



Academic Bulletin

revised August 2026

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The Division of Lifelong and Professional Studies

Associate Provost of Digital and Continuing Learning and Dean of Lifelong and Professional Studies: Dr. Lisa Springer

Director of Administration: Aden Fischer-Brown

Director of Outreach: Ellie Gettinger

The Division of Lifelong and Professional Studies (DLPS) is the nexus of JTS's continuing education initiatives and programs, adult learning, and teen experiences.

Vision

The Division of Lifelong and Professional Studies strives to expand JTS learning into new areas and to reach new audiences. We do so by:

- **Driving Innovation in Education:** We design cutting-edge, flexible, and accessible programs tailored to meet the evolving needs of learners and professionals.
- **Expanding Existing Programming:** We create new pathways for engaging with JTS's unparalleled education, bringing our world-renowned faculty and resources to both local and virtual audiences.
- **Strengthening the Leadership Pipeline:** We invest in the future of Jewish communal leadership by identifying passionate, curious learners and providing them with education, connection, inspiration, and mentorship.
- **Prioritizing Experiential Education:** We are dedicated to offering hands-on educational programs and content that bridge theory with practice, helping students develop practical professional skills while cultivating a deeper understanding of their fields.

The Division is organized into multiple centers and degree programs, as well as oversees various public education and outreach programs. Core offerings include:

- **The Center for Lifelong Learning:** JTS's Lifelong Learning programs extend our sophisticated scholarship and meaningful insights beyond the classroom to Jewish learners around the world. We offer a wide variety of

opportunities to learn with JTS scholars—from podcasts to online courses to events on campus and much more.

- **[The Center for Pastoral Education](#):** The Center combines theoretical learning with practical clinical training through two signature programs—a Master of Arts in Spiritual Care and Counseling and the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) internship program. Students also have the option of earning a Certificate in Spiritual Care and Counseling.
- **[The MFA in Creative Writing](#):** In the MFA, students experiment with different methods of storytelling while working towards the development, production, and completion of a substantial storytelling piece. This four-semester, two-year program combines in-person residencies at JTS with personalized study and mentorship with world-renowned storytellers.
- **[The MA in Ritual Leadership](#):** Through this low-residency, cohort-based master's program, students deepen their skills in prayer leadership, Torah, Hebrew fluency, and the choreography of communal ritual. Graduates earn an MA in Ritual Leadership from JTS and the professional title of Shamash—a steward of Jewish communal life who is equipped to serve and support communities and clergy with knowledge, presence, and care
- **Teen Learning:** JTS offers a variety of programs that engage Jewish teenagers in Jewish learning and community. Among our programs, we offer academic learning in Hebrew and Jewish Studies through [Prozdor](#), advocacy training through [Ruchot](#), and community-building, learning, and mentorship through the [Emerging Leaders Fellowship](#).

The William Davidson School of Jewish Education is also associated with the Division, and faculty and staff work closely together to ensure that Davidson programs serve a wide audience of emerging and committed professionals in Jewish education. For more information on Davidson's degree programs and requirements, see the [Davidson School's Academic Bulletin](#).

Center for Lifelong Learning

Academic Director: Dr. Alisa Braun

Program Director for External Programs: Tani Schwartz-Herman

Program Manager: Nori Jaffer

Biblical Hebrew

Core Faculty

- Dr. David Z. Moster, Director of Biblical Hebrew

Associated Instructors

- Malka Strasberg Edinger, PhD, Adjunct Instructor of Biblical Hebrew
- Ari Adler, Adjunct Instructor of Biblical Hebrew
- Noam Cohen PhD, Adjunct Instructor of Biblical Hebrew

Knowledge of Biblical Hebrew is a vital tool for reading and interpreting the Tanakh. JTS's online Biblical Hebrew program introduces students to Biblical Hebrew so that they can develop the foundational knowledge required to engage with the Hebrew texts of the Bible in the original. The program offers beginner through advanced courses. Students can take individual courses or pursue the certificate in Biblical Hebrew.

Beginner courses cover the fundamentals of biblical grammar such as nouns, verbal stems, prefixes and suffixes. Advanced courses introduce students to the genres of biblical literature, including poetry and prophetic texts, and offer opportunities to workshop passages with fellow adult learners in real-time.

Small class sizes guarantee participation and individualized instruction. Participants are introduced to the latest resources to support this unique category of language acquisition, including Accordance Bible software and the Biblical Hebrew Grammar Card.

Certificate in Biblical Hebrew

For those ready to commit to sustained study of the Hebrew Bible, JTS offers a Certificate in Biblical Hebrew. Complete the four-course sequence and optional capstone project. By the conclusion of the program, students will be able to read and understand a book of the Bible from start to finish in the original Hebrew.

Learning Outcomes

By the conclusion of the program, certificate students will be able to...

1. Read Biblical Hebrew fluently, with correct pronunciation.
2. Identify and explain Biblical Hebrew grammatical structures and syntax.
3. Translate chapters of the Hebrew Bible into English.

Certificate Requirements

The certificate requires a minimum of three online, synchronous courses, at least one of which must be Biblical Hebrew IV: Advanced Reading Seminar. Levels I and II may be waived at the Director's discretion, based on an oral evaluation. Students may opt to complete a capstone project consisting of an original translation of a Biblical chapter.

Prerequisites:

Students must have a basic background in Biblical Hebrew, including the ability to read the Hebrew alphabet and read and pronounce simple words, in order to enroll in BHP 1000. Students with no background are encouraged to take BHP 0001: Fundamentals of Biblical Hebrew to prepare for the program, or they may obtain basic Biblical Hebrew education elsewhere before the start of their enrollment.

Required Courses:

- BHP 1000: Biblical Hebrew I: Jumpstart Your Biblical Hebrew
- BHP 1001: Biblical Hebrew II: Workshop
- BHP 1002: Biblical Hebrew III: Binyanim Bootcamp
- BHP 1003: Biblical Hebrew IV: Advanced Reading Seminar

Assessment

Every Biblical Hebrew course at JTS has level-specific learning outcomes that are shared with enrolled students each semester via a syllabus provided by the instructor. Reading and pronunciation skills are developed and assessed through frequent assignments.

For more information about the Biblical Hebrew program, contact Dr. David Moster:
damoster@jtsa.edu

Context

Director: Dr. Alisa Braun

Core Faculty

- Rabbi Dr. Robert Harris, Professor of Bible and Ancient Semitic Languages
- Dr. Benjamin Sommer, Professor of Bible and Ancient Semitic Languages
- Dr. David Kraemer, Joseph J. and Dora Abbell Librarian and Professor of Talmud and Rabbinics
- Dr. Sarah Wolf, Assistant Professor of Talmud and Rabbinics
- Dr. Benjamin Gampel, Dina and Eli Field Family Chair in Jewish History
- Dr. David Fishman, Professor of Jewish History

Context is a two-year intellectual journey that fosters a sense of being at home in Jewish culture, religion, text, and civilization. Participants meet weekly on Zoom, studying with major scholars and forming a supportive learning community. The program involves 80 hours of total instruction over two years, with courses meeting weekly during each 10-session semester. Participants also complete regular weekly reading. At the program's conclusion, students are awarded a certificate of completion.

Learning Goals

Context students will...

- Encounter the sweep of Jewish history and the core texts of the ancient, medieval, and modern periods.
- Engage in close reading of texts and stimulating discussion guided by outstanding JTS scholars, who use the best in educational technology tools and strategies.
- Explore the development of Jewish belief and practice over time and encounter the richness and diversity of Jewish civilization with learners from across the globe.

