

**Student
Handbook
5771**

**THE ACADEMY FOR
JEWISH RELIGION**



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Student Handbook
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This AJR Student Handbook should be read in conjunction with the current edition of the AJR Catalog that appears on the AJR website.

I. PREAMBLE

The Academy for Jewish Religion offers a rich and rigorous program of study and training. Its courses, Retreats, Intensives and supplementary offerings are designed to prepare each student to engage – with competence and integrity – in the plurality of traditions and religious expressions, old and new, that make up Judaism and Jewish life. The implications of such a program mean that AJR students are expected to satisfy standards and commitments that go beyond successful completion of their academic and professional requirements. Every AJR student will strive to meet the highest standards of morality and spiritual authenticity. AJR students are expected to work on expanding their own personal experience with Judaism, Jewish issues and Jewish communities. They are expected to be well-informed regarding current events and issues – religious, spiritual, cultural or socio-political – that are discussed and debated in today's Jewish world, a world that is increasingly integrated into the global community of humanity. A spiritual leader trained by AJR will be a person deeply engaged with God, Torah and Israel, and committed to realizing an embracing vision of *Torah, Avodah u-G'milut Chasadim* in the world.

To carry such a mission, an AJR student will be a person who embodies qualities of maturity, leadership, sensitivity, and ethical responsibility.

II. GENERAL ACADEMIC POLICY

A. Class Hours, Preparation Time

A course offered at AJR (or any other institution of graduate study) will be based upon the synthesis of material covered in class sessions, and a body of additional material to be studied by class participants outside of class session, individually or in groups.

1. A class earning 1.0 course points will generally meet for one hour and forty minutes once a week for 13 sessions.
2. Students should expect to study for two to three hours for each hour of class time. A class meeting for two hours would then require four to six hours of study time. A reading assignment of between 90 and 150 pages would be usual for some courses. In the case of courses working with primary texts, the assignment will be the preparation of specified primary texts, with background material from secondary sources.
3. It is the general policy of The Academy for Jewish Religion that assignments should, where possible, serve the needs of a student preparing for religious leadership. In some courses, the AJR Faculty will base their assignments around the working life of a rabbi or cantor.

B. Required Books and Materials

1. Students are advised that almost all AJR courses will require the purchase of textbooks and standard reference works. The costs of these purchases are entirely the responsibility of the student.
2. In certain circumstances, the materials may be provided by the school or the professor and students will be expected to reimburse the school or the professor for the cost of the materials.

C. AJR Masters of Jewish Studies Track at Gratz College

The historic agreement between the two oldest trans-denominational schools of their kind – the seminary for spiritual leaders, AJR, and the academic institution, Gratz College – is the product of ongoing thought and efforts on the part of AJR to create a program of rabbinical and cantorial preparation of the highest quality.

AJR is committed to the belief that the core elements of such a program must include excellent academic study along with a deep and challenging immersion in the rich plurality of Jewish religious, ethical and spiritual traditions and approaches, all geared to preparing spiritual leaders who will be equipped to devote themselves to serving God, Torah and Israel in these most challenging times.

But, just as AJR demands the utmost dedication of its students to open themselves and apply themselves to the necessarily transformative nature of their seminary education, another key element of AJR's approach has always been its respect for and concern for the well-being and sustenance of every student, both during his/her career as a student as well as afterwards, when s/he enters the field of Jewish clergy. To that end AJR continually re-examines its courses of studies, its spiritual goals and its vision of the rabbinate and cantorate.

The AJR Masters of Jewish Studies Track at Gratz College is a significant step forward in fulfilling these commitments. In collaboration with Gratz College, AJR has crafted a Masters Track that is specifically tailored to the needs of AJR students engaged in the complex process of academic and sacred study and growth. A flexible yet limited menu of courses has been selected to achieve our purposes.

The AJR Masters in Jewish Studies Track at Gratz College requires the satisfactory completion of twelve courses. Nine of the twelve courses must be taken through the on-line program at Gratz College and three of the twelve courses will be taken at AJR.

1. AJR courses eligible to count toward the Masters include the following:
 - Introduction to Liturgy
 - Shabbat Liturgy
 - Festival Liturgy
 - *Yammim Noraim* Liturgy
 - Introduction to Mishnah
 - Intermediate Talmud
 - Advanced Talmud
 - Personal Theology
2. For purposes of calculating the three courses to be taken at AJR, each of the courses listed above counts as one-half (1/2) course, except for the Talmud courses which count as full Gratz courses since they meet twice as long (including the *Havruta* time period.)
3. No courses taken at AJR before the Fall 2008 semester may be grandfathered into this program. All courses taken as part of the Masters also fulfill AJR requirements, which means that no extra courses need to be taken in order to fulfill the requirements for the AJR ordination program or the Masters.
4. Rabbinical students will choose courses at Gratz that fulfill the following AJR requirements:
 - History, choose four of the following five:
 1. Biblical History
 2. History of the Antiquity Period
 3. Medieval History
 4. Modern History
 5. Contemporary History
 - Critical Issues (professional skills)
 - Education I
 - Education II
 - Senior Thesis (comprises 6 credits)
5. Cantorial students will choose courses at Gratz that fulfill the following AJR requirements:
 - Seminar in Classical Judaism
 - Seminar in Modern Judaism
 - Introduction to Classical Rabbinic Literature
 - Music History
 - Education I
 - Methods of Teaching Judaic Studies through the Arts
 - Education elective
 - Judaism in America

