



RECONSTRUCTIONIST RABBINICAL COLLEGE

המדרשה ליהדות מתחדשת



2020-21 COURSE CATALOGUE

1299 Church Road, Wyncote, Pa.

215.576.0800

RRC.edu

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| I. THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST RABBINICAL COLLEGE | 4 |
| Mission and Vision Statements..... | 4 |
| RRC: Our Academic Philosophy and Program..... | 4 |
| The Reconstructionist Movement: Intellectual Origins..... | 6 |
| II. FACULTY | 7 |
| Emeritus Faculty..... | 8 |
| III. DEGREE PROGRAMS AND ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS | 9 |
| Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters and Title of Rabbi..... | 9 |
| Requests for Credit for Independent Study at RRC..... | 14 |
| Learning Opportunities Outside of RRC, Including Transfer of Credit Policy..... | 14 |
| Applying for Exemption from Requirements While at RRC..... | 14 |
| Master of Arts in Jewish Studies..... | 15 |
| Doctor of Hebrew Letters..... | 17 |
| Joint Degree and Certificate Programs and Academic Partnerships..... | 17 |
| Non-Matriculated Students..... | 18 |
| IV. RABBINICAL PROGRAM OF STUDY | 19 |
| Credit Policy..... | 27 |
| Program Offerings..... | 28 |
| Mekhinah Year Program..... | 28 |
| Required Civilizational Courses..... | 29 |
| Required Thought Courses..... | 30 |
| Required Text Courses..... | 31 |
| Distribution Requirement Courses..... | 33 |
| Hebrew Language..... | 42 |
| Practical Rabbinics – Field Readiness..... | 43 |
| Practical Rabbinics – Advanced..... | 45 |
| Multifaith/Social Justice Courses..... | 48 |
| Electives..... | 50 |
| Immersive community-wide retreats..... | 52 |
| Curricular Highlights..... | 52 |
| Beit Midrash..... | 52 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| William H. Fern Field Education Program in Field Education: Practical Rabbinics, Field Education and Student Employment | 52 |
| Practical rabbinics, field education and student employment in Years 1-3 | 53 |
| Practical rabbinics, field education and student employment in years 4-5 | 53 |
| Overview of Types of Employment and Field Experience | 53 |
| Congregational Positions | 54 |
| High Holiday Positions | 54 |
| Chaplaincy Positions | 54 |
| Campus Work..... | 54 |
| Social-Justice, Multifaith and Other Organizational Work | 54 |
| Internships at RRC and for the Reconstructionist Movement..... | 55 |
| Education Positions..... | 55 |
| Life-Cycle Officiation | 55 |
| Community-Service Placements and Other Volunteer Positions | 55 |
| Guest Speakers and Community <i>Limmud</i> (Learning)..... | 55 |
| Jewish Spiritual Direction..... | 56 |
| The Reconstructionist Student Association | 56 |
| Funded Fellowships and Internships | 56 |
| V. FACILITIES, SURROUNDINGS AND STUDENT RESOURCES | 57 |
| Campus Facilities..... | 57 |
| Ziegelman Hall..... | 57 |
| The Center for Jewish Ethics | 58 |
| Campus Surroundings | 59 |
| Directions to RRC | 60 |
| Grading System | 61 |
| Student Resources | 66 |
| Financial Assistance | 66 |
| Financial-Aid Award Deadlines | 66 |
| Need-Based Scholarships..... | 67 |
| Merit-Based Scholarships for Incoming Students..... | 67 |
| Additional Scholarships..... | 67 |
| Need- and Merit-Based Scholarships..... | 69 |
| VII. GRADUATION AND EMPLOYMENT DATA | 70 |

VIII. 2020-21 ACADEMIC CALENDAR..... 71

I. THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST RABBINICAL COLLEGE

Mission and Vision Statements

MISSION The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College cultivates and supports Jewish living, learning and leadership for a changing world.

EDUCATIONAL ENTERPRISE The vitality of the Jewish people requires a dynamic approach to Jewish life. The approach must honor the past, meet the needs of the present and provide a road to the future through bold, innovative thinking. The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College will:

EDUCATE rabbis and other Jewish community leaders who will help people create meaningful, purposeful and spiritual lives; engage Jews of all ages in sacred study grounded in scholarly, traditional and innovative methods of interpretation; foster participation in Jewish cultural arts and letters; inspire Jews and others to pursue justice, peace and righteousness; and lead efforts to build and sustain participatory and vibrant Jewish communities.

ADVANCE scholarship with an esteemed teaching faculty that gives voice to Jewish wisdom throughout the ages; sheds light on the historical and intellectual dynamics of Jewish religious civilization; and contributes fresh ideas to contemporary Jewish life through research and publication.

DEVELOP and widely disseminate Jewish liturgical and educational materials that foster meaningful living and promote a world in which all peoples coexist peacefully and with mutual respect.