Context Courses

All students must complete each of the following semester-long courses to earn the certificate. Courses do not require prerequisite knowledge and do not require knowledge of Hebrew. All courses also include 30-60 pages of outside reading per week.

The Bible and Ancient Israel

The Hebrew Bible, or Tanakh, is the central text of ancient Israel and the foundational text for Judaism. This course balances an overview of the Bible with focused discussion of core texts, such as the Creation narrative, the Exodus, the Revelation at Sinai, and the prophetic books. Students will examine various

biblical genres, structures, and concepts, as well as the historical and religious experience of ancient Israel. Biblical texts will be analyzed through different lenses: literary, historical-comparative, and rabbinic commentary. This in-depth exposure to both familiar and less familiar texts and to different modes of reading will challenge you—and may lead you to reconsider some long-held views.

The World of Rabbinic Judaism

The rabbinic period—from the Second Temple to the completion of the Babylonian Talmud—saw the emergence of new Jewish leaders whose approach continues to define our Jewish lives today. The Rabbis developed a new vision of Judaism grounded in learning, and a legal system that has shaped the contours of Jewish community, culture, and behavior for the past two millennia. This semester you will explore the Jewish encounter with empires of the ancient world and become familiar with the key collections of rabbinic texts and how to read them. Secondary readings will convey how the Rabbis grappled with urgent theological, ethical, and communal issues. When examined in conjunction with biblical texts, these sources will reveal how central beliefs and practices evolved radically over time.

Jews in the Medieval World

Jewish life during the Middle Ages (roughly the 7th century through the 17th century) built upon earlier rabbinic foundations to generate the construction of a Jewish civilization with distinctive approaches to communal life, social norms, beliefs, values, and religious practice. During this semester, you will encounter core texts that highlight key dynamics of the Middle Ages, including Jewish political and cultural relations with Muslim and Christian host societies; the creation of new modes of community in the Diaspora; and the vast expansion of Jewish culture in the realms of philosophy, mysticism, liturgy, and textual commentary.

Jews in the Post-Enlightenment World

Beginning with the 18th century Age of Enlightenment, modernity posed a significant challenge to Jewish culture, community, and identity. It generated new social and economic opportunities but also threatened traditional Jewish values and society. As in previous eras, modern Jews engaged with sacred texts—suggesting that, however great the rupture and discontinuity, their passion for reading and interpretation continued to be a source for Jewish creativity and thought. During this semester, you will delve into core philosophical, political,

and literary texts that reflect an ongoing engagement with the Jewish past, as well as profound interaction with and involvement in the broader surrounding culture.

Open Classroom

The JTS Open Classroom program allows community members to audit select Jewish Studies and Hebrew language courses each semester. This provides an opportunity for those not seeking academic credit to study with JTS's world-renowned faculty, learn alongside JTS students, immerse themselves in the Jewish scholarly tradition, and access an open and nurturing community of learners. Students in Open Classroom also receive a JTS student ID card and borrowing privileges at the JTS Library.

Up to date information on the application, current fees, and more can be found at <https://www.jtsa.edu/audit-jts-courses/>.

How It Works

Students learn alongside full-time JTS students and are subject to any relevant prerequisites, but do not take exams, submit papers, or receive academic credit or transcripts. Students access course materials via an online platform. **Note:** in Hebrew Language courses, auditors do all required homework and exams.

Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing

Director: Etgar Keret

Assistant Directors: Carlie Hoffman & Eli Zuzovsky

MFA Mentors

As of Spring 2026, the MFA Mentors are:

- Etgar Keret
- Maya Arad
- Rama Burshtein
- Ruth Franklin
- Assaf Gavron
- Asaf Hanuka
- Todd Hasak-Lowy
- Lynn Melnick
- Tova Mirvis
- Yerra Sugarman
- Alicia Ostriker
- Itamar Kubovy
- Iddo Gefen

Learning Outcomes

By the completion of the program, students will acquire:

1. *Mastery of Critical Reading* – read and analyze the work of fellow writers critically, using what they learn to expand their own creative practice.
2. *Knowledge and Proficiency in the Process of Developing Creative Projects* – each semester, focus on one creative writing project under the guidance of a mentor.
3. *Skill Development in Cultivating Artistic Communities* – be active participants in an artistic community and know how to build and sustain such a community throughout their careers.

Course of Study

Required Courses

The MFA consists of **51 credits**, divided between **four 3-credit residencies, four 9-credit semester projects, and a final 3-credit graduation experience**. All courses are required. Students are expected to complete both the Residency and Semester Project courses for each semester that they are enrolled. No partial credit is offered for incomplete Residencies or Semester Projects.

Semester 1:

1. MFA 5100 – Residency 1 (3 credits)
2. MFA 5110 D – Semester Project 1 (9 credits)

Semester 2:

1. MFA 5200 – Residency 2 (3 credits)
2. MFA 5210 D – Semester Project 2 (9 credits)

Semester 3:

1. MFA 5300 – Residency 3 (3 credits)
2. MFA 5310 D – Semester Project 3 (9 credits)

Semester 4:

1. MFA 5400 – Residency 4 (3 credits)
2. MFA 5410 D – Semester Project 4 (9 credits)
3. MFA 5500 – Graduation Experience (3 credits)

Optional Additional Courses

In addition to their MFA coursework, students may be eligible to enroll in other courses at JTS. Students may consult the course listings posted in advance of each semester on MyJTS to determine if there are any courses of interest offered in the upcoming semester. Should a student wish to enroll in a course, they must notify the MFA Assistant Directors, who will consult with the relevant deans of schools and the course's instructor to confirm a student's eligibility.

All registration for additional courses must occur during the registration period before a given semester, which generally occurs in mid-fall and mid-spring. Given this, students are strongly encouraged to consult MyJTS early and to contact the Assistant Directors

immediately if there are courses they wish to enroll in.

Eligible courses are those listed at the 5000-level or those listed in the Hebrew program. Per JTS policy, no student will be permitted to enroll in or audit a course at the undergraduate level or in the Rabbinical School or Cantorial School.

Residential Intensives

(MFA 5100, MFA 5200, MFA 5300, MFA 5400)

Each semester begins with a ten-day in-person Residency on campus at JTS, held in the early fall and early winter. Through craft classes and workshops with celebrated storytellers, study of Jewish narrative forms with JTS faculty, and other literary events, each cohort will form community, build their literary network, gain concrete skills, and draw inspiration for their storytelling.

Jewish Learning Opportunities

During the Residency, students will immerse themselves in Jewish storytelling traditions. Throughout the program, students will have the opportunity to learn from JTS faculty and explore the treasures of the JTS Library, which has the largest collection of Jewish manuscripts in the world.

Students will also be able to participate in regular community-wide services and events held in the Women's League Seminary Synagogue (WLSS) and the JTS Beit Midrash. Interested students can reach out to the MFA staff for the schedule of daily prayer services and relevant Beit Midrash events.

Residency Activity Overview

- **Workshops** for reviewing and discussing student work
- **Craft classes** led by experts on specific topics relevant to writers
- **Miscellaneous sessions**, including small group activities, community building exercises, and field trips
- **Evening activities**, including intimate readings, dinners, film screenings, and SPOILER Festival (see below)
- SPOILER Festival
 - As part of the fall Residency, MFA students are required to attend all SPOILER events.