- Senior Project (comprises 3 credits)
6. Academic advisement will be available at both Gratz and AJR to ensure that students enroll in the proper courses. While the Gratz MA allows for much choice in its program, in order to make this MA work as part of the AJR program, it will be essential to choose courses with AJR approval.
 7. Students need not take courses at Gratz every semester, they may space out the courses as desired to fit their individual programs. However, students must be taking two courses at AJR in order to be allowed to take courses at Gratz toward the MA. In addition, in order to be eligible for federal loans, students must be taking two courses at Gratz. All questions about federal loans should be addressed to the relevant individuals at Gratz College.
 8. Administratively, students will be part of both Gratz and AJR. When students apply to AJR, their application will be shared with Gratz College. While the student will need to be accepted by both schools, AJR will facilitate this process. Advisement will take place in both schools, and payment will go to each respective school for courses taken at that school. (AJR courses will be paid for at AJR, and Gratz courses will be paid for at Gratz.) Each school may also charge its own respective administrative fees.
 9. While this program is required for every incoming student, it is also an option for current students who desire to enter this track. Students' records, however, will have to be reviewed to determine how the Masters Track will work for them. The farther along students have progressed at AJR, the more likely that the Masters will involve the addition of extra courses to their AJR program. AJR will facilitate the admissions process for current students who wish to enter this track. Students should fill out and sign the Gratz waiver available in the administrative office or on the website and submit it to the AJR office together with a \$50 fee.
 10. Please note that rabbinical students in the AJR Masters Track at Gratz College will now be fulfilling their senior thesis requirement at Gratz College. Only those students not in the Masters program will still be fulfilling this requirement at AJR.

D. Supplemental Study

In addition to study connected with AJR courses, students should expect to read and study extensively outside the formal program to develop a breadth of familiarity with Jewish sources that cannot be covered in class. Rabbinical students should expect to read the entire *Tanakh* as well as a large portion of the Mishnah in Hebrew. The summer intersession should be seen as the ideal opportunity for such study projects.

E. Private Study and Transfer Credits

1. There may be occasions when the interests of a student, or other compelling circumstances, warrant the pursuit of a course by Private Study, either with a member of the AJR Faculty or with some other approved instructor. In addition, students may elect to take courses at other approved institutions of higher Jewish learning.
2. Students pursuing the AJR Masters in Jewish Studies at Gratz College as part of their AJR studies may take five courses as either private study, or as transfer credit in addition to the courses taken as part of the MA at Gratz. Students enrolled prior to Fall 2008 who are not pursuing the Masters in Jewish Studies at Gratz have the option of taking up to 20% of the course points required by means of courses at other approved institutions of higher Jewish learning and Private Study. Students in the Accelerated Program may take no more than three courses by private study or as transfer credit, except with prior permission of the Academic Dean. Notwithstanding the number of courses taken as either private study or as transfer credit, students in the Accelerated Program must take a minimum of 28 courses onsite as noted below.
3. In order to be granted credit for outside work, the Academic Dean must pre-approve the coursework. No credit will be earned at AJR until the student presents a transcript or other acceptable documentation showing successful completion of the course with a minimum grade of B. **The requirement to submit a**

transcript or other acceptable documentation showing successful completion of coursework also applies to courses taken at Gratz College as part of the AJR Masters in Jewish Studies at Gratz College.

4. There will be a Transfer Credit Fee charged for each outside course or Private Study added to the student's transcript. This fee does not apply to courses taken at Gratz College as part of the AJR Masters in Jewish Studies.
5. The transfer of credit of 4 or more courses from one institution at one time will be charged a Bulk Transfer Credit Fee (currently \$705).

F. Advanced Standing

Many students come to us having studied previously at various graduate institutions and receive advanced standing credit for that work. During the first year of study, students in that situation should meet with the Dean to work out their advanced standing. There is a fee for bulk transfer of advanced standing credits.

G. Accelerated Program

Students who come to AJR with a very strong background in many areas of Jewish studies, and who have had a strong involvement in the Jewish community for five years may be eligible for the accelerated program. The advanced standing of students in this program allows them to place out of many course requirements, and an individualized program is created with each student. It is the student's responsibility to be sure that a copy of the individualized program is filed in the Administrative Office. Students in the accelerated program are required to take a minimum of 28 course points at AJR, and must complete the ritual skill requirements, comprehensives, and a senior thesis.

H. Attendance and Written Work

1. Attendance at AJR class sessions is an AJR requirement.
2. Students who miss three class sessions will be required to complete make-up work corresponding to the content of all sessions missed. This work will be expected after missing one session of a 0.5 point class. Excessive lateness or leaving class early will not be tolerated. At the professor's discretion, repeated partial absences may be considered an absence requiring make-up work.
3. Students who miss a fourth class have the option of dropping the course or converting their status in that class to that of auditor, with no academic penalty and no refund of tuition, and cannot use the class towards credit for Academy requirements. This policy will apply if a second class is missed in a 0.5 point class.
4. In the event of severe mitigating circumstances, the Instructor and Student will meet with a member of the Senior Administration to approve an alternative plan for meeting course requirements.
5. In order for a change of class status to take effect, the student must file the appropriate paperwork in the Administrative Office.
6. Please do not "call in sick" to the Office; it is your responsibility to notify the instructor directly or via another student in the class. A student who has missed a class is responsible for obtaining all handouts and details of assignments, and for learning the material covered in the class session. Faculty cannot make sure that students receive materials for classes missed. Please contact a fellow student for this information.