RRC: Our Academic Philosophy and Program

The Reconstructionist Rabbinical College trains leaders and provides scholarly and religious resources for the Reconstructionist movement and the Jewish community at large. We are committed to fostering rootedness in Jewish tradition; strengthening progressive moral values, such as egalitarianism and inclusion; nurturing spirituality; and contributing to the growth of Jewish communities. We pride ourselves on being a *kehillah kedushah* — a sacred, ethical community guided by a sense of connection to godliness and grounded in beliefs and values that compel us to work for a better world.

We believe that training Jewish leaders is a complex task. It requires us to impart the knowledge and practical training necessary to carry out the responsibilities of the profession, and also to model an ethical community in which transparency of governance, participatory decision-making and caring for each individual are central to the day-to-day experience of students, faculty and staff.

TALMUD TORAH: A RECONSTRUCTIONIST APPROACH

RRC's curriculum reflects the Reconstructionist view of Judaism as the evolving religious civilization of the Jewish people. Our approach to Jewish learning simultaneously embraces the wisdom of our tradition and our ancestors, and shows a willingness to struggle or differ with that tradition. Every course at RRC requires students to be intellectually honest, rigorous and self-reflective. Our students learn how to understand our predecessors' texts and traditions on their own terms historically; explore how subsequent generations have reinterpreted and developed them; and reaffirm, reconstruct or reject

certain texts or practices. We take very seriously our responsibility as heirs of this rich tradition; we are willing to seek wisdom in the Jewish past and to explore new possibilities for the Jewish future.

Our students delve deeply into the five principal periods of Jewish civilization: biblical, rabbinic, medieval, modern and contemporary. In mining our ancestors' understanding of Torah, students enter into a dialogue with those in previous generations who addressed perennial human issues. In this way, RRC educates leaders who can articulate the voice of tradition as it speaks to today's Jews.

FIELD EDUCATION-BASED PRACTICAL RABBINICS TRAINING

In the fall of 2020, RRC launched a new curriculum that centers on practical rabbinics training in field education. In years 1-3 of the program, students will participate in a sequence of field readiness courses where they will develop foundational skills in the areas of pastoral care, ritual leadership and education. While classroom based, these courses will integrate field observation and student learning to help students connect what they are learning in class to the realities of rabbinic work in the field. In years 4-5, students will continue to develop their skills through intensive and immersive field internships throughout North America and beyond, that will be supported and scaffolded by group and individual supervision and ongoing academic work through a range of on-line learning modalities. This innovative model integrates into rabbinic training the best practices that have emerged across a range of professional disciplines.

BECOMING A RABBI

Rabbis, like all clergy in the 21st century, play complex and demanding roles. As community leaders, they must mediate between the rapidly changing contemporary world and their own religious traditions, providing guidance in a maelstrom of ethical and political challenges. As practical administrators, they must contend with concerns of staff, budgets, buildings and program planning. As pulpit rabbis or educators, college chaplains or pastoral caregivers, they must translate religious teachings into holy human encounters. And as religious practitioners, they must nourish themselves through prayer, study and spiritual pursuits so that they can lead and model an engaged Jewish life. To fulfill these roles, rabbinical students need to cultivate and internalize a rabbinical identity. At RRC, we take seriously the mandate to foster among students a rabbinical identity that integrates dedication to the Jewish people, knowledge and skills, spiritual maturity, strong interpersonal skills, integrity and other traits of fine moral character, in addition to a commitment to the responsibilities they will be assuming in clergy practice.

Students develop knowledge and skills through (1) a variety of core courses and electives covering Jewish texts, history and thought; (2) RRC's unique field-education centered practical rabbinics program that combines classroom learning, immersive field work and group and individual supervision and (3) participation in a broad range of co-curricular programs, including workshops, lectures and committee work.

Students are encouraged to use their years at RRC to develop spiritual maturity, to build moral character and to cultivate interpersonal skills. They have the opportunity to participate in RRC's innovative spiritual direction program, a contemplative practice that assists those seeking to discern God's presence in their lives. Opportunities for communal worship and religious expression abound in and around the RRC

community, enriched by the diverse liturgical styles and religious practices of its students and faculty. *Hevrotah* study (partnered study) encourages the development of intimate and fruitful relationships with others.

RRC's commitment to egalitarianism, inclusiveness, participatory decision-making and a vibrant Beit Midrash enables students to cultivate interpersonal skills and build character. By encouraging and sustaining a diverse and inclusive community, RRC enables students to explore and appreciate a variety of Jewish identities and expressions. The appreciation of our diversity equips RRC's graduates to see the holiness in those they will come to serve and to be open to the varieties of contemporary Jewish expressions and identities.