Workshop Submission Guidelines and Expectations

Every Residency will have a workshop component, led by the MFA Director and other

facilitators. Students will submit work in advance of the residencies for these workshops. Workshop submissions can be part of a larger project or something else the students would benefit from workshopping. The MFA Director or Assistant Directors may require that some semesters the students bring in elements of their larger project to be workshopped, but this will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

The materials submitted before each Residency are the following:

Context Letter (1 page max)

- This serves as a cover page and should provide helpful background on the student's submission.
- For narrative projects (novels, short stories, screenplays), include a brief summary of the overall project and explain where the excerpt fits. For poetry or other work where a summary isn't relevant, the student may include creative context, questions the student is exploring, or anything else that would help the group understand the student's piece.
- Please note if there are specific areas the student would like feedback on or questions the student has about their work that they would like the group to explore.

Writing Sample

- Prose: Up to 20 pages
- Screenplays: Up to 30 pages
- Poetry: up to 5 pages of poems

Students are expected to read all their peers' submissions before the start of the Residency.

Workshop Grading

Following each Residency, the MFA Director and Assistant Directors will evaluate student performance using the following rubric:

- Preparation & Deadlines – 20%
- Participation – 40%
- Craft & Literary Engagement – 30%
- Community & Event Participation – 10%

Preparation & Deadlines (20%)

- **Excellent (A):** Submits workshop material and context letter on time and in correct format; demonstrates careful preparation by reading all peers' submissions.
- **Good (B):** Submits required work on time with solid preparation; engages with most peers' submissions.
- **Adequate (C):** Late or incomplete submissions; inconsistent engagement with peers' work.
- **Poor (D/F):** Misses deadlines or fails to prepare.

Participation (40%)

(Includes workshops, craft classes, Jewish learning sessions, and all discussions)

- **Excellent (A):** Consistently engaged; provides thoughtful, respectful contributions in all settings; listens attentively and helps foster productive conversation.
- **Good (B):** Regularly contributes useful comments and questions; engaged in most sessions.
- **Adequate (C):** Inconsistent or minimal participation; contributions lack depth.
- **Poor (D/F):** Rarely participates; disengaged or disruptive.

Craft & Literary Engagement (30%)

(Focus on applying lessons and connections to creative practice)

- **Excellent (A):** Fully engaged with content of craft and Jewish learning classes; actively integrates lessons into creative work.
- **Good (B):** Attends and participates in nearly all sessions; demonstrates effort to connect material to practice.
- **Adequate (C):** Uneven attendance or passive participation; little evidence of applying material.
- **Poor (D/F):** Misses or disengages from required sessions.

Community & Event Participation (10%)

(Includes SPOILER Festival, field trips, group meals, etc.)

- **Excellent (A):** Fully participates in all community events; contributes to building a supportive, engaged cohort.
- **Good (B):** Attends nearly all events; participates actively in most.
- **Adequate (C):** Uneven attendance or passive participation.

- **Poor (D/F):** Frequently absent, disengaged, or disruptive.

Semester Projects

After each Residency, students will engage in independent study from wherever they live, working closely with an assigned mentor on a personalized curriculum that includes creative work and deep exploration of readings and other artistic materials.

Three times per semester, students will share drafts of their work in progress as well as reflections on their process and sources of inspiration, which will serve as the foundation for a rich and evolving dialogue with their mentor.

The work for each semester includes four meetings, three packet submissions, and three short reflections:

Introductory Meeting

(Within two weeks of the end of the Residency)

- Meet with their mentor (via Zoom or in person)
 - Students are not required to submit materials prior to this meeting. However, they may choose to share a small amount of work, as well as a brief (1–2 paragraph) description outlining the courses of study and projects they are considering.
- Be prepared to:
 - Introduce themselves and share their writing goals for the semester.
 - Discuss and confirm the semester schedule for submitting work.
 - Receive initial assignments (“homework”), which may include writing tasks as well as reading, viewing, or experiential activities.

Packet Submissions and Feedback Meetings

(Three Times per Semester)

- Upload and submit **three packets of work** during the semester to their individual folders, following the program’s schedule.
- Packet guidelines:
 - Maximum 20 pages prose, 30 pages screenplay/playwriting, or 5 pages of poems.
 - Packets may include new work and/or revised earlier work.
- Within one week of submission, meet with their mentor (via Zoom or in-person) to discuss their work, next steps, and additional assignments.
- After each meeting, the student must:

- o Write a **1-page follow-up reflection** (maximum) that includes:
 - ♣ What they plan to write next
 - ♣ The craft focus for their next stage of work
 - ♣ A list of any assigned reading, viewing, or activities
 - ♣ Any other reflections on their growth as a storyteller
- o Submit this reflection to their folder within one week of the meeting.
- o NOTE: The third and Final Reflection (2-3 pages) of the semester should also include:
 - ♣ A bibliography of the works read and a list of activities completed throughout the semester.
 - ♣ An assessment of their writing process, effort, and growth.
 - ♣ Reflections on how the work with the mentor shaped the student's development.

Note: Mentors will also submit three comparable reflections to the MFA Assistant Directors, which the student will have access to via their folders.

Semester Project Grading

Each semester, students' progress is evaluated by the Mentor and Assistant Directors, in consultation with the MFA Director. The following rubric will be used:

- Dedication to Craft – 30%
- Experimentation and Courage – 25%
- Participation – 25%
- Meeting Deadlines – 20%

Dedication to Craft (30%)

- **Excellent (A):** Consistently demonstrates deep commitment to developing craft; engages fully with assigned work and revision; thoughtfully incorporates feedback; shows persistence and care in the creative process.
- **Good (B):** Regular effort toward improving craft; completes assignments with attention and some revision; makes use of feedback.
- **Adequate (C):** Effort is inconsistent; engagement with revision or feedback is limited; demonstrates only basic commitment to developing craft.
- **Poor (D/F):** Minimal effort toward developing craft; rarely revises or incorporates feedback; lacks commitment to sustained practice.

Experimentation and Courage (25%)

- **Excellent (A):** Exhibits courage and commitment to growth in work; takes creative risks with originality and purpose.
- **Good (B):** Attempts new methods or ideas with some success; demonstrates curiosity and willingness to grow.
- **Adequate (C):** Limited experimentation; relies on familiar approaches without significant risk-taking.
- **Poor (D/F):** Little or no effort to expand creative practice; unwillingness to take risks.

Participation (25%)

- **Excellent (A):** Actively and thoughtfully contributes to critiques, discussions, and collaborative work; provides constructive feedback to peers.
- **Good (B):** Regularly participates with useful contributions; engages respectfully with peers.
- **Adequate (C):** Infrequent participation; contributions may lack depth or consistency.
- **Poor (D/F):** Rarely or never contributes; disengaged from class community.

Meeting Deadlines (20%)

- **Excellent (A):** All work submitted on time; consistently prepared for class activities and critiques.
- **Good (B):** Most work submitted on time; occasional lateness but does not disrupt class progress.
- **Adequate (C):** Frequent late submissions; preparation is uneven, sometimes impacting class.
- **Poor (D/F):** Work often missing or significantly late; lack of preparation undermines class work.

Degree Completion

In order to receive the MFA degree, students are required to complete all coursework (51 credits) . Failure to complete all 51 credits will result in non-conferral. Final degree approval is granted by the Dean of the Division of Lifelong and Professional Studies, who can assist with any questions a student may have about their progress towards their degree.

MFA Policies

Academic Integrity and Generative AI

Students in the MFA program are governed by the same standards of integrity in their work as all JTS students. The full JTS academic integrity policy can be found here:

<https://www.jtsa.edu/academic-integrity/>.

MFA students should note that JTS's academic integrity policy includes prohibiting the unsanctioned and/or uncited use of generative AI, including using generative AI outputs as a substitution for a student's original work. Students in the MFA program are encouraged to use all available tools to support their creativity and editing processes within the bounds of ethical use and citation. They are further encouraged to discuss the role of generative AI in their writing process with their faculty mentors. Questions about generative AI use and academic integrity can be directed to the MFA Assistant Directors or the Dean of the DLPS.