I. Policy on Taping Classes

As a learning aid, students may record the audio component of classes with the permission of the professors. These recordings may be lent to other students enrolled in the recorded class, but it is understood that otherwise they are only for the private, personal use of the student making them (or the absent student on whose behalf they are made) and that

the recorded material will never be broadcast, duplicated, transcribed into printed form, or made available to any person not enrolled in the recorded class, without the permission of the Academic Dean, the professor, and class participants.

J. Incompletes

The accumulation of incompletes can undermine academic progress and place added stress one's personal life. To minimize this practice at the Academy the following policies will apply:

1. Students must speak to the professor, be granted an Incomplete, and submit a signed Incomplete Request Form to the Administrative Office by the last day of the semester.
2. Incompletes from the fall semester must be handed in by May 1. Incompletes from the spring semester must be handed in by September 1. Incompletes from the summer semester must be handed in by November 1.
3. In order to remove the Incomplete grade, satisfactory work must be submitted directly to the professors, with a copy sent to the Administrative Office attached to an Incomplete Submission Form.
4. If these procedures are not followed, or the work is not handed in on time, students will receive an FI for the course.
5. Whenever the student has extenuating circumstances, the student may be granted an extension by the Academic Dean. In the event an extension is granted, there may be a Grading Fee of \$75 per paper or exam to be graded.
6. If no incompletes are to be granted in a course, professors must state this in writing on their syllabi at the beginning of the semester, such as when an adjunct professor will only be at the Academy for one semester.

K. Leave of Absence

Students are permitted to take a leave of absence from their course work and to register as an off-site student. Permission is required from the Dean in order to be able to maintain this status for more than two consecutive semesters. Students who have not registered for any semester, either as an active student or as an off-site student, will be automatically withdrawn from the program. Should a student who has been withdrawn from the program want to resume studies, he or she must submit a letter to the Academic Dean requesting readmission to the school. The student will either be advised that he or she will be considered matriculated as is or that he or she needs to submit an updated application to the Admissions Committee.

L. Community Time

It is important for our school to come together to discuss issues of significance to our students, our community, and to the Jewish world at large. This is accomplished through our program of Community Time. When the calendar allows, the semester is lengthened by one week so that it is possible to miss one class slot each week without shortening the number of sessions in a semester. Every student who normally has a class during that time slot is required to attend the community time program. Absence from community time will be counted as an absence from the normally scheduled class. When Community Time is not scheduled during class times, meetings will be scheduled at various times throughout the semester. Students are strongly urged to attend.

M. Annual Retreat and Intensive

1. AJR holds a Retreat each autumn. The Retreat is planned by a committee that includes students and Administration. These gatherings offer students opportunities to build strong relationships within the AJR community, to meet new classmates, and to focus in depth upon an experience or an area of learning that demands more attention than normal class sessions would allow. Retreats also offer students opportunities to interact informally with members of the AJR Faculty, the Administration and alumni. In the middle of

the spring semester, we hold a week of intensive study on a topic that is of deep concern to the contemporary Jewish community. Topics for this Intensive program, and for the Retreat, include such areas as practical professional development, outreach, the arts and religion, and contemporary spirituality.

2. The Retreat and Intensive are an integral and crucial part of preparation for ordination; consequently, all matriculating students, including those studying elsewhere, are required to participate in the full program. Retreat attendance, including a description of the topic covered, will be recorded on the student's transcript. It is hoped that this will make an impact on potential employers.
3. Non-matriculating students are warmly invited to participate.
4. In the event that a student must miss all or even a portion of a Retreat or an Intensive due to extenuating circumstances, the student is responsible to obtain written approval from the Academic Dean to miss some or all of the program. A condition of such approval will be contingent upon an alternate assignment such as attending a conference or taking a course that covers the material at the missed Retreat or Intensive. Only students attending the full Retreat or Intensive program will have attendance and the topic recorded on his or her transcript.

N. Internships and Fellowships

The placement office encourages students to take advantage of professional internship and fellowship opportunities. These are available as year-long commitments or as short-term seminars and retreats. A detailed list of opportunities is available from the Placement Office. Whether participation is the result of personal invitation or by general application, student participants represent AJR as an institution and should keep the Administration informed of the content and expectations of these experiences. Only students in good academic standing will be considered for such programs. Incoming students need to be vetted by the school before applying.

When an open invitation is made by AJR to students to apply for an internship or interseminary experience, the Administration will be responsible for the final selection. Priority will be given to students with more advanced standing or with a relevant connection to the subject matter. If there are students who are interested but who have participated in previous experiences as an AJR representative, they will be placed on a waiting list.

O. Seminar in Core Concepts

1. Seminar in Core Concepts is a sequence of six seminars. It includes Core Concepts Seminar 1 through 6, which comprise three full years of study. The seminars cover some of the fundamental values, concepts and vocabulary of Jewish tradition. The student is expected first to gain a basic acquaintance with these terms and then to delve more deeply into them so as to appreciate their range of significance. The goal of the seminars is not simply to gather information, but to develop an integrated way of thinking about and expressing these value-concepts, so that the student may grow from an appreciation of the tradition to active and creative participation in the discourse of Torah.
2. Every student is required to take four of the six seminar semesters given in the sequence. After fulfilling this non-credit requirement, a student may elect to take a fifth and/or sixth seminar for credit. Each seminar will meet for 45 minutes weekly. Students taking a fifth or sixth seminar for credit will be charged for 0.5 course point each at the current tuition rate.

P. New Requirements and Program Revision

1. The number of course points required for Ordination will not be varied after the date of matriculation. Students will be responsible for completing the number of courses required at the time of their matriculation.
2. Within the required number of course points, if new distribution requirements or required courses are introduced, students with 25 points or fewer will be required to follow the new system.

