fall and lasting through the beginning of the summer. This workshop is intended to help students with the initial stages of their proposal and outline in order to meet the necessary deadlines for completing their MA Projects.

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 Dr. Matt Goldstone 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.

Addendum II

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. All written exams, with the exception of the written Talmud exam, which is administered through Populi, require a proctor. Please be in touch with Rabbi Matt Goldstone about scheduling an exam.

In order for rabbinical students (including Cantors to Rabbis students) to be ordained they must take the following exams:

Liturgical Hebrew

Translation of liturgical texts. Hard copy dictionaries and the following digital dictionaries are allowed:

Modern Hebrew - <https://www.morfix.co.il/>;

BDB - <http://www.ericlevy.com/revel/bdb/bdb/main.htm>;

Jastrow - <https://www.lahavlearning.com/jastrow/>

Bible

Parshanut Section - Students will receive preparatory material 72 hours before they take the exam. The exam will include translations and questions with a Hebrew *Tanakh* and *Miqra'ot Gedolot* (Rashi script).

Translation Section - Using unseen texts, students will be asked to translate and answer questions. A Hebrew *Tanakh* as well as hard copy dictionaries and the following digital dictionaries are allowed:

Modern Hebrew - <https://www.morfix.co.il/>;

BDB - <http://www.ericlevy.com/revel/bdb/bdb/main.htm>;

Jastrow - <https://www.lahavlearning.com/jastrow/>.

Talmud

Terms and Tractates Section - Students will also be tested on key Talmudic technical terminology and the tractates of the various Orders of the Mishnah.

Sugya/Sugyot Section - The student must choose to be tested on one of the three selections of *sugyot*. 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*.

The two sections of this exam are typically done together but students may do them separately.

Codes

Terms Section – Students will be asked to translate and explain several foundational halakhic terms and/or phrases.

Translation Section – Students will be asked to read, translate, and explain selections from the *Mishneh Torah* text packet. Selections are made by the testers.

Resources for the exams are available in the Comprehensive Exam Preparation group in Populi. If you are not a member of this group, please contact Linda Ripps (lrripps@ajr.edu).

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.

Liturgical Hebrew

Translation of liturgical texts. Hard copy dictionaries and the following digital dictionaries are allowed:

Modern Hebrew - <https://www.morfix.co.il/>;

BDB - <http://www.ericlevy.com/revel/bdb/bdb/main.htm>;

Jastrow - <https://www.lahavlearning.com/jastrow/>

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, *Piyyutim*, 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 5, 2024**:

- Hebrew & English names exactly as they are to appear on the invitation and *semikhah* document
- Approved list of your *Beit Din* & presenter with contact info
- 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
- Presenter piece for Ordination Journal - 400 words max in a word document - *Please make sure your presenter is aware of this deadline!*

Due on or before **March 11, 2024**:

- Ordination Speech for review/approval - 2 1/2 minutes max (slightly longer for *Kol-Bo* ordinees)



Letter of Agreement

Due in office on or before Thursday, September 28, 2023

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 to sfassler@ajr.edu by Thursday, September 28, 2023.