The Reconstructionist Movement: Intellectual Origins

The name Reconstructionist was coined in the first half of the 20th century to describe an approach to understanding and living a Jewish life that dates back to the sixth century BCE. Jeremiah illustrated this approach as he confronted the challenges of early Israel. Correctly sensing that the community was facing great changes, Jeremiah understood that it was his role as a Jewish leader "to uproot and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant." (Jeremiah 1:10)

Jeremiah recognized that the continuation of Judaism required an active effort to abandon certain elements of tradition that were standing in the way of the continued health of the community and to create new approaches in their place.

In the 18th century, emancipation — which granted Jews citizenship rights in France and later throughout Europe — presented the Jewish community with unprecedented questions. Non-Jews and Jews began to ask if Jews could be loyal citizens of the countries in which they lived. If they did not need to be Jewish, why would they choose to retain their Jewish connections? What exactly was Judaism? Was it a religion, a nationality, an ethnicity or something else entirely? Jewish thinkers in various geographic locations addressed these questions.

In the 1930s, Mordecai M. Kaplan, the intellectual founder of Reconstructionist Judaism, defined Judaism as the evolving religious civilization of the Jewish people. This definition of Judaism, widely adopted by many American Jews without knowledge of its authorship, effectively brought to a close 150 years of Jewish communal struggle with the question of what it means to be Jewish post-emancipation. But ending the intellectual debate was just the beginning. A clearer definition of Judaism gave the Jewish people a helpful starting point, but would this newfound clarity lead to a vibrant Jewish life for individuals and for the community? Would the Jewish people be able to contribute in new ways to the improvement of the world, bringing us closer to the peace and wholeness we all seek?

For more than 70 years, many members of the Jewish community have been motivated by an approach to Jewish life that emerges from Kaplan's definition. This approach is dynamic, giving true weight to the evolutionary nature of Jewish life that Kaplan described. The changing nature of Judaism is both a description of what Jewish life has been and a prescription for a healthy Jewish future. A Reconstructionist approach to Jewish life is deeply immersed in tradition, while simultaneously responding to the present and providing a pathway to the future.

RECONSTRUCTIONIST RABBINICAL COLLEGE AND RECONSTRUCTING JUDAISM

In 2012, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College merged with the Jewish Reconstructionist Federation to form Reconstructing Judaism, the central organization of Reconstructionist Judaism. As part of Reconstructing Judaism, RRC participates in the vibrancy of the Reconstructionist movement and provides opportunities for students and faculty to work with, teach and learn from our congregational affiliates in North America and beyond. Our students benefit from being part of a dynamic network of congregations, rabbis and Reconstructionists who, day-to-day, are living out the principles of a Reconstructionist approach. In addition, our students benefit from mentorship from Reconstructing Judaism staff and opportunities to serve as interns within the various departments and initiatives of Reconstructing Judaism.

II. FACULTY

Friedman, Reena Sigman, Ph.D. (p/t), Associate Professor of Modern Jewish History; B.A., History, Cornell University; M.A. and Ph.D., History, Columbia University

Hecker, Joel, Ph.D. (f/t), Professor of Jewish Mysticism; B.A., University of Toronto; M.S., Yeshiva University; Ph.D., Judaic Studies, New York University; rabbinic ordination, Yeshiva University

Heller, Melissa, (f/t), Director of Admissions and Recruitment; B.A., Binghamton University; Title of Rabbi, M.A.H.L., Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

Holtzman, Rabbi Linda (p/t), Acting Director of Rabbinic Formation and Student Life; B.A. and M.S., Temple University; B.H.L., Gratz College; Title of Rabbi, M.A.H.L., Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

Kamionkowski, S. Tamar, Ph.D. (f/t), Professor of Bible; B.A., Oberlin College; M.T.S, Harvard Divinity School; Ph.D., Near Eastern and Judaic Studies, Brandeis University

LaPayover, Rabbi Alan (f/t), Director of the Goldyne Savad Library Center; B.A., Theatre, Pennsylvania State University; M.Div., Union Theological Seminary; Title of Rabbi, M.A.H.L., Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

Lev, Rabbi Sarra, Ph.D. (f/t), Associate Professor of Rabbinic Literature; B.A., Religious Studies, York University; Ph.D., Rabbinic Literature, New York University; Title of Rabbi, M.A.H.L., Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

Mayer, Rabbi Vivie (f/t), Director, Mekhinah Year Program and Beit Midrash; Instructor of Jewish Studies; B.A., Queens College of the City University of New York; Title of Rabbi, M.A.H.L., Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

Powers, Rabbi Amber (f/t), Executive Vice President, Instructor of Practical Rabbinics; B.A., Emory University; Title of Rabbi, M.A.H.L., Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

Staub, Rabbi Jacob, Ph.D. (f/t), Professor of Jewish Philosophy and Spirituality Director, Jewish Spiritual Direction Program; B.A., State University of New York, Buffalo; M.A. and Ph.D., Religion, Temple

University; Certification in Mindfulness Leadership Training; Title of Rabbi, M.A.H.L., Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