Q. Academic Honesty

Students at AJR, training to serve as *k'lei kodesh*, must ascribe to very high levels of academic honesty.

1. Any student found to have engaged in plagiarism from published book or internet sources or from other students may be expelled from the school. Expulsions may be appealed to the Presidential Council.
2. Students are not permitted to submit the same work to fulfill separate requirements without the express knowledge of each professor.

III. PLACEMENT

The Placement Office is available to assist students in finding a variety of work experiences, whether for income or for the acquisition of skills. Experiences within Jewish settings or related to general clergy function will be disseminated in regular employment opportunity updates sent to the student body. The placement office works with both students and alumni for employment needs. At times, the Director of Placement will be in touch with the supervisors of our students in order to monitor students' progress.

A. Placement Procedure

Once the student is ready to seek a position, s/he should make an appointment with the Director of Placement. At that time, together they will review the resume to assess skills and discuss goals in placement. All pulpit or clergy-related work obtained through the placement office requires that the student be vetted by faculty to ensure that they are ready to undertake the position and to safeguard AJR standards.

The Director of Placement will maintain the student's resume in an electronic file and in hard copy. Resumes are sent with a cover note or letter from the Placement Office describing both AJR and the candidate. When multiple positions are sought, the student should provide pre-assembled packets of a personal cover letter, resume, CD (for cantors), and manila envelopes.

Positions that are related to fieldwork will be formally monitored and evaluated in conjunction with the student, the fieldwork supervisor and the Placement Office. This will be done mid-way and at the end of the academic year through a written evaluation form and follow-up conversations between the supervisor and the Director of Placement. Students will sign off on the evaluation form and have the opportunity to comment and elaborate on the experience.

B. Placement Leads and Referrals

Placement leads are procured in a variety of ways. Websites for professional employment, organizational listservs, the classified section of the Anglo-Jewish press and other resources are reviewed regularly. The Director of Placement works with a network of professionals, lay leaders, and alumni who are asked to make referrals. AJR places ads and articles in Jewish newspapers and magazines. Additionally, calls are made to introduce AJR to synagogues in desired geographic areas. Students are encouraged to use their own resources and networks to find positions, and to share information if not applicable to their situation. A lead remains "exclusive" to the individual only as long as it is not public information. Once a lead is obtained, detailed intake conversations determine the needs of the institution and establish a relationship. The intake form notes the history and background of the congregation, its current composition and orientation, description of the position, and the desired applicant. Both the contact person and the student are notified when the resumes go out. Referral to a position is made based on knowledge of a student's skills, religious comfort level and preference, and geography. Every effort is made to find a place that fits the student's reality. Follow up contacts are made after an interview with both applicant and institution. Students should expect honest feedback and constructive criticism as part of the placement process and as a means to improve and strengthen interview and presentation skills.

IV. STUDENT CONTRACTS OF EMPLOYMENT

This policy applies to all rabbinical/cantorial positions held by students, whether or not the position is a part of the Fieldwork Program.

1. AJR students have primary responsibility for the courses in which they are registered. Duties to congregations or other agencies must be secondary to student obligations in all but the most exceptional circumstances. AJR Senior Staff will support students in every way possible to negotiate appropriate terms of service.
2. Students obtaining work within the Jewish community should review a potential position with the Director of Placement. Any proposed Contract or Letter of Employment should be submitted before a student enters a commitment with a congregation or agency.
3. A student who has too much time committed to work may not be able to handle a full course-load, and thus should be aware that the duration of study may be increased.
4. AJR will not sanction contracts/positions that require students to work during AJR required programs such as the retreat, intensive, and ordination and courses for which students are enrolled.
5. AJR students are not permitted to perform intermarriages.

V. FIELDWORK REQUIREMENTS

A. Introduction

An essential complement to the rigorous AJR academic program is supervised, diversified field experience in the full range of rabbinical or cantorial responsibilities.

1. While volunteer or paid experience in the field is encouraged throughout a candidate's education, two years' fieldwork experience, earned concurrently with taking the AJR Fieldwork Support Seminar (FWSS), is required for ordination.
2. Each fieldwork year must be composed of at least thirty weeks, with an average of 10 hours per week at a single location.
3. Experience earned prior to entering AJR cannot be used to fulfill this requirement.
4. AJR will not sanction contracts/positions which require students to work during AJR required programs such as the retreat, intensive and ordination and courses for which students are enrolled.
5. Any position held while a student is enrolled in Mechina may not count toward the field work requirement. As a rule, first year students' work does not count toward field work. In extenuating circumstances, the Director of Placement may make an exception.
6. It is the responsibility of the student to complete the fieldwork as agreed upon with the site supervisor and the Director of Placement in order to receive credit for completion of Fieldwork Support Seminar.

B. Congregational Fieldwork

1. Our graduates are viewed by prospective employers as capable of serving in the full spectrum of rabbinic and cantorial duties. Accordingly, one year must, and both years can, be fulfilled by congregational placements as *kol bo* or assistant rabbi or cantor, concurrent with participation in FWSS. (Minimum average of 10 hours/week. See A2 above.) Fieldwork should include, but is not limited to, leading services, giving

- sermons or *divrei torah*, public reading from the Torah, teaching adult education, officiating at life cycle events and attending synagogue committee meetings.
2. Fieldwork supervision should be provided by a professional clergy, ordained or invested with a minimum of five years of experience. If only a layperson is present at the site, an arrangement must be made to match the student with an appropriate professional.
 3. In very rare situations, exemption from congregational training may be granted. In such cases, the following reduced congregational awareness program will nevertheless be required and reviewed by the student's advisor:
 - a. Students will find a rabbi/cantor (as appropriate) to mentor them and the students will attend their congregations for six full Sabbaths, (leading or assisting at four of these).
 - b. Experience must include the following: giving three sermons/*divrei torah* and reading Torah, four adult education sessions, one wedding, one funeral, one naming, one circumcision, and attending a meeting of each of the following: the board, ritual, and executive committees.