In cases of suspected integrity violations, the Division will follow adjudication procedures laid out in the general JTS policy, with the inclusion and advisement of the MFA's Director, Assistant Directors, and DLPS Dean as needed.

Student Conduct

All MFA students are expected to follow general JTS policies on student conduct, as found on the JTS website and in the general student handbook provided each year and publicized on the Academic Bulletin page: <https://www.jtsa.edu/academic-bulletin/>.

Questions regarding student conduct and expectations may be directed to the Assistant Directors or Dean of the Division.

Grievances

Should any student need to register a problem, complaint, or other issue related to their participation in the program, work with a faculty mentor or creative advisor, experience during a Residency, experience with a fellow student, institutional problem, or other issue, the student is expected to follow JTS policies and procedures as outlined here: <https://www.jtsa.edu/policies/>.

As indicated, the Dean of the Division and/or the Chief Human Resources Office can be consulted for assistance with any grievance issues.

Absences for Residency

- Residency workshops are required with no exceptions (other than emergencies communicated to and approved by the Director and/or Assistant Directors).
- Residency craft classes are required, but students may request and receive advance approval to miss a session.
- Extracurricular activities/special screenings with faculty are required, but students may be eligible to skip one session with advance approval.
- Unapproved absences may contribute to a lower grade and, in some cases, not receiving credit for the Residency.

Registration Categories and Continuous Enrollment

All students must register for both the Residency and Semester Project every semester of their enrollment. Students may not enroll part-time and must complete both the Residency and Semester Project courses in full in order to receive credit for a given semester.

All students are expected to be continuously enrolled in the program full-time for two years.

Exceptions are possible in certain circumstances. Students are not permitted to choose not to register for a given semester without approval from the Division's dean to take a leave of absence.

MFA students may begin their course of study during the fall or spring semester, and all registration and time to degree policies begin from the start of a student's first semester of enrollment.

No partial credit is offered for a semester in which either the Residency or Semester Project are not completed.

Incompletes

In exceptional circumstances, and with the approval of both the semester's Mentor and the MFA Team, a student may be granted an Incomplete. Once the required work has been submitted, the Incomplete will be converted to a letter grade.

Please note that work submitted after the semester under an Incomplete may not receive feedback from the Mentor.

Leaves of Absence

Students may request and be granted permission to take a leave of absence for one or more semesters. They must complete the degree within five years of their initial enrollment. They may request and be granted the opportunity to enroll at cost in an additional semester if they believe this will be beneficial to their learning.

Time to Degree

Students must complete the degree within five years (10 semesters) of their start in the program. This timeline includes any leaves of absence.

Academic Standing and Probation

Students are expected to maintain good academic standing throughout their enrollment. Good standing is defined as maintaining a cumulative average of B or higher.

A cumulative average of C or below places a student on Academic Probation. Probation lasts for one semester, during which the student must raise their average to the minimum required standard. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the program.

MA in Ritual Leadership

Academic Director: Dr. Alisa Braun

Program Manager: Nori Jaffer

This part-time, low residency MA is designed to prepare students to become stewards of Jewish prayer and ritual life. All students admitted to the MA program immerse themselves in a core curriculum that provides strong grounding in tefillah and Torah reading skills, with an emphasis on facilitating religious services in different contexts. Electives enable students to develop skills of individual pastoral care or educational leadership. Upon graduation, students are awarded the title of *shamash*, indicating their ability to be collaborative partners in the stewardship of Jewish communities.

Core Faculty

- Rabbi David Moster, PhD, Hebrew
- Dr. Miriam Meir, Hebrew
- Saralee Shrell-Fox, Nusach
- Cantor Perry Fine, Cantillation
- Dr. Rabbi Robert Scheinberg, Liturgy

Course of Study

The MA curriculum is designed to provide all students with a strong foundation in Judaica and education, in addition to fostering religious development and personal growth.

In order to meet graduation requirements, a student must earn a minimum of 30 credits. Students in this online MA program are part-time and take no more than 9.5 credits in any given semester.

Learning Outcomes

By the time of graduation, students will be able to:

1. Effectively guide communal prayer in different contexts, using an understanding of and sensitivity to traditions in Jewish music and liturgy, calendar-specific guidelines, and the spiritual needs of various communities.
2. Plan and facilitate specific rituals such as a shiva (period of mourning following a death of a family member) and other ritual occasions, while offering appropriate

pastoral care to participants.

3. Read and understand a range of Hebrew sacred texts in their original Hebrew form, draw meaning from the texts, and effectively communicate their analysis to a congregation.
4. Develop strategies for ongoing reflective practice in their work as ritual leaders.

Courses

Students must complete a minimum of 30 credits, distributed as follows:

Core Requirements (6 courses, 15 credits)

- LTG 5031Z: Introduction to Liturgy: History, Structure, Theology
- HAZ 5600Z: Nusah I: Weekday Minha and Maariv
- HAZ 5xxx: Nusah II: Shabbat Morning
- HAZ 5001Z: Cantillation: Torah and Haftarah
- LTG5xxx: Synagogue Choreography (includes residency)
- BIB 5013Z: Parshanut

Hebrew (3 courses, 7 credits)

- HEB 5600Z: Jumpstart Your Biblical Hebrew I
- HEB 5601Z: Jumpstart Your Biblical Hebrew II
- HEB 5xxx: Prayerbook Hebrew

Spiritual Care and Counseling /Jewish Education Requirements (2 courses, 6 credits)

- Students may select 2 elective courses (6 credits) in Spiritual Care and Counseling or Jewish Education.

Capstone (1 course, 2 credits)

- All students complete a Capstone project. Further details on the capstone are found below.

Capstone

Students are required to complete a culminating project, The Capstone, in which they will work with a mentor to develop a service, ritual moment, or a relevant alternative that is pre-approved by the Program Director. During the semester, students participate in a weekly seminar where they share aspects of their project to be workshopped by classmates. The Capstone should represent the culmination of work in the program, integrating the academic and experiential elements of learning that have taken place throughout the course of study.

Residential Intensives

Students will be able to participate in and lead elements of regular community-wide services held in the Women's League Seminary Synagogue (WLSS). Two of the residencies are required components of credit-bearing courses.

Fall Semester / Year One

This 2-day residency is devoted to cohort building and strengthening relationships through a combination of learning sessions, workshops, case studies, and opportunities to lead tefillah.

Fall Semester / Year Two: Synagogue Choreography

This 4-day residency is the in-person component of this hybrid course and represents the heart of the curriculum. Over the course of the residency students will:

- Learn how to use the *luah hashanah* (the calendar), and its guidelines for leading tefillah and Torah services on different occasions.
- Learn the responsibilities of the *gabbaim*, including language and nusah for a variety of aliyot (the occasion of being called to the Torah).
- Gain knowledge of issues around the intersection of communal prayer and personal observances, including special *berakhot* made at significant moments.
- Gain a working knowledge of how to make pastorally sensitive ritual decisions that may arise in the course of a service in the absence of a presiding rabbi.

Spring Semester / Year Two: Capstone Project.

Over the course of this 2-day residency, students will present their respective projects and participate in peer-review workshops.

Language Requirements

To be eligible for admissions, applicants should be able to read and vocalize the alef-bet and demonstrate a readiness to continue developing their Hebrew skills. All entering will be assessed by the Director of the Biblical Hebrew program. The following levels are required for completion of the degree: Jumpstart I and II. Hebrew courses are also offered over the summer for students needing to advance their Hebrew skills.