Stern, Elsie, Ph.D. (f/t), Vice President for Academic Affairs, Associate Professor of Bible; B.A., Yale University; Ph.D., Bible, University of Chicago

Wasserman, Rabbi Mira, Ph.D. (f/t), Director, Assistant Professor of Rabbinics; B.A., Barnard College; B.H.L., Jewish Theological Seminary; Ph.D., Jewish Studies, University of California, Berkeley; Title of Rabbi, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

Waxman, Rabbi Deborah, Ph.D. (f/t), President, Aaron and Marjorie Ziegelman Presidential Professor, Assistant Professor of Contemporary Jewish Thought; B.A., Columbia University; Ph.D., American Jewish History, Temple University; Title of Rabbi, M.A.H.L., Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

Weissman, Cyd (f/t), Vice President for Innovation and Impact, Instructor of Practical Rabbinics; B.A., University of Pennsylvania; M.A., Jewish Liberal Studies, Gratz College; M.A., Instructional Systems and Design, Penn State University

Emeritus Faculty

Kreimer, Rabbi Nancy Fuchs, Ph.D. Director Emeritus, Department of Multifaith Studies and Initiatives; Associate Professor of Religious Studies; B.A., Wesleyan; M.A., Yale Divinity School; Ph.D., Religion, Temple University; Title of Rabbi, M.A.H.L., Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

Liebling, Rabbi Mordechai, Director Emeritus, Social Justice Organizing Program; Instructor of Practical Rabbinics; B.A., Cornell University; M.A., Brandeis University; Title of Rabbi, M.A.H.L., Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

Teutsch, Rabbi David, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus; B.A., Harvard University; Ph.D., Social Systems Sciences, the Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania; Title of Rabbi, M.A.H.L., Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

III. DEGREE PROGRAMS AND ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters and Title of Rabbi

- Requirements for the title of rabbi are the following:
- satisfactory completion of academic coursework (minimum three years; normally five or six years)
- satisfactory completion of professional requirements
- final approval of the faculty

Upon successful completion of the rabbinical program, students also receive the Master of Arts in Hebrew Letters degree.

ADMISSIONS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Entrance Requirements and Desired Attributes at Admission

The Admissions Committee will determine each candidate's suitability for the College after a thorough review of all application materials, including the completed application form and written self-assessment, resume, academic record, letters of recommendation and a personal statement. We do not require the GRE.

A candidate can only be admitted subsequent to a personal interview with the Admissions Committee.

The College welcomes applications for admission to the rabbinical program from candidates who meet our admissions requirements, which include the following attributes:

Jewish Identity

Candidates must be born of at least one Jewish parent and raised as Jews or be Jews-by-choice. For Jews-by-choice, we accept conversions from all denominations.

Jewish Commitments

We expect candidates to actively demonstrate engagement with God, Torah and the Jewish people. Candidates model commitment to Jewish community and continuity in their personal, familial and communal lives, engaging thoughtfully in Jewish practice and with respect for tradition.

Hebrew Language Facility

For candidates who accept our invitation to interview, the College will administer a Hebrew placement exam to determine their readiness for rabbinical study. By the time of their matriculation, candidates will need facility with Modern Hebrew minimally equivalent to one year of successful, college-level Hebrew study.

Educational Background

Candidates must hold an undergraduate degree from an accredited institution of higher learning, and their transcripts must show solid academic abilities.

Critical Thinking/Intellectual Curiosity

Candidates should demonstrate an ability and willingness to reflect upon, analyze and synthesize information, as well as a desire to explore and shape new ideas and ways of thinking.

Service Orientation

The College expects candidates to value community and enact selflessness motivated by a desire to 'give back' and help, and who look for opportunities to work with and serve others.

Leadership

Candidates should be able to articulate a compelling vision and support a group in determining its goals, as well as be able to develop and implement appropriate strategies to achieve them.

Interpersonal

The College seeks candidates who easily connect with others, demonstrate empathy and work well as part of a team. Candidates need the ability to 'read a room' and to establish and maintain appropriate boundaries with others.

Listening/Communication

Candidates we seek actively engage in conversation with others. They articulate their ideas in a coherent manner. Equally important is that they listen actively and are attentive to words spoken by others while being able to accurately interpret their meaning.

Resilience/Stress Management

Candidates should have the ability to work under pressure, effectively deal with adverse situations and difficult people, and handle multiple responsibilities/tasks at one time. Candidates must demonstrate effective self-care strategies.

Openness

Candidates are expected to seek out and accept constructive criticism or feedback. The ability to be reflective and the willingness to admit mistakes and demonstrate humility is crucial for rabbis and rabbinical students. We seek candidates who actively pursue opportunities to further their personal growth.