C. Other Modalities

1. As specified above, at least one year of supervised fieldwork must be in a congregation. Any of the following would qualify for the other year of fieldwork:
 - a. One full CPE unit (which includes its own integral group supervision process) will fulfill one year of fieldwork/FWSS.
 - i. Additional CPE units are of great value but will not be applicable to the fieldwork requirement.
 - ii. Up to two additional CPE units can be applied as academic transfer credit in the area of professional skills. Each additional CPE unit will receive one course point.
 - b. Along with FWSS participation, up to one full academic year, comprising a minimum of 10 hours per week as:
 - i. Religious school principal or education position
 - ii. Hillel director, Hillel rabbi, Hillel assistant director
 - iii. Position at a JCC, Jewish Federation, Jewish youth movement, or other Jewish agency that requires the development and demonstration of the major skills required of a rabbi or *hazzan* in their professional career
 - iv. Chaplain (hospital, prison, hospice, etc.)
3. Religious school teaching and summer positions are not eligible to meet the fieldwork requirement. (Creative exception example: a Jewish summer camp directorship/high level position – two consecutive summers at the same camp with attendance at FWSS between and after may count.)
4. Additional experience in such positions is of great value, yet no more than one year will be applicable to the fieldwork requirement.

D. Procedures for Receiving Fieldwork Credit

The following procedures are necessary to receive fieldwork credit.

1. AJR requires that students prepare a description of positions intended for fieldwork credit and submit these for approval to the Director of Placement as part of the registration process **each** semester.
2. A formal contract or letter of appointment between the student and the hiring agency/congregation must

- be reviewed by the Director of Placement, or designated colleague, and should be included with the position description.
3. To allow for quality guidance in contracting, these documents should be submitted as soon as possible, preferably a month or more in advance of the anticipated commencement of duties. A minimum of 14 days prior to contract signing is required by AJR (to allow staff enough time for adequate response).
 4. The position description should also include a summary of hours, duties, brief description of the setting, name, mailing address, fax, phone/email of the president or administrative head of the work site, and the student's address and phone/fax/email at that work site.

E. AJR Role

The Director of Placement will maintain relationships with a variety of agencies and congregations, and make every effort to help each student find a context for fieldwork that supports his/her learning goals and professional aspirations. Students are encouraged to propose fieldwork sites based upon their own network of contacts. Ultimate responsibility for attaining these positions rests with the student.

F. Fieldwork Support Seminar (FWSS)

1. Fieldwork Support Seminar is a supervised professional development forum for students to present issues which have arisen in their fieldwork experience, and to derive support, perspective and guidance in how to proceed.
2. Attendance at FWSS is required of students in each year of work in the field which is intended toward fulfillment of the fieldwork credit. The only exception to this will be for a student in a supervised CPE program.

VI. STUDENT COURTESY CODE

As students of The Academy for Jewish Religion, we are a large group sharing a small space in a host university. This Courtesy Code, created by students through the Student Association, offers suggestions for preserving “*Shalom Bayit*” with our hosts, and maximizing comfort within our own environment. Here are some simple guidelines:

A. At AJR

1. Each AJR student is an ambassador for our school, whether to visiting prospective students, new students, or to the public at large. Please take your role as an emissary seriously and try to present yourself, and the school, in the best possible light. Everything we do or say reflects on our school and our community.
2. Be aware that the rest of the campus is on a different schedule – when we have breaks they usually have class – so keep hallway conversations quiet. Keep noise down in the stairwells. When moving tables and chairs, please try to pick them up rather than scrape them on the floor – this is very noisy for the classrooms below.
3. Please remember that the other half of our hallway, where the elevators and bathrooms are located, is the space of the English Language School. At no time should AJR students use their classrooms or congregate in that hall. Care should be taken to speak in low tones in the hallway when waiting for the elevator. The hallway should not be used for cellphone conversations.
4. Please respect the administrative and personal space of AJR staff, including desks, telephones, refrigerator and supply closets. Students should not use any AJR administrative space for their own personal use.

5. Throw out your trash. It is inconsiderate to fellow students and to cleaning staff to leave cups and bottles lying around.
6. Try not to eat in the *Beit Midrash*, except during lunchtime meetings, and keep drink containers as closed as possible. The *Beit Midrash* should be used for quiet study, prayer or *havruta* study, except when it must be used as a classroom.
7. Re-shelve library books before the next period, especially after *havruta* study.
8. If you have a problem that you need to discuss with AJR staff, please make sure you consult the appropriate person. Use your student liaisons when possible. Once you have made a request, please allow the staff member or student liaison enough time to deal with the situation.