Degree Completion

To receive the MA degree, students are required to complete all coursework (30 credits), which includes a Capstone Project that is evaluated by a three-member committee made up of approved mentors, within four years from the date of formal admission to the program. Upon successful completion of the program, students are awarded the title of *shamash* as well as the MA degree.

MA in Ritual Leadership Policies

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)

If a student has previously taken a comparable course(s) to any core or Hebrew classes or can demonstrate significant prior learning attained through professional, academic, or volunteer experiences, the student can request to be granted Prior Learning Credit by consulting with the Program Director to arrange an assessment. Most assessments take the form of an examination proctored by program faculty. No more than 12 credits of Prior Learning will be granted.

Time to Degree

Students enrolled in the degree are required to either take courses or maintain continuous enrollment status each semester for the duration of the program. Barring approved leaves of absence, students are required to complete the program within four years of their initial date of enrollment. Failure to complete all 30 credits and successfully complete the Capstone within that timeframe will result in non-conferral. Final degree approval is granted by the Dean of the Division of Lifelong and Professional Studies, who can assist with any questions a student may have about their progress towards degree.

Leaves of Absence and Continuous Enrollment

Students may request and be granted permission to take a leave of absence for one or more semesters with approval from the Director. Those granted leaves of absence musth must complete the degree within five years of their initial enrollment, inclusive of any leave time. Students should be in touch with the Registrar's office regarding fees for a leave of absence and for continuous enrollment.

Academic Accommodations

All JTS students are eligible for reasonable accommodations to support their learning. Students must complete the application process and submit necessary documentation before they may receive accommodation and services. The full policy and process for requesting accommodations can be found at the following link to [the JTS website](#).

The Dean of the Division of Lifelong and Professional Studies oversees accommodations for MA in Ritual Leadership students.

Student Conduct

All MA students are expected to follow general JTS policies on student conduct, as found on the JTS website and in the general student handbook provided each year and publicized on the Academic Bulletin page: <https://www.jtsa.edu/academic-bulletin/>

Questions regarding student conduct and expectations may be directed to the Director or Dean of the Division.

Academic Integrity and Generative AI

Students are obligated to follow all JTS guidelines for AI usage and for academic integrity.

Students in the MA in Ritual Leadership are governed by the same standards of integrity in their work as all JTS students. The full JTS academic integrity policy can be found here: <https://www.jtsa.edu/academic-integrity/>.

MA in Ritual Leadership students should note that JTS's academic integrity policy includes prohibiting the unsanctioned and/or uncited use of generative AI, including using generative AI outputs as a substitution for a student's original work. Students are encouraged to use all available tools to support their creativity, academic learning, personal reflection, and editing processes within the bounds of ethical use and citation. They are further encouraged to discuss the role of generative AI in their writing process with their instructors. Questions about generative AI use and academic integrity can be directed to the Director of the MA in Ritual Leadership.

Separately, applicants should be aware that our program reserves the right to decline consideration of any application materials it determines to be substantially written or generated by AI.

In cases of suspected integrity violations, the Division will follow adjudication

procedures laid out in the general JTS policy, with the inclusion and advisement of the Center's Director, Associate and Assistant Directors, and DLPS Dean as needed.

Grievances

Should any student need to register a problem, complaint, or other issue related to their participation in the program, work with instructors, mentors, experience during a residency, experience with a fellow student, institutional problem, or other issue, the student is expected to follow JTS policies and procedures as outlined here:

<https://www.jtsa.edu/policies/>.

The Dean and/or the Chief Human Resources Office can be consulted for assistance with any grievance issues.

Absences for Residency

- Residency attendance is required with no exceptions (other than emergencies communicated to and approved by the Director).
- For the two credit-bearing residencies, Synagogue Choreography and Capstone, unapproved absences from residency activities will contribute to a lower grade in the course.

Academic Standing and Probation

Students are expected to maintain good academic standing throughout their enrollment. Good standing is defined as maintaining a cumulative average of B or higher.

A cumulative average of C or below places a student on Academic Probation. Probation lasts for one semester, during which the student must raise their average to the minimum required standard. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the program.

Center for Pastoral Education

Director: Rabbi Naomi Kalish, PhD, ACPE, BCC

Associate Director: Rabbi Ilanit Goldberg-Gradess, MA, ACPE, BCC

Associate Director: Rabbi Yael Shmilovitz, MA, MARE, MHC-LP, ACPE

Assistant Director: The Rev. Kaylin Milazzo, MDiv, ACPE, BCC

The Center for Pastoral Education is a multifaith program providing training and education in pastoral care to seminary students, religious leaders, and professionals from diverse religious communities through our course offerings, certificate program, and master's degree. Our programs equip students to connect in caring relationships with people as they search for meaningful responses to the challenges of illness, hospitalization, death and dying, mental illness, and other distressing life experiences. Students engage in small group seminars and receive individual supervision, deepening their spiritual and professional development, awareness of self and others, and spiritual caregiving skills.

Our programs are grounded in the “reflective practitioner” model of learning, which helps students integrate their identities, beliefs, and prior knowledge with new insights that emerge through the process of practicing spiritual caregiving. The educational components of CPE include student presentations of verbatims—written reports of spiritual care visits—as well as group seminars emphasizing attuned engagement with others, seminars on spiritual care topics, and individual supervision.

Spiritual Care and Counseling Faculty

- Chaplain Stevie Douglas, MFA
- Chaplain Soren Glassing, MA
- Chaplain Linda Golding, MA, BCC
- Rabbi Maor Green, PhD
- Rabbi Jo Hirschmann, ACPE, BCC
- Rabbi Naomi Kalish, PhD, ACPE, BCC
- Rabbi Mary Brett Koplen, MA, BCC
- Rob Stevens, MDiv, LMSW
- Rev. Daniel Yang, MDiv, BCC

ACPE Faculty

- Rabbi Ilanit Goldberg-Gradess, ACPE, BCC

- Rabbi Naomi Kalish, PhD, ACPE, BCC
- Rev. Kaylin Milazzo, MDiv, ACPE, BCC
- Chaplain Anthony Maynard, MDiv, ThM, ACPE
- Rabbi Yael Shmilovitz, MA, MARE, MHC-LP, ACPE

Master of Arts in Spiritual Care and Counseling

The MA in Spiritual Care and Counseling welcomes people who feel called upon to bring healing to a troubled world by becoming a spiritual care professional. Inspired by Judaism's rich tradition of caring for others during significant and challenging times, JTS's program offers both a traditional in-person and a flexible online pathway for developing the skills and capacity to support, comfort, and accompany people through difficulty. Our program prepares people for work in chaplaincy and other contexts for providing spiritual care. This multifaith program welcomes students from diverse backgrounds.

Students will focus on providing care to people during difficult times, including death, trauma, illness, hospitalization, and incarceration, and in settings such as hospitals, congregations, schools, camps, or prisons. This MA will help fulfill the educational requirements for board certification as a Professional Chaplain.

Interested applicants are strongly encouraged to set up an informal conversation with the director of the MA, Rabbi Kalish, to discuss our programs further:

<https://calendly.com/nakalish/meeting-with-rabbi-kalish>

Learning Outcomes

By graduation, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate spiritual care and counseling content knowledge through appropriate planning and provision of care.
2. Apply insight and wisdom drawn from Jewish texts and traditions (or from one's own religious, spiritual, or cultural background) in providing spiritual care.
3. In clinical learning, achieve at least Level 1A outcomes as articulated in the 2023 standards by [The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education \(ACPE\)](#).
4. In the clinical setting, demonstrates awareness and willingness to tend to the care recipient's attitudes, values, and emotional engagement as person-centered care.
5. Weave together knowledge that emerges from three sources of learning (personal, cognitive, clinical) in the formation of as a spiritual care provider.
6. Develop strategies for ongoing reflective practice as spiritual caregivers.
7. Establish peer relations and build communities of practice for the purposes of

providing support and consultation that promotes individual growth throughout their careers.

Course of Study

The MA in Spiritual Care and Counseling is a 30-credit degree that has two options for completion: (A) Six academic SCC courses and two accredited CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) internships by approved accreditors or (B) eight academic SCC courses and one CPE internship by an approved accreditor. CPE internships earn 6 credits. In both pathways, students' coursework requirements include a capstone project.

Students are also required to participate in an annual in-person retreats at the JTS campus in New York. Students should expect to attend a minimum of two retreats during their degree program—those who take more flexible pathways to degree completion should consult with the Director regarding attendance at additional retreats during their time of enrollment.

The program offers flexibility for students to move through their requirements at their own pace. The shortest length for completion of the program is 15 months, with most students typically completing the program within 2–3 years.

Courses

All students must complete the four core courses, one elective course in Spiritual Care Resources, and one elective course in Ethics and Diversity. These courses are:

Core courses:

- SCC 5431: Foundations of Spiritual Care and Counseling (3 credits)
 - Ideally, this course should be completed in the first or second semester of enrollment.
- SCC 5422: Dying, Death, Grief, and Bereavement (3 credits)
- SCC 5426: Mental Health and Healing of Spirit (3 credits)
- SCC 5000: Capstone Course (3 credits)

Electives in Spiritual Care Resources

- SCC 5410 Music, Art, and Texts of Comfort (3 credits)
- SCC 5472 Psalms and Spiritual Care (3 credits)

Electives in Ethics and Diversity

- SCC 5401 Spiritual Care across Difference (3 credits)
- SCC 5425 Spiritual Care Ethics (3 credits)

If students are completing the program through Option A (six academic SCC courses), they will also complete two accredited CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) internships by approved accreditors; see below.

If they are completing the program through Option B (eight academic SCC courses), they will take two additional SCC electives and complete one CPE internship by an approved accreditor; see below.

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

Students in the MA in Spiritual Care and Counseling program earn six (6) academic credits for completing an internship in Clinical Pastoral Education or twelve (12) credits for completing two.

SCC Retreats

MA students participate in a mandatory in-person annual retreat. This year it will take place from January 11-15, 2027 at the JTS campus in New York City.

Capstone Project

Students are required to complete a culminating project, **The Capstone**, which can be an academic research paper, the development of a professional tool, an artistic expression, or a relevant alternative that is pre-approved by the Program Director. The Capstone should represent the culmination of work in the program, integrating the theoretical and experiential elements of learning that have taken place throughout the course of study. The Capstone Project is completed in SCC 5000.

Certificate in Spiritual Care and Counseling

The Certificate program welcomes people who seek an introduction to Spiritual Care and Counseling. Inspired by Judaism's rich tradition of caring for others during significant and challenging times, JTS's program offers both a traditional in-person and a flexible online pathway for developing the skills and capacity to support, comfort, and accompany people through difficulty. This multifaith program welcomes students from diverse backgrounds. Students will focus on providing care to people during difficult times, such as during times of death, trauma, illness, hospitalization, or incarceration, and in settings such as hospitals, congregations, schools, camps, or prisons.

Learning Outcomes

By completion of the certificate, students will be able to:

1. Begin to demonstrate spiritual care and counseling content knowledge through appropriate planning and provision of care.
2. Apply insight and wisdom drawn from Jewish texts and traditions (or from one's own religious, spiritual, or cultural background) in providing spiritual care.
3. In clinical learning, begin to achieve Level 1A outcomes as articulated in the 2023 standards by [The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education \(ACPE\)](#).
4. In the clinical setting, demonstrates awareness and willingness to tend to the care recipient's attitudes, values, and emotional engagement as person-centered care.
5. Begin to develop strategies for ongoing reflective practice as spiritual caregivers.
6. Begin to establish peer relations and build communities of practice for the purposes of providing support and consultation that promotes individual growth throughout their careers.

Course of Study

The Certificate in Spiritual Care and Counseling is a 15-credit program that consists of three 3-credit academic courses in Spiritual Care and Counseling and one 6-credit accredited CPE internship. **Unlike the MA, there is no capstone project.** Students in the Certificate program may apply to the MA program and transfer all their certificate credits towards the MA degree. See above for course listings.

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)

Our Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) programs equip students to connect in caring relationships with people as they search for meaningful responses to the challenges of illness, hospitalization, death and dying, mental illness, and other distressing life experiences. Students engage in small group seminars and receive individual supervision, deepening their spiritual and professional development, awareness of self and others, and spiritual caregiving skills. Seminary students, religious leaders, and professionals from diverse religious communities are all encouraged to enroll in the Center's CPE programs.

Approved CPE programs

To satisfy JTS graduation requirements for the MA in Spiritual Care and Counseling, the Rabbinical School and Cantorial School, students must complete CPE at a center that is certified by ACPE: the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education or CASC: the

Canadian Association of Spiritual Care.

An accredited program directory can be found [here](#).

Students seeking to fulfill JTS CPE requirements must receive approval by the Director of the Center for Pastoral Education before the start of the program.

Learning Outcomes and Indicators

Learning outcomes and indicators for ACPE-accredited CPE programs are in the following areas:

- Category A: Spiritual Formation and Integration
- Category B: Awareness of Self and Others
- Category C: Relational Dynamics
- Category D: Spiritual Care Interventions
- Category E: Professional Development

JTS draws upon the outcomes and indicators as approved by ACPE in 2023, detailed on their website here: [ACPE Outcomes and Indicators - ACPE Manuals - 2025](#).

In-person CPE internship program at JTS

In JTS's in-person New York City CPE programs, students have placements with JTS partner institutions that provide care in hospices, hospitals, nursing homes, prison reentry organizations, or mental health settings. Our partner institutions include Coop Village NORC, Dorot, Hebrew Home at Riverdale, MJHS Hospice, Project ORE, The New Jewish Home, The Osborne Association, and The New York City Health and Hospital Systems.

JTS offers the in-person CPE program during two cycles per year:

- Part-time Academic Year program: students typically spend ten to twelve hours a week providing spiritual care at the clinical site and approximately four hours a week attending CPE classes. This program earns one (1.0) unit of credit through ACPE: Association for Clinical Pastoral Education.
- Full-time Summer program: students spend three days a week providing spiritual care at the clinical site and the other two days at JTS for educational seminars. This program earns one (1.0) unit of credit through ACPE: Association for Clinical Pastoral Education.

The JTS Online CPE program

For JTS's online CPE program, students identify an organization that is conducive for them to provide spiritual care. These may include hospices, hospitals, nursing homes, congregations, colleges or universities, boarding schools, prisons or jails, prison reentry organizations, social service agencies, or mental health settings. A person's place of employment is eligible to serve as CPE Clinical Site Placement as long as it provides enough opportunity for providing spiritual care. The organization must sign a Clinical Site Placement Agreement with JTS.

JTS offers the online CPE program during two cycles per year:

- Academic Year part-time program ("Extended Unit"): typically spend ten to twelve hours a week providing spiritual care in-person at their clinical site in their local community and approximately four hours a week attending an online CPE classes. This program earns one (1.0) unit of credit through ACPE: Association for Clinical Pastoral Education.
- Spring-Summer part-time program ("Extended Unit"): students typically spend ten to twelve hours a week providing spiritual care in-person at their clinical site in their local community and approximately four hours a week attending an online CPE class. This program earns one (1.0) unit of credit through ACPE: Association for Clinical Pastoral Education.

Application Materials and Instructions for the JTS CPE Program

We welcome applicants to the JTS CPE program who are matriculated students at JTS from all graduate programs, students from other institutions, religious and spiritual leaders, working professionals, and those who are exploring a career change into chaplaincy.

To apply, please fill out [this application](#).

Admission to degree programs at JTS does not guarantee a placement in our CPE program due to limited availability. The faculty and staff at the Center for Pastoral Education are available to JTS students for guidance in exploring the over 400 accredited ACPE programs around the country. An accredited program directory can be found [here](#).

CPE Fees

The program fee for participation in the JTS CPE Program is \$1,000. All students in the New York City Summer Program are eligible to receive a tuition scholarship of \$1000.

Students participating in the JTS online CPE program also are charged a \$200 fee to establish a new clinical site placement agreement.

Students participating in non-JTS CPE programs are responsible for paying the program fee or tuition charged by those institutions.

CPE Scholarship Support

Students who participate in the JTS in-person NYC CPE Program are eligible for scholarships granted to the center through agencies and foundations, including the UJA-Federation of New York, the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation, the Sam Roosth Foundation, The New Jewish Home, and the Education Alliance. These scholarships provide full coverage of the \$1,000 tuition and a stipend of \$1,500 toward living expenses.

JTS rabbinical and cantorial students are also eligible to receive the Paul A. Kaplan Memorial Fellowship in Pastoral Care (see below).

Pastoral Care Education for Rabbinical and Cantorial Students

Graduation Requirements

Students in the JTS Rabbinical School have the following graduation requirements:

- SCC 5431 Foundations of Spiritual Care and Counseling (3 credits): This course should be completed as a prerequisite for the CPE internship.
- An accredited CPE internship
- An elective in Spiritual Care and Counseling (or one Professional Skills course that is overseen by the Deans of the Rabbinical School).

Students in the JTS Cantorial School have the following graduation requirements:

- SCC 5431 Foundations of Spiritual Care and Counseling (3 credits): This course should be completed as a prerequisite for the CPE internship.
- An accredited CPE internship

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Internship

See above for information about the JTS CPE program, other accredited programs that

fulfill the graduation requirement, and fees.

Admission to degree programs at JTS does not guarantee a placement in our CPE program due to limited availability. The faculty and staff at the Center for Pastoral Education are available to JTS students for guidance in exploring the over 400 accredited ACPE programs around the country. An accredited program directory can be found [here](#).

In addition to the scholarships offered to all participants in the JTS in-person New York City CPE program, JTS Rabbinical and Cantorial students are eligible to receive the Paul A. Kaplan Memorial Fellowship for the completion of one CPE internship in the amount of \$4,500. To confirm receiving this fellowship, students should complete the following form: <https://form.jotform.com/261085374032048> and email InfoCPE@jtsa.edu to alert the office to its submission.

Certificate in Spiritual Care and Counseling

Students in the JTS Rabbinical and Cantorial Schools may apply for the Certificate in Spiritual Care and Counseling. The program consists of three academic courses in Spiritual Care and Counseling and one CPE internship, inclusive of what they have completed as their graduation requirements.

To apply, students should complete the application here: <https://form.jotform.com/253284308705054> and email InfoCPE@jtsa.edu to alert the office to the submission of their application. Admissions are on a rolling basis.

MA in Spiritual Care and Counseling

Students in the JTS Rabbinical and Cantorial Schools may apply for the MA in Spiritual Care and Counseling. The program consists of six academic courses in Spiritual Care and Counseling and two CPE internships, inclusive of what they have completed as their graduation requirements. The MA in Spiritual Care and Counseling fulfills the masters requirements of the Rabbinical School.

To apply, students should complete the application here: <https://form.jotform.com/253284308705054> and email InfoCPE@jtsa.edu to alert the office to the submission of their application. Admissions are on a rolling basis.

Building a Community of Spiritual Caregivers

The Center for Pastoral Education offers a pluralistic setting that encourages the examination of diverse experiences and ideas. While there are no formal religious or

denominational requirements for admission and enrollment, the fields of chaplaincy and spiritual care are rooted in the idea that people are meaning-making creatures and that spirituality holds potential for healing, purpose, and resilience. At JTS we draw on the understanding of spirituality as the part of us that seeks hope, meaning, purpose, and connection, whether through religion, a spiritual practice, the arts, or another source. Students should be engaged and prepared to reflect on their own thoughts and experiences in these areas.

Our strength as spiritual caregivers comes from our commitment to relationship-based caregiving and learning. The Center encourages all students to participate in communal the communal life of the program.

SCC Retreat

SCC MA students participate in a mandatory annual four-day retreat in-person at JTS. During this time, we strengthen our learning relationships as a community of faculty, students, and administrators. Students meet with and learn from leaders in the professional field of chaplaincy and spiritual care.

Community Time

All students in SCC program are encouraged to attend occasional online meetings dedicated to conversations about professional goals and aspirations of emerging professionals. Community Time gatherings will be announced to SCC students by email.

WhatsApp Group

Students have the opportunity to participate in the program's WhatsApp Group to provide quick, logistical information, ease of contact with one another, and to promote a positive and encouraging atmosphere.

All expectations articulated in the Student Code of Conduct policy apply to the program's WhatsApp group and any private communications between students (see below). Students are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism and respect in how they present themselves and act toward others. Harassment, bullying, and disparagement are not tolerated. Hateful and inciting language is not tolerated and grounds for disciplinary action. Questions regarding student conduct and expectations may be directed to the Director of the Center for Pastoral Education.

Board Certification Qualification and Advising

Board certification is a process by which a chaplain or spiritual care giver demonstrates

a mastery of advanced knowledge and skill and capacity for providing spiritual care. Though it is not a government issued and legally required licensure, it is the credential issued by the professional chaplaincy associations and is required by some institutions for employment. Membership in professional associations provides a community of professional peers and opportunities for continuing education.

The MA is a 30-credit degree in the subject areas required for board certification by the main certifying associations. Typically, these associations require up to 72-credits of graduate level study in relevant areas. If students have prior graduate education, it may qualify for fulfillment of the graduate education requirements for certification. Throughout their studies, students may meet with SCC faculty, CPE Educators, and the Center administrators for advisement about pursuing a career in chaplaincy including qualifying for board certification as a professional chaplain. JTS has multiple program offerings to combine with the MA in Spiritual Care and Counseling if one needs or is seeking more graduate education.

Students are advised to contact the professional certifying associations directly to confirm what they need to qualify for certification. The primary association links are here:

[APC: Association of Professional Chaplains](#)

[CASC: Canadian Association for Spiritual Care](#)

[NACC: National Association of Catholic Chaplains](#)

[NAJC: Neshama: Association of Jewish Chaplains](#)

Career Advising

All graduating MA SCC students are eligible for support from the JTS Alumni Office. The Alumni Office assists students with networking, social media, resumes, cover letters, thank you notes, references, personal branding, interviewing, negotiating, and much more.

Academic Policies and Standards

Deferred Enrollment

Accepted students may defer enrollment for one or two semesters.

Transfer Credit

Students may transfer credit for up to 2 units of CPE internship (accredited by either ACPE or CASC or another accrediting body approved by ACPE), totaling up to or 12

credits. Students may transfer up to 6 credits, or 2 courses, of approved academic coursework in Spiritual or Pastoral Care and Counseling. Courses in Pastoral or Spiritual Care and Counseling previously taken at JTS are automatically approved. Students may apply for a review for approval of courses taken at other institutions.

Time to Degree

Students must complete the MA degree within five years (10 semesters) of their start in the program. This timeline includes any leaves of absence.

Leaves of Absence and Continuous Enrollment

Students may request and be granted permission to take a leave of absence for one or more semesters with approval from the Director. They must complete the degree within five years of their initial enrollment. Students should be in touch with the Registrar's office regarding fees for a leave of absence and for continuous enrollment.

Academic Accommodations

All JTS students, including those in the SCC MA, Certificate Program, and CPE Internship program, are eligible for reasonable accommodations to support their learning. Students must complete the application process and submit necessary documentation before they may receive accommodation and services. The full policy and process for requesting accommodations can be found at the following link to [the JTS website](#).

The Dean of the Division of Lifelong and Professional Studies oversees accommodations for SCC students. The Director of the Center should be consulted for accommodations that may be needed at CPE internship sites. Note that internship sites will have their own policies and procedures for requesting and granting accommodations. The Director can assist and advise on this as needed.

Student Conduct

All students are expected to follow general JTS policies on student conduct, as found on the JTS website and in the general student handbook provided each year and publicized on the Academic Bulletin and Student Intranet. SCC students are also expected to conduct themselves according to the norms of ethical and professional conduct in the field of chaplaincy, as expressed in the Common Code of Ethics for Chaplains, Pastoral Counselors, Pastoral Educators, and Students: [Common-Code-of-Ethics.pdf](#). During CPE, students are also obligated to adhere to the rights and responsibilities, standards, and policies, for students.

Students are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism and respect in how they present themselves and act toward others. Harassment, bullying, and disparagement are not tolerated. Hateful and inciting language is not tolerated and grounds for disciplinary action. Questions regarding student conduct and expectations may be directed to the Director of the Center for Pastoral Education.

Academic Integrity and Generative AI.

Students are obligated to follow all JTS guidelines for AI usage and for academic integrity.

Students in the SCC and CPE programs are governed by the same standards of integrity in their work as all JTS students. The full JTS academic integrity policy can be found here: <https://www.jtsa.edu/academic-integrity/>.

SCC and CPE students should note that JTS's academic integrity policy includes prohibiting the unsanctioned and/or uncited use of generative AI, including using generative AI outputs as a substitution for a student's original work. Students in the SCC and CPE programs are encouraged to use all available tools to support their creativity, academic learning, personal reflection and narrative, and editing processes within the bounds of ethical use and citation. They are further encouraged to discuss the role of generative AI in their writing process with their faculty mentors. Questions about generative AI use and academic integrity can be directed to the Director, Associate Directors, and Assistant Director of the Center for Pastoral Education.

Reflection and personal narrative writing in SCC courses and in the CPE internship class should be completed without the use of Generative AI.

Separately, applicants should be aware that our CPE program reserves the right to decline consideration of any application materials it determines to be substantially written or generated by AI.

In cases of suspected integrity violations, the Division will follow adjudication procedures laid out in the general JTS policy, with the inclusion and advisement of the Center's Director, Associate and Assistant Directors, and DLPS Dean as needed.

Absences from SCC Retreats

Retreat attendance is required during each academic year of enrollment in the SCC program with no exceptions (other than emergencies communicated to and approved by the Director and/or Associate Directors). Unapproved absences may lead to probation or dismissal from the program.

Grievances

Should any student need to register a problem, complaint, or other issue related to their participation in the program, work with a faculty mentor or creative advisor, experience with a fellow student, institutional problem, or other issue, the student is expected to follow JTS policies and procedures as outlined here: <https://www.jtsa.edu/policies/>.

While participating in JTS's CPE program, or any ACPE-accredited program, students also have the option of addressing the issue through the CPE complaint procedure. They should consult their CPE handbook for information on raising the issue in the local institution and will find information for issuing a complaint direct with ACPE here: [Information on Filing a Complaint](#)

As indicated, the Dean of the Division and/or the Chief Human Resources Office can be consulted for assistance with any grievances.

Academic Standing and Probation

Students are expected to maintain good academic standing throughout their enrollment. Good standing is defined as maintaining a cumulative average of B or higher across all coursework.

A cumulative average of C or below places a student on Academic Probation. Probation lasts for one semester, during which the student must raise their average to the minimum required standard. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the program.

As part of the MA program, students must complete either one or two units of ACPE Clinical Pastoral Education. Students are expected to advance to CPE Level 2 (of the 2026 outcomes) by the end of their second unit of CPE. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the program.

Teen Programs

Director: Marissa Aaronson

JTS offers numerous pre-college programs that engage Jewish teens in academic and practical learning in a vibrant Jewish environment.

Emerging Leaders Fellowship (ELF)

The Emerging Leaders Fellowship is a nine-month program designed to inspire curiosity, critical thinking, and a deeper connection to Jewish learning. Rooted in the values of student agency, academic freedom, and a rich tradition of over 200 years of critical Jewish scholarship, the fellowship invites students to explore key ideas that shape how we understand Jewish history, texts, and identity.

Twice throughout the program, first in Winter, then in Spring, students gather in New York for retreats where they will share moments of deep learning and social interaction with their cohort. Throughout the fellowship, students grow not only in their ability to read and reflect on academic work, but also in seeing Jewish learning as a living, evolving part of their personal and intellectual identity.

Monthly Seminars

On a monthly basis, students meet on Zoom for a seminar taught by a rotating selection of JTS faculty. Each seminar is centered around one of the four guiding questions that form the basis for fellows' research (see below). The purpose of the seminars is to give students different pathways to imagine how they may approach their research processes. Seminars in the past have spanned human authorship of the Tanakh, the influence of contemporary cultures in Talmudic narrative, the difficulty and importance of restoring female voices to the historical narrative, and the ways in which antisemitism has been used – and questioned – as a framework for analysis.

Capstone Project

Throughout the year, students will complete their own individual creative research project. Once per month, students will meet in small group cohorts with a Rabbinic intern mentor to help guide the capstone project component. Twice a semester, students meet one-one with their mentor for a research check-in.

The students base their research off one of the following guiding questions:

1. Pick a time or text in Jewish history. How did Jewish and non-Jewish cultures mix? What does this show about what it means to be Jewish in a diverse world? How do you see yourself in this mix today?
2. Pick a Jewish concept or idea. How did it get its meaning? How does knowing that shape how you understand it now?
3. Pick a time or text in Jewish history. Who is often left out of the story? How does learning about them change the way you see Jewish life and identity?
4. Pick a conflict, debate, or tension in Jewish history or a Jewish text. What was at stake? How do you see that tension showing up in Jewish life today, or in your own identity?

Prozdor

The updated Prozdor model cultivates Talmud skills, a central element of Beit Midrash learning. Students develop language proficiency and study in *chevruta*, working collaboratively to unpack the text. Each session concludes with a class or *shiur* where the group reviews and discusses the excerpt studied. Over the course of the year, Prozdor students build confidence navigating a *daf*, a page of Talmud, and acquire the foundational skills necessary to engage deeply with Mishnah and Gemara in their original form.

Learning Goals

1. Gain familiarity navigating a daf, improving language proficiency in Hebrew
2. Develop foundational skills for Mishnah and Gemara study
3. Strengthen collaborative learning and discussion skills

Daily Schedule

- 10:30–11:15 a.m.: Skill focus (Hebrew/Aramaic review, vocabulary, etc)
- 11:15–11:45 a.m.: Havruta study
- 11:45–12:15 p.m.: Lunch break / informal social time
- 12:15–1:00 p.m.: Group shiur/class