Character

RRC seeks candidates who strive to live their lives consistent with their core beliefs. They demonstrate maturity, integrity and authenticity in the face of conflicting demands in order to make appropriate and reasoned decisions. Others must perceive them as reliable, trustworthy, flexible, moral and personable.

Suitability for Reconstructionist Rabbinical Study

Candidates have made a sincere effort to learn about a Reconstructionist approach through exploration of Reconstructionist resources and engagement with a Reconstructionist rabbi and, whenever possible, experience with at least one Reconstructionist community.

While RRC has no formal standard religious practice that it demands of students or candidates for admission, respect for the sancta of the Jewish people and an openness to issues of personal religious observances are expected, as are high standards of ethical behavior.

The College, under the auspices of the Admissions Committee, also reserves the right to conduct a psychological evaluation of candidates.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Applications for admission can be accessed via the [RRC website](#) . We strongly advise prospective applicants to visit the College before beginning the application process so that they can become more familiar with the program, the community, and the entrance and academic requirements. A visit may be arranged by contacting the Director of Admissions.

Each applicant must complete a formal application and also submit the following:

- official transcripts of undergraduate and graduate academic records
- at least three letters of recommendation, one of which needs to be written by a current or former teacher, and another by a rabbi (applicants may submit up to six letters)
- A 5-to-10-page personal statement (double-spaced) that addresses your interest in the rabbinate and the College, as well as your goals as a rabbi. Topics you may wish to address include your formative influences and life experiences, intellectual and religious development, your current Jewish practices, relationship with Israel, and conception of and relationship with God
- a \$50 non-refundable application fee

Applicants are considered on a rolling basis throughout the academic year for the following fall semester. However, those seeking financial aid should submit applications for admission and all supporting materials by Feb. 1 to allow sufficient time for administrative processing. In addition, because applications may be considered for merit scholarships on a rolling basis, applicants are advised to submit all the materials listed above as early as possible in the academic year.

Candidates who are clearly not qualified (in terms of prerequisite requirements, academic record or some other outstanding factor) will be informed in writing that they will not be considered for admission. The office of admissions will contact qualified candidates to schedule interviews with the Admissions Committee. Upon advance request, home hospitality with an RRC student will be provided for out-of-town applicants.

The Admissions Committee consists of the following members:

- the Director of Admissions
- the Vice President for Academic Affairs

- a representative of the board of governors
- a graduate of the College
- two faculty members
- a senior student

ADMISSIONS INTERVIEW

If your submitted materials indicate that you are a strong prospect, we will schedule an interview with our Admissions Committee. Admissions interviews are generally held at the College from November through April, although interviews may be scheduled at other times at the discretion of the Admissions Committee. Applicants outside of the US may arrange to be interviewed via videoconferencing. The Admissions Committee reserves the right to require all applicants to interview again in person at the College. Placement examinations in Hebrew and in Jewish traditions are administered in conjunction with the interview.

At the interview, applicants should be prepared to respond to questions about the following:

- your personal Jewish journey
- your personal Jewish beliefs and practices
- your motivations for wanting to become a rabbi
- your conception of and relationship with God
- your relationship to Israel
- your experiences engaging with North American Jewish life
- your acquaintance with the Reconstructionist movement and its philosophy
- your experience of Reconstructionist communities, Reconstructionist rabbis and the Reconstructionist approach to Jewish civilization
- your experience in Jewish leadership
- your vision for the rabbinate - what kind of rabbi do you want to be?

Because the College values the interview as an opportunity to get to know each candidate individually, other subjects may be raised as well. Applicants less familiar with Reconstructionist Judaism are expected to seek opportunities to learn in advance about the movement, its practices and its philosophy.

DEADLINES

Applications are considered on a rolling basis throughout the academic year.

NOTIFICATION OF DECISION

A decision about your acceptance will generally be communicated in writing within a month of your interview. At that point, you will be accepted into the preparatory Mekhinah year, the five-year program, or, if you have strong professional experience or previous graduate-level work in Jewish Studies, a customized accelerated program. Once accepted, you will need to confirm your intent to enroll by replying in writing within three weeks of the date listed on your acceptance letter. Letters of intent should be accompanied by a \$500 deposit, which will reserve your place in the entering class. (Applicants

who pay the deposit may receive a full refund up to May 15, a 50 percent refund up to May 31 and no refund thereafter.)

Admitted candidates will be sent instructions on how to apply for financial aid. Enrolling students who wish to be considered for scholarships must fill out a financial aid application form provided by the College. Application forms and supplementary materials must be completed and submitted by April 15. Students admitted after

April 1 will be given an extension to the April 15 deadline. Please note, late applications will be accepted but may be at a disadvantage. We encourage all students to apply for financial aid by April 15 if possible. Financial-aid decisions are ordinarily announced by May 15. At this time, students may request Federal Direct Loan application forms from the loan administrator.