B. In Class

1. Since AJR classes can be large, please be sensitive to the needs of the group as a whole and be aware of the amount of material that each class must cover.
2. Please be aware of other students' needs when asking questions or making comments in class. Class participation is great, but be considerate. Try not to spotlight your personal learning needs at the expense of the needs of other students.
3. AJR students have a variety of learning styles. Please be patient with students who may move at a different pace than yours. Keep in mind that good listening skills are very important for rabbis and cantors. If you find the behavior of a particular student is interfering with your learning, please speak to him or her privately. Respectful, face-to-face, private discussions often can clear up the matter. If the problem persists, please see the Dean of Students.
4. If you have a contagious illness, please do not come to class. Ask fellow students to take notes. Colds and flu prevent many with student pulpits – especially cantors – from doing their jobs.
5. Ringing cellphones have become a nuisance at AJR. If you have a cellphone or beeper, please turn it off or put it on silent mode during class. If you have to leave class to answer a call, please do this quietly and try to create a minimum of distraction for fellow students.
6. When the instructor or fellow students are speaking, basic respect demands that we give them our attention. Therefore, it is a violation of basic respect to use our computer or other devices to check for email or voicemail, or to check the Internet, or to do anything that is not directly connected with the class in session.

VII. STUDENT MONITORING

A. Conditional Acceptance

A student who is admitted conditionally will need to meet with the Dean of Admissions to assess the progress made in the areas of concern by the end of the student's first semester. If further monitoring is necessary, the student will be informed at that meeting.

B. Jewish Status of Partner/Spouse

The Academy for Jewish Religion Entrance Requirements state that: "The spouse or partner of an applicant to a program leading to Ordination must also be Jewish. It is the conviction of the Academy that this requirement enables our students and our graduates to serve the widest spectrum of the Jewish community as leaders and as exemplars of Jewish life." The natural implication of that admission policy is that the spouse or partner of a student at The Academy

for Jewish Religion must be Jewish. This policy holds true throughout each student's career at The Academy for Jewish Religion.

C. Ongoing Assessment

1. There will be ongoing assessment of each student's psychological and spiritual growth. At the end of each academic year, a committee formed of members of the AJR Faculty and Administration will review each student's progress. While the progress of all students is reviewed by administration and faculty, a meeting will be held with only those students who will most benefit from an immediate personal follow up. In addition, any student may request such a meeting.
2. A question may arise as to the potential suitability of an AJR student for ordination at any time during a student's career at the Academy. When this occurs great efforts will be made to enable the student to heal and grow.
 - a. This process will begin with the Academic Dean or the Dean of Students. The Dean will meet with the student and will speak personally or will delegate someone to speak with Faculty who know the student and the student's field site supervisors. Those who provided references that assisted students in getting into AJR may be contacted to determine the extent of the history of the problem behavior and clarify its importance.
 - b. A Faculty member may offer to spend additional counseling hours with the student.
 - c. If the student is already in therapy and is amenable, an AJR representative may speak with the student's therapist. Otherwise therapy may be recommended or even required for continuing attendance at AJR.
 - d. Students may be asked to formulate learning contracts with their advisor(s) delineating the stages and methods of the anticipated learning process.

D. Suspension or Expulsion

To the greatest extent possible, the Administration and Core Faculty of AJR takes responsibility for the spiritual and psychological guidance of each student throughout his/her career at the Academy.

1. Given the limitations of the context and AJR resources, there may regrettably be times when a student requires more guidance or support than the institution is able to give, or proves to be unsuited for further training. When a consensus forms in the Administration that such a situation has arisen, it is the school's sad duty to suspend or expel the student from the program.
2. Suspension or expulsion may result when a student violates Academy policy in any of three areas:
 - a. Academic – Any student who receives a grade of C, C-, or F will be placed on academic probation. A student placed on academic probation for two consecutive semesters will be liable to suspension, subject to the review of a meeting of AJR advisors.
 - b. Financial standing – Students who are in arrears on their payment to the Academy at the end of a semester will not be admitted to classes until they once again are in good financial standing, unless they have made arrangements with our Financial Office or have special permission. Students should understand that their financial interactions also reflect on them as *k'lei kodesh*. It is imperative that students take responsibility for their financial obligations and speak pro-actively with the Director of Operations to deal with any potential problems that may arise.
 - c. Personal suitability – A few representative examples of the wide range of personal issues that could lead the Administration to consider suspension or expulsion of any student would be:

- i. Repeated incidents of severe emotional volatility or anger.
 - ii. Boundary problems: for example, inability to share classroom or meeting time maturely; chronic lateness; communication skills problems such as regularly calling faculty or students at inappropriate times.
 - iii. Romantic, abusive or sexual approaches to, or relationships with, staff, congregants, clients, or faculty.
 - iv. Inability to understand severely destructive behaviors in one's own personality; inability to establish and carry out a plan to modify such behavior(s) to safe, professional levels.
 - v. Gross inability to tolerate and assimilate constructive feedback.
 - vi. Conviction by civil or criminal courts for illegal activities.
3. Suspension will as a rule be expressed by refusal to readmit a student at the beginning of the subsequent semester. Only in the gravest cases may a student be suspended during the course of a semester. A letter will be given to a suspended student specifying the conditions to be met in order that the suspension be lifted. Suspension may be imposed by a committee of not less than four, comprising members of the Senior Administration and members of the Full Time or Core Faculty.
 4. Students who wish to appeal the imposition of a suspension or expulsion may follow the course described in section XV of this handbook.

VIII. SENIOR STANDING

A. Requirements for Senior Standing

1. Upon entering the senior year, students must have fulfilled all but 14 of their courses, completed their proficiency exams, have significant work done on their senior projects, and be in good standing financially.
2. Personal suitability – Each student must meet criteria of personal suitability for the cantorate or rabbinate. Our program of training culminates with institutional *semikha* 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:
 - a. The manner in which a student interacts within the AJR community.
 - b. Feedback from AJR Faculty and advisors.
 - c. Feedback from colleagues and congregants at worksites.
 - d. Direct discussion with the student.
3. Ultimately the decision to ordain any candidate will be made by the Senior Administration. Someone determined to be unprepared in any of the areas delineated above will not be ordained.

B. Special Tuition Exception Program for Graduating Seniors.

1. If a senior has paid a full-time package rate the fall semester preceding the spring semester of the senior's ordination (\$8,195 or \$8,465 for fall 5771), the senior may take up to two required courses in the spring to the extent:
 - a. the courses would have been included in a full-time package rate had they been taken in the fall; and

- b. either (1) the courses were not offered in the fall or (2) the courses would have conflicted with other courses that were also required for ordination in the spring. These courses are referred to as Tuition Exception Program courses.
2. If the senior is eligible to take any Tuition Exception Program courses, and chooses to take any additional courses in the spring (above and beyond the tuition exception courses), the senior will be charged as if the **Tuition Exception Program** courses described above were taken in the fall, not the spring. If the student had paid the lower package rate in the fall and the inclusion of **Tuition Exception Program** courses would have put them at the higher package rate, then the student will be responsible to pay the difference in the package rates (currently \$270).
3. The following example illustrates this policy using the rates for 5771 (2010-2011):

ASSUMPTIONS & RATES

Package rate for 4-5 courses, Fall 5771	\$8,195
Package rate for 6-7 courses, Fall 5771	\$8,465
3 Classes, Spring 5771	\$6,750
Rate for each class over 7 course points	\$2,045

Ploni Senior is scheduled for ordination in Spring 5771. Because Course A, which is required for ordination, was not offered in Fall 5771, and is offered in Spring 5771, and because Course B, which is required for ordination, conflicted with Course C (also required for ordination) the preceding semester, Ploni is eligible to take Course A and Course B in Spring 5771 under the Tuition Exception Program.

If Ploni enrolls for a course load of 5 courses for Fall 5771 and Courses A and B plus 3 additional courses in Spring 5771, Ploni's bill will be \$8,195 for Fall 5771 (4-5 course package rate) and \$7,020 for Spring 5771 (3 classes plus the difference in package rates). If Ploni were a junior, the Spring 5771 bill would be \$8,195 (5 course package rate).

If Ploni enrolls for a full course load of 5 courses for Fall 5771 and Courses A and B plus 1 additional course in Spring 5771, Ploni's bill will be \$8,195 for Fall 5771 (4-5 course package rate) and \$2,520 for Spring 5771. If Ploni were not a graduating senior, the Spring 5771 bill would be \$6,750.

IX. ORDINATION REQUIREMENTS

A. Status Interview

In the Spring semester, 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 and Comprehensives

All Examinations and Comprehensives must be completed by September 1 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. 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.

C. Senior Project

Senior Rabbinical students must produce a Senior Project, as outlined in the section, "Senior Projects: Guidelines." Topic and mentor must be chosen and approved by mid-June. The final draft must be submitted to

the Faculty by November 30. After the final editing and approval, the student has the option to present the thesis before students, Faculty and Administration. Those fulfilling the Senior Project requirement at Gratz College should follow guidelines provided by Gratz College.

D. Senior Practicum

Senior Cantorial students must present a Senior Practicum.

E. Ritual Skills

Senior Ritual Skill requirements must be completed by the end of the first semester of the senior year. Specific ritual skill requirements are outlined in the appropriate supplement for Rabbis or Cantors. The Ritual Skill Handbook provides a description of the requirements for each skill.

F. Financial Obligations

All financial obligations to the Academy must be settled by March 1, and acknowledgment of any debt for student loans must be filed with the Financial Office.

X. ORDINATION CEREMONY

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. At present, each ordinee is allocated 2 ½ minutes after their Ordination, which may be used for teaching, musical presentation, or personal remarks. This 2 ½ 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 at least four weeks prior to ordination.
2. Each Senior may choose the four participants in his/her 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 member of the Board of Trustees.
3. 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* may be a rabbi.
4. 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.

XI. LIBRARY

The AJR Library now consists of well over 8,000 catalogued titles. The Library catalogue can be accessed through the menu option: "For Current Students" on the school's website, www.ajrsem.org. There is a computer in the Beit Midrash that students can use to access the catalog. The library uses The Library of Congress Cataloging system, which is the standard among Jewish Seminary Libraries. For more information on how this cataloging system works, go to: <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsol/lcco/lcco.html>.

Currently the Library uses five rooms at AJR. The *Beit Midrash* contains all of our Reference Books and *S'forim*. The books that belong in this room have a reference sticker on the spine. These books are not to be removed from AJR. The Lending Library is located in the Library room as well as in the large classroom, Room 2, and in Room 3. The Library room contains mostly Judaic study materials, Room 2 contains American Jewish History and Jewish Social Sciences and Room 3 contains Jewish Literature, Bio-Ethics and Jewish Food. The cantorial library (currently under construction) is located in Room 4.

The Library works on the honor system in as much as we don't have high-tech security measures. ALL BOOKS MUST BE SIGNED OUT with the AJR office or the Librarian. Although at times this may seem like an inconvenience, it is essential to the management of the Library that we know where all the books are all the time. (Failure to sign out books may result in loss of Library privileges).

There will be many opportunities to volunteer your assistance with the library and help strengthen AJR by supporting the upkeep and growth of our library.

XII. FOOD POLICY

As a *M'qom Torah* embracing all *Klal Yisrael* AJR attempts to follow policies that maintain the integrity of our Torah while respecting diversity of approach. In that spirit, we have adopted the following guidelines regarding food items at AJR:

1. Alcoholic beverages should not be brought onto AJR premises, except when wine may be deemed appropriate for a sacred occasion or a *simhab*. In such cases, the wine must be kosher. Other beverages, such as juices, must comply with the appropriate guidelines for an individual and the institution, as set forth below.
2. Non-kosher food items should not be brought onto AJR premises. This includes meats from non-kosher animals, fish and sea creatures, meat that is not slaughtered and prepared in accordance with traditional rules of *kashrut*, and foods that combine meat and dairy ingredients.
3. As individuals we may have differing commitments to *kashrut* and differing interpretations of its rules. All food brought onto AJR premises by any individual for the individual's own consumption must be kosher according to that person's conviction.
4. Food that is brought in to be shared by others, as in a group or class situation or that is left to be shared in the student lounge, must satisfy AJR institutional standards of *kashrut*.
5. As an institution, AJR will accept or serve only foods that are certified kosher by an authoritative and recognized supervisory body.

XIII. SCHOOL CLOSINGS

AJR will be closed and classes will be cancelled for the day due to weather conditions when the New York City public schools are closed, when the CMSV campus is closed and its classes are cancelled, or at the at the discretion of the Academic Dean. Please check the AJR website or log on to www.cancellations.com for up-to-the-minute announcements.

XIV. STUDENT LIFE AT AJR

A. ATM

There is an ATM (\$3.00 charge for use) outside the bookstore on the first floor of the building.

B. Bookstore

The College of Mount St. Vincent (CMSV) bookstore is on the first floor of the building, and offers a wide range of products as well as books.

C. Email

The majority of communication between the AJR Administration and students takes place through email. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the Administrative Office has a working email address and that the email account is checked regularly.

1. Each student is assigned an AJR email address, which will forward to your personal email account. Students may wish to give out this address for professional purposes.
2. Students in leadership positions are asked to vet all communication using the AJR logo with the AJR administration prior to sending.
3. Communications to AJR lists from students in leadership positions should not be sent on Shabbat and Holidays.

D. Family Participation

While we welcome family members and friends to our learning community, we must limit participation to a week's worth of classes. This means that the visitor may attend each class one time. Participation can be staggered over a period of time, but limited to one visit per course. Should someone wish to attend additional sessions, approval must be obtained from the Academic Dean, and payment charged at the audit rate.

E. Food

There are two places to buy food at CMSV. The most convenient is the cafeteria, called Benedict's Café, which is open from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on normal school days of the College. The nearby Pastorini Dining Room is a nice place to sit for meetings or study. An all-you-can-eat buffet is also available at low cost in the Spellman Dining Room, a five-minute walk from the Administration Building. If you bring your lunch to the AJR premises, please be aware that AJR itself observes *kasbrut* (see Food Policy guidelines). We also encourage you to support the local kosher food establishments in Riverdale, several of which will deliver to AJR. Names of restaurants are available in the AJR Office.

F. Mailbox

Each student and Faculty member has a mailbox. Student mailboxes are located outside the *Beit Midrash*; Faculty mailboxes are located in the main AJR Office.

G. Photocopying

There is a copy machine located in the AJR Student Lounge. The photocopier in the AJR Office is for administrative use only. Photocopying is available at the Student Services Office for a fee.

H. Quiet study

If the *Beit Midrash* is not available for quiet study, there are study carrels on the second floor near the stairs. The Pastorini Dining Hall is another good, and usually quiet, place to study. The CMSV Library is also available for your use,

a few minutes' walk from the Administration Building. The small Cantorial Practice/Coaching Room next to the *Beit Midrash* is NOT for study; it is reserved for practice and use by cantorial students.

I. Restrooms

A women's room is on the fifth floor, right outside the double doors of AJR; the men's room is one flight down by the stairs on the fourth floor. There are also restrooms behind the lockers on the first floor of the building.

J. Student Lounge

The student lounge offers a microwave, refrigerator, water cooler and tea/coffee/hot chocolate for use by students. Also, be sure to put your name on anything you store in the refrigerator; otherwise it will be considered common property. Please remember to keep the student lounge neat.

XV. APPEAL TO THE PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL

A. Procedures and Guidelines

1. A student has the right to appeal major decisions, that is, suspension or expulsion, to the Presidential Council. The decision of the Presidential Council shall be binding and final in all matters.
2. A student shall advise the Senior Administration in writing of intent to make an appeal to the Presidential Council. It shall be the responsibility of the Administration to schedule a meeting of the Presidential Council.
3. The student shall submit, in writing, an account of the circumstances, and the grounds upon which an action by the Presidential Council is requested. The President shall submit, in writing, a statement of the position of the Administration. One written addition may be presented by each party. Copies of all written submissions shall be sent to the other party.
4. There shall be no discussion of the issues with any member of the Presidential Council, other than by means of these written submissions, and at the meeting of the Council. The student's file shall be available to the Presidential Council.
5. Three members of the Presidential Council shall be a quorum for the purpose of hearing an appeal. The Presidential Council shall meet at the premises of AJR, unless exceptional circumstances dictate some other venue.
6. The student may be accompanied by a friend or family member; either party may be represented by an advocate.
7. The case of the student shall be presented first; the student may present testimony. The Administration shall then present its case, and may present testimony.
8. All matter concerning the conduct of the Appeal, the admissibility of any testimony, the length of submissions, and the personal conduct of all parties shall be at the sole discretion of the presiding member of the Presidential Council.
9. The decision of the Presidential Council shall be communicated within 21 days of the Appeal. There shall be no obligation upon the Presidential Council to give reasons or explanation of their decision, although they may do so.
10. All matters before the Presidential Council shall be regarded as confidential and shall not be publicly discussed.

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