



THE JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Student Look Book 2025



Though the Jewish people continue to face significant challenges, we at JTS are inspired by the enthusiasm of our students as they come together in community and study. This year’s incoming class of rabbinical and cantorial school students is the largest we’ve seen in many years, and the number of MA students has also grown. Additionally, an increasing number of young people are asking how they can serve the Jewish people—these are all reasons for hope in our future.

Our students are committed to pursuing a rich and vibrant intellectual and Jewish life. As you read about some of them in the following pages, you will discover their unique paths to JTS, the focus of their studies, and the impactful work they are already doing both inside and outside the walls of JTS. We hope you will feel great pride, for together we are educating scholars and professional leaders for academia, sending highly trained and compassionate Jewish educators into the world, and inspiring the next generation of passionate, thoughtful, and committed Jewish leaders.

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H. L. Miller Cantorial School



RACHEL BLACK is a senior cantorial student at the H. L. Miller Cantorial School. In addition to her studies, she is also serving as a chaplain intern at New York Presbyterian Queens hospital, where she

is training in pastoral care. Rachel is thrilled to be serving the Hillcrest Jewish Center community in Queens, where she is in her second year as a student cantor. Throughout her studies, Rachel's love of *nusah*, *tefillah*, and the Jewish community have only deepened.

Prior to cantorial school, she served synagogues in the Kansas City region as a cantorial soloist, composer, and religious school director. She has traveled the world, singing at commemorations and special events, most notably at the House of Representatives, the Knesset, the National Press Club, and Temple Israel of the City of New York.

As a young child, Rachel's family lived in Jerusalem and later moved to Rockville, Maryland, where she studied for her bat mitzvah under Cantor Mike Stein at Congregation B'nai Tzedek, and began formal voice lessons with Cantor Susan Berkson. Rachel earned her bachelor of music in Performance from Berklee College of Music, focusing on her vocal training and songwriting. Her critically acclaimed original song "Edyka" has been featured in publications around the world such as the *Kansas City Star*, the *Miami Herald*, *U.S. News and World Report*, the *Jerusalem Post*, and the *Times of Israel*. In the

fall of 2020, Rachel took a big step in her cantorial journey by beginning her studies at JTS remotely. In the summer of 2022, Rachel relocated her family to New York to attend classes in person.

When not davening or studying, Rachel enjoys exploring New York with her husband, Eric, and their five-year-old daughter, Cora.



SHIRA BODNAR is a first-year cantorial student who is originally from Toronto, Canada. She previously received an honors bachelor of Music Theatre Performance from Sheridan College in Ontario,

Canada, and worked for a year as an outdoor educator at Shoresh, a Jewish environmental organization in Toronto. Shira believes that art and curiosity are fundamental tools for creating strong, compassionate communities, and she is deeply curious about what it means to honor all kinds of wisdom in an ever-changing world.

As a descendent of Holocaust survivors, she is passionate about how music can be a tool for reclaiming one's Judaism after generations of displacement. This year, Shira is lucky to be serving her home congregation, Beth Tzedec Congregation, as their Tanenbaum Fellow.



MARC SZECHTER is a second-year student in the H. L. Miller Cantorial School who is also pursuing an MA in Jewish Education from JTS's William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education. Marc grew

up in Hartsdale, New York, where he attended the Solomon Schechter School of Westchester from kindergarten through twelfth grade. He started playing piano at age five and saxophone at age ten, but he discovered his love for Jewish music while participating in HaZamir: The International Jewish Teen Choir in high school.

Marc graduated from Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pennsylvania, in 2022 with a BA in Jewish Studies and Music Composition, and was named a semi-finalist in the Fulbright Program. While in college, Marc composed several musical settings of Jewish liturgical texts and wrote an honors thesis on the development of cantorial music. After spending a year learning at Yeshivas Tiferes Bachurim in Morristown, New Jersey, Marc began his cantorial studies at JTS in the fall of 2023. He currently serves as the cantorial intern at the Westchester Jewish Center and a choral intern at Shirei Chesed Community Chorus.

The William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education



RABBI NAIMA HIRSCH GELMAN is a writer, educator, and lifelong student. Based in Savannah, Georgia, with her family, she is an online MA student at The William Davidson Graduate School of

Jewish Education. Her past experience as an educator includes teaching fifth graders about adversity in Jewish history, high schoolers about the power of ritual, and college students about approaches to Jewish sexuality. Naima was selected for the Vatichtov writing fellowship and has trained with Clal and JOIN for Justice. She has a BA in English from Hunter College and was ordained from Yeshivat Maharat in June of 2024. Her poetry and prose have appeared in *Lilith*, *Lehrhaus*, and *Minyan* magazine, among others.



JULIA GOLDBERG is from Dallas, Texas, and Birmingham, Alabama. She is a recent graduate of List College, having earned a BA from JTS in Hebrew Bible and a BA from Columbia University in

Linguistics. As a Nachshon Project Fellow, she spent the spring of 2023 studying at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Julia is now pursuing her MA in Hebrew Bible at JTS and is excited to be studying at The William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education. She student-teaches 6–8th grade Tanakh at Luria Academy of Brooklyn for her practicum, continues to teach Hebrew and Tefillah at Temple Beth Israel in Port Washington, and recently began teaching at Orangetown Jewish Center. Julia

enjoys spending her summers working as Rosh Musica at Camp Ramah Darom, where she previously was a camper and a counselor. Julia hopes to inspire future generations to love Judaism and learning as much as she does.



HENRIQUE KORMAN

was born in Belo Horizonte, and currently resides in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He holds a law degree with a supplementary education in social sciences from Fundação Getulio Vargas.

Throughout his life, Henrique has demonstrated a strong commitment to Jewish community leadership. He participated in the youth movement Habonim Dror from the ages of 8–20, serving as Maskir and Rosh Chinuch for two years, showcasing his leadership abilities from a young age. Henrique has also made notable contributions to Brazilian politics. He worked as a parliamentary advisor to Councilman Pedro Duarte, was a deputy candidate, and led a political education training program that empowered over 100 young people, highlighting his dedication to promoting political participation and civic education. Henrique is an online student in his first year in the Pardes Experiential MA Program, a joint program between JTS and the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies.



REENA ZUCKERMAN,

who is from Somerville, Massachusetts, graduated *magna cum laude* from Brandeis University with a BA in Politics and minors in Legal Studies and Near Eastern and Judaic Studies.

While in college, she was a student researcher at the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies and the Student-Centered Religious Literacy and Learning (SCRoLL) lab at the Mandel Center for Jewish Education. This past academic year she worked as a beit midrash fellow and teaching assistant at SAR High School in the Bronx, New York, where she also developed lesson plans on the weekly parashah for her high school students. She attended the Drisha Summer High School Program and has attended multiple learning programs at the Hadar Institute.

Gershon Kekst Graduate School



HANNAH ZALIS-ANZI is pursuing an MA in Hebrew Bible at the Gershon Kekst Graduate School and hopes to eventually earn a PhD in the same discipline.

She is the former cultural attaché at the Embassy of Israel New Delhi and the former Technion Israel Institute of Technology country representative. She was part of the founding team of the Amity School of Film & Drama, Amity University, and served as an associate professor at the department. She has also directed, produced, and edited several documentary and short fiction films, and received her BFA in Film and Television Production from Tel-Aviv University and her MA in Cultural Studies from the Open University, Israel.



ISRA BYRNE is a first-year MA student in Jewish History at the Gershon Kekst Graduate School. They previously attended Sweet Briar College in Virginia, graduating with a BA in History and Archaeology. While

completing their degree, they worked as a writing tutor at the Academic Resource Center on campus, and a substitute teacher in Ancient History at their high school. They are thrilled to be working at The Library of JTS. Outside of academics, Isra spends their time with family, drawing, reading science fiction, and exploring what New York has to offer.

JTS gives Isra the opportunity to dive into how the Jewish community's religion, culture, languages, and ethics have affected history, and how they will shape our future. Isra looks forward to learning more about topics like interreligious marriage, exegesis, and excommunication, and other places where Judaism and Jewishness press against cultural and intellectual boundaries.



MARK NEUFELD is passionate about the academic study of Judaism and is excited to be in the MA in Jewish Thought program at the Gershon Kekst Graduate School. Mark is particularly interested in Jewish mysticism and Hebrew liturgical poetry.

After finishing his MA, Mark hopes to pursue doctoral studies and author a critical edition of a Kabbalistic work that has not been translated yet.

Prior to joining JTS, Mark obtained a BA in Mathematics at Rutgers University and has since been working as an actuary. In his free time, Mark enjoys cooking, traveling, learning languages, and hosting events at the Harlem Moishe House.

Albert A. List College



GABRIEL FREEDMAN-NADITCH is a junior in the Joint Program between JTS and Columbia University, majoring in Jewish Texts and Interpretation and Political Science-Statistics. He was raised

in Newton, Massachusetts, and attended Jewish day schools his whole life. Additionally, he attended Camp Ramah in New England for five summers and sang with HaZamir, the international Jewish teen choir. His mother is a JTS-ordained rabbi, and both of his parents instilled the importance of Jewish values in him. Gabriel graduated from Gann Academy in 2022.

Outside of academics, Gabriel is a member of Pizmon, the Jewish *a cappella* group at Columbia, as well as several other clubs at JTS and Columbia. Additionally, he is the outreach director of Jewish on Campus Columbia and is also very involved in the traditional egalitarian minyan at Columbia Barnard Hillel. He has interned with the Massachusetts Democratic Party, with his state representative, and with the Brandeis University Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies. Gabriel has brought the Jewish values both learned and practiced at List College and the secular education offered by Columbia with him through all of his experiences.



HELENE GOLDBERG is a junior in the Joint Program between JTS and Columbia University. She was raised in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where she attended Jewish day school until fifth grade.

She rediscovered the unique experience fostered by a close-knit Jewish community when she spent a semester abroad at Alexander Muss High School in Israel. After this four-month-long experience, which combined both Jewish and secular learning, Helene knew that the Joint Program was the ideal fit for her college experience. She has found an exceptional and supportive community at List College.

Helene is studying Psychology at Columbia University and Jewish Ethics at List College. She spends her weekends teaching second and third graders at Romemu, a nearby synagogue on the Upper West Side. She also works as a research assistant at the Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience Lab at Columbia University. Helene is continuing her studies this semester abroad in Berlin, Germany. She is eager to continue to grow, academically and personally, in her last years in the Joint Program.



DAHLIA SOUSSAN is in her senior year in the Double Degree program between Barnard College and The Jewish Theological Seminary. She was born in Toronto, Canada, and grew up in San Jose, California.

Dahlia attended Gideon Hausner Jewish Day School and Kehillah Jewish High School.

Dahlia majors in Political Science and minors in English at Barnard. At JTS, she majors in Jewish Texts and Interpretation. After college, Dahlia hopes to work in government or public affairs, and write on the side. In addition to her studies, Dahlia is a Barnard resident assistant. She also works at the Office of the New York State Attorney General, where she began as a student assistant in the Civil Rights Bureau and has since moved to the Consumer Frauds and Protection Bureau to work as a student mediator.

Over the past three summers, Dahlia has interned across multiple fields. She most recently completed the Summer Analyst program at Morgan Stanley working in the Legal and Compliance Division.



GABRIEL (GABE) WEISS is in his final year of the Joint Program between JTS and Columbia University. Gabe was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia, where he attended a Conservative Jewish day school

for grades K–5 and then a Modern Orthodox Jewish day school for grades 6–12. Continuing his Jewish education was a motivating factor in his choice of the JTS/CU program. Gabe is majoring in Jewish Texts and Interpretation at JTS and at Columbia he is majoring in Film and Media Studies.

Gabe received the JTS Fellow's Award, NSHSS Robert Sheppard Student Leadership Scholarship, and Georgia-Pacific Foundation Scholarship, and he is one of only three students currently in the 2024–2025 JTS Honors Program. At Columbia, he plays drums in the Louis Armstrong Jazz Performance Program, competes against other colleges in the League of Legends, Overwatch, and Valorant E-sports teams, and serves as secretary on the Executive Board of Directors for E-Sports, in addition to being the president of the Anime Club.

Gabe is a proud recipient of the United States Congressional Award Gold Medal. He was featured in the *Atlanta Jewish Times's* "18 Under 18" issue. He is also founder and CEO of Legal Aid for All, Inc., a 501(c)3 that provides legal aid for the "working poor" and "lower-middle class" who earn too much to be eligible for almost all other legal aid programs but cannot afford to pay private legal fees.

The Rabbinical School

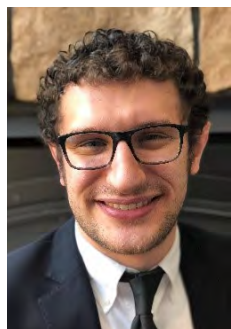


HAROLD (HARRY)

AARONSON is a first-year student in The Rabbinical School. In addition to his studies at JTS, Harry spends one Shabbat a month at Congregation Eitz Chaim in

Monroe, New York. He also serves as a rabbinic mentor for the new JTS Emerging Leaders Fellowship for juniors in high school. Harry is a member of the Beit Midrash Advisory Committee at JTS, where he works to ensure a robust beit midrash culture for JTS students.

Harry holds a BA with highest honors in Jewish Studies from Indiana University and an MPP (Master of Public Policy) from the University of Southern California (USC). His study of social innovation and analytical methods at USC expanded upon his two years as a research specialist at the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, where he helped Jewish communities around the United States make data-informed decisions about their institutional and programmatic offerings. Prior to starting at JTS, Harry was a beit midrash fellow at the Hadar Institute, where he spent a year immersed in the study of rabbinic and biblical literature.



EITAN BLOOSTEIN

is a fourth-year rabbinical student who cares deeply about using the wisdom of our ancient texts to build Jewish community. Driven by his deep passion for engaging and

translating our tradition to our modern world, Eitan is pursuing an MA in Rabbinic Literature and Cultures. He is currently the rabbinic intern at Sutton Place Synagogue in Manhattan and teaches on Jewish views of civil discourse at Congregation Eitz Chaim in Monroe, New York, where he also served as student rabbi for the past two years. As a Beit Midrash Peer Tutor, Eitan works with younger JTS students to improve their text skills.

He also taught adult education at Temple Aliyah in Needham, Massachusetts; served as scholar-in-residence at Beth Tikvah Synagogue in Toronto, Canada; and as student rabbi at Temple Israel of the Poconos.

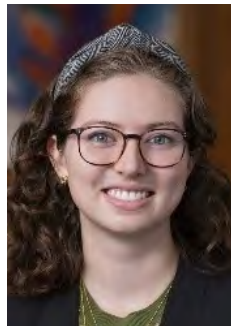
Before college, Eitan spent a year at Yeshivat Ma'aleh Gilboa, where he learned in an Israeli yeshiva environment. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Tufts University with a BA in Religion and a focus on Theology. After graduation, Eitan served as youth director at Temple Aliyah.



SARAH ROCKFORD is a fourth-year rabbinical student at JTS. She hails from Denver, Colorado, and graduated from Colby College in Maine in 2015. There, she spent the next six years working on organic farms

and in the Jewish community—notably as program director for the Center for Small Town Jewish Life.

Sarah is also pursuing an MA in Spiritual Care and Counseling at JTS. She works as an intern with the Glen Rock Jewish Center in New Jersey; at Chizuk Amuno Congregation in Baltimore, Maryland; and with the Hendel Center for Ethics and Justice at JTS, developing a new community organizing and advocacy program for high school students called Ruchot.



CLAIRE SHOYER is a fifth-year rabbinical student at JTS pursuing her MA in Midrash. Claire is excited to accompany Jews and their loved ones through their lives, from daily life to milestones, and help people

to make meaning of a wide range of Jewish texts and traditions.

Claire has served as the Slifka-Nadich Rabbinic Intern for Conservative Jewish student groups at the University of Maryland and the University of Pennsylvania, where she received her BA in Communications in 2019, and she led High Holiday services at the University of Virginia this year. She is entering her second year as the rabbinic intern at the Westchester Jewish Center in Mamaroneck, New York, with a focus on adult education. Claire spent her third year of JTS studying at the Conservative Yeshiva and the Shechter Institute in Jerusalem. She is a trained mikveh guide and recently became the first woman to receive certification for the kosher slaughter of fowl and cattle.