TRANSFER POLICY

Students may petition to be granted equivalency credit for graduate courses taken at other institutions if the courses correspond to the RRC course requirements. Entering students should submit a request to transfer credit to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Requests should include the course syllabus and a transcript from the institution at which the course was taken. The VPAA, in conversation with the faculty member responsible for the curricular area in which the course falls, will determine whether to grant equivalency credit. Students requesting transfer credit while enrolled at RRC should submit a petition to the Faculty Executive Committee that includes the course syllabus, a transcript from the institution at which the course was taken, and the signature (signifying approval) of the member of the RRC faculty in whose area the course falls. The maximum number of equivalency credits that a student may apply is 48. This policy does not include courses taken in Israel as part of the RRC program.

CUSTOMIZING THE STANDARD PROGRAM

RRC encourages students to customize the standard program to meet their individual learning needs and aspirations. Options include independent studies at RRC, graduate courses at other institutions and participation in learning opportunities at non-credit-bearing institutions or with instructors outside of RRC. These customizations require petitions to the Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) as detailed below. A FEC petition template can be found in the files section of Populi. ***All FEC petitions must be submitted to the FEC by the announced deadline in the semester before the proposed learning experience.*** To submit a FEC petition, the student should email it to the Director of Academic Administration. The FEC will consider the petition at a meeting shortly after the announced deadline. In some cases, the FEC may ask the student to provide additional information relevant to the petition. The FEC will decide regarding the petition that will be announced to regular faculty members, who have the opportunity to ask questions or express concerns regarding the petition. In some cases, responses from faculty members will lead the FEC to reconsider its decision or to bring the petition to the full faculty for consideration. Once the decision is finalized, the student will be notified. If the FEC approves the petition, the student will receive credit upon completion of the experience and approval of the evidence of learning. All petitions to the FEC require the signature of the student's **advisor**. This signature signifies that the **advisor** is aware of the petition. It does not signify approval. For appeals of a FEC decision, see Section 22.

Requests for Credit for Independent Study at RRC

If a student wants to receive credit for independent academic study with an RRC instructor, they must write an independent study proposal that lists: learning objectives; content of the experience; number of credits requested; evidence of learning and supervising instructor; and signature of the student's advisor. The FEC will then review the proposal to determine that it meets the criteria for credit. If the FEC approves the proposal, the student can earn credit upon completion of the course and demonstration of learning as assessed by the supervising instructor. If students want to receive credit for independent *hevrotah* study, the same policy applies. Students should submit the proposal to the FEC by the deadline of the semester preceding the planned Independent Study. RRC does not normally approve independent study alternatives for required courses offered as scheduled.

Learning Opportunities Outside of RRC, Including Transfer of Credit Policy

Students are encouraged to take advantage of learning opportunities outside of RRC that are appropriate to their interests and complement their coursework at RRC. Students pursuing learning experiences outside of RRC must fulfill at least 72 credits through study at RRC.

Students may petition to be granted equivalency credit for graduate courses taken at other institutions if the courses correspond to RRC course requirements. Petitions to the FEC should include the course syllabus, number of credits requested, a transcript from the institution at which the course was taken, and signed approvals of the student's advisor and the member of the RRC faculty whose area of expertise is relevant to the course.

If, during the program, a student wants to earn credit through an experience outside of RRC that is not a standard academic course, they must write an independent study proposal that lists: learning objectives; content of the experience; number of credits; evidence of learning; and supervising instructor. The FEC will then review the proposal to verify that it meets the criteria for credit and is relevant to the student's rabbinic training. If the FEC approves the proposal, the student can earn credit upon completion of the proposed experience and demonstration of learning as assessed by the supervising instructor. Students should submit the proposal to the FEC by the deadline of the semester preceding the planned Independent Study.

Applying for Exemption from Requirements While at RRC

A student may apply to be exempted from course requirements based on knowledge that the student possesses. In such cases, the student must meet with the appropriate faculty member, who will administer an assessment that measures whether a student has met the learning objectives of the course. If the faculty member determines that the student has done so, the faculty member informs the director of academic administration and vice president for academic affairs. The approval to take a course out of sequence does not obligate RRC to schedule courses to accommodate scheduling problems that result in subsequent years. Students may find it necessary to do equivalent coursework outside RRC.

Master of Arts in Jewish Studies

Requirements for the Master of Arts in Jewish Studies (M.A.J.S) are the following:

- satisfactory completion of all academic coursework
- a master's essay or project: a coherent and original work that reflects the student's insight and learning, planned with and guided by a faculty advisor over the course of a semester

The Master of Arts in Jewish Studies program offers a serious, graduate-level opportunity to delve deeply into Jewish history, thought, ethics and literature while searching for spiritual meaning and holiness. The M.A.J.S. provides students with a sound basis for later specialization, affording them a background in the full breadth of Jewish studies, including Hebrew language.

- The program is designed to serve students with a variety of personal and professional objectives, including individuals who:
- are in the process of learning about Judaism and want to intensify their learning at a level not available in most adult-education programs
- prefer to learn in an environment that encourages exploration of a subject's religious significance and spiritual potential, rather than in a setting that emphasizes only academic "objectivity" and precludes personal engagement
- have already achieved a significant level of Jewish learning and now wish to study Torah in an open, academically rigorous environment
- are planning careers as Jewish professionals and want to deepen their background first
- are considering embarking on doctoral work in Jewish studies that will require narrow specialization

Classes are taught by rabbinical school faculty and are attended by rabbinical students. Love of Torah is enhanced by a commitment to viewing Jewish teachings and traditions through a contemporary lens. Hebrew-language requirements support the study of Jewish texts in their original language. The College integrates academic learning with the exploration of spiritual significance and personal meaning. M.A.J.S. students may participate in many of RRC's community programs, including worship and celebration.

Students in the program will:

- achieve advanced Hebrew-language proficiency to support a lifetime of ongoing text study
- gain a substantial mastery of areas that interest them, particularly in Jewish history, thought and literature
- deepen their Jewish sense of self and advance their spiritual growth
- integrate the academic and personal aspects of the course of study through a master's essay or project, developed with the help of a faculty advisor

ADMISSIONS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Applications are accessible via the [RRC website](#). Applicants will be expected to demonstrate or provide the following:

- a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and an academic record that demonstrates the potential to do quality graduate-level study
- a proficiency in Modern Hebrew equivalent to at least one year of college-level Hebrew study, as determined by an examination administered in conjunction with the admissions interview
- familiarity with the basic concepts of Reconstructionist Judaism
- academic and personal references
- a three-page statement (double-spaced) discussing their intellectual and religious development, reasons for applying to the program, personal and/or professional goals and, if determined, their academic areas of focus within the M.A.J.S. program or ideas for the final paper or project
- a \$50 application fee

A personal interview with the director of admissions and two members of the regular faculty is required.

Applicants must submit all materials to the Admissions Office no later than May 15 before the fall semester in which studies are to begin. When circumstances permit, applications submitted by Nov. 1 will be considered for a program that begins during the spring semester; however, entering in the fall semester generally is preferable.

GENERAL POLICIES

Age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, race, color, ancestry, national origin, handicap and disability will not be determining factors in the considerations of the admissions committee.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The Master of Arts in Jewish Studies program is a two-year program for those who enroll full time. Students may also enroll on a part-time basis.

Forty-two credits are required, including the following:

- Six credits in Jewish history/civilization; and six credits in Jewish thought
- Reconstructionism 1 (3 credits)
- Twelve credits of electives, including one course in which texts are studied in the original Hebrew or Aramaic
- Twelve credits in Hebrew (each student will be placed at an appropriate level based on a Hebrew-language examination, and students whose Hebrew competence is equivalent to that required for completion of the rabbinical program will be exempt from this requirement)
- A three-credit master's essay or project, planned with and guided by a faculty adviser, in which the student spends a semester integrating the materials studied into a coherent and original work that reflects the individual's insight and learning

DESIGNING AN INDIVIDUAL ACADEMIC PLAN

Upon admission, the student will be assigned a faculty adviser by the vice president for academic affairs. The adviser will meet with the student at least once each semester to reflect upon the student's progress and plan an individualized academic program that will culminate in the master's essay/project.

The shape of the program and the cluster of courses the student chooses depend on his or her interests. For example, the program might focus on a period of Jewish history (such as biblical, rabbinic or modern), a discipline in Jewish studies (such as Jewish history, Jewish mysticism, Jewish ethics or Jewish feminism) or a theme (such as covenant, community or prayer). Although no such specialization is required in course selection, the master's essay/project will provide an opportunity for personalized consideration of themes that have emerged from coursework. Examples of master's essays/projects include "The Use of Classical and Contemporary Images of the Matriarchs in Creating a Feminist Jewish Consciousness," "The Hasidic Approach to Prayer and Meditation," "What Is Jewish Art?" and new rituals (e.g., a Tu B'Shvat *seder*).

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

An orientation program is held before the first day of classes each fall. Other co-curricular programs for rabbinical students are often open to M.A.J.S. students.

TRANSFER TO THE M.A.J.S. PROGRAM

When a student in the RRC rabbinic program applies for admission to the Master of Arts in Jewish Studies (M.A.J.S.) program, the admission to the M.A.J.S. program will include withdrawal from the rabbinic program.

Doctor of Hebrew Letters

Students granted the title of rabbi at RRC are eligible for the Doctor of Hebrew Letters degree upon completing the required degree work at RRC, earning a doctorate at an accredited university and submitting to RRC an approved thesis growing out of the doctoral dissertation. Additional details regarding the doctoral program are available from the vice president for academic affairs.

Joint Degree and Certificate Programs and Academic Partnerships

CERTIFICATE IN CONGREGATIONAL AND FAMILY SYSTEMS AND POST-GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN FAMILY AND MARRIAGE at the Council for Relationships

Students admitted as RRC students who are interested in specializing in pastoral care or becoming a licensed Family and Marriage therapist may enroll in certificate programs at the Council for Relationships. Successful completion of the coursework for the certificate fulfills some RRC graduation requirements, and successful completion of the rabbinic program at RRC fulfills some CFR certificate requirements. For more information on the certificate programs, visit CouncilForRelationships.org. For details regarding the joint program, please contact Rabbi Elisa Goldberg at EGoldberg@TheRRA.org.

MASTER OF ARTS IN JEWISH EDUCATION with Gratz College

Students matriculated at the College who are interested in specializing in education may opt to enroll in the Master of Arts in Jewish Education program at Gratz College. Students can apply credits from approved RRC coursework to the Gratz degree and can apply credits from approved Gratz coursework to their RRC degree. For information on Gratz College's Master of Arts in Jewish Education program, contact

Gratz College's Office of Admissions at 215.635.7300 ext. 140 or 800.475.4635 ext. 140, or e-mail Admissions@Gratz.edu.

Coursework at RRC satisfies all relevant Jewish-studies requirements. Two RRC education courses also may be applied to the seven graduate courses in education required for the master's degree at Gratz College.

An internship under the supervision of a joint RRC-Gratz committee also is required. For information on Gratz College's Master of Arts in Jewish Education program, contact Gratz College's Office of Admissions at 215.635.7300 ext. 140, or 800.475.4635 ext. 140, or e-mail Admissions@Gratz.edu.

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT with Gratz College

Students matriculated at the College who are interested in specializing in nonprofit leadership may opt to enroll in the Master of Science in Nonprofit Management at Gratz College. Students can apply credits from approved RRC coursework to the Gratz degree and can apply credits from approved Gratz coursework to their RRC degree. For information on Gratz College's Master of Science in Nonprofit Management program, contact Gratz College's Office of Admissions at 215.635.7300 ext. 140, or 800.475.4635 ext. 140 or e-mail Admissions@Gratz.edu.

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP with the University of Pennsylvania

RRC has an arrangement with the University of Pennsylvania's School of Policy and Social Practice's Master of Science in Nonprofit Leadership degree program, which provides RRC students who enroll in the program with special funding and accelerated opportunities. More information on this program can be found on the University of Pennsylvania's [MS in Nonprofit Leadership page](#).

Non-Matriculated Students

Each semester, some of the courses in the rabbinical program are open to limited numbers of non-matriculated students. These courses are advertised; permission from the instructor is required.

Temple University Department of Religion (on hold Fall 2020)

Full-time matriculated RRC students are entitled to enroll free of charge in graduate-level courses in the Department of Religion at Temple University during the academic year if they receive the approval of the course instructor and the approval of the department's director of graduate studies. Upon approval, the student will receive credit for the course once the director of academic administration has received a final passing grade from the course instructor.

United Lutheran Seminary

RRC students in good standing are eligible to register for courses at the master's level. A student interested in a course is responsible to contact the ULS Registrar's office to ensure that the course is open for enrollment and that the student has satisfied any prerequisites of the course. It may be necessary in some cases for the student to obtain permission from the course instructor(s). The student is to obtain a course description for the course and assurance of the amount of academic credit awarded. Upon

confirmation of the ULS registrar, the student will register the course at RRC ideally three weeks before the start of the course. Tuition will be paid by ULS. Any additional course costs or fees for services by ULS are the responsibility of the student. Upon successful completion of the course, the ULS registrar will submit the student's final grade to RRC for student credit.

Leo Baeck College (On Hold 2020-21)

A student who is in good standing in the rabbinical program of Leo Baeck College or the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College may, with the approval and endorsement of the chief academic officer of their home institution, enroll for a year of full-time study at the other institution and pay a registration fee of \$1,000 in lieu of tuition.

Students interested in doing so should notify the chief academic officer of their home institution, who will then contact their counterpart at the other institution.

The visiting student will be subject to the rules that apply to rabbinical students. Each institution will independently arrange the procedures and rules that apply to the transfer of academic credit for its own students.

IV. RABBINICAL PROGRAM OF STUDY

Goals of the Rabbinic Curriculum

The RRC Rabbinic program is founded on the question: What competencies do 21st century rabbis need to create and sustain vibrant Jewish life, as well as to lead, inspire and support the communities they serve? The full list of competencies that constitute the aims of the curriculum are found in Appendix B, Competencies. In summary, the curriculum is designed to cultivate skills and knowledge that will allow students to be:

- vessels of Torah who are deeply rooted in Judaism's rich textual legacy and are able to share that legacy with others in ways that enrich their lives with meaning.
- *sh'likhei tzibur* (ritual leaders) who lead communities in meaningful and inspiring prayer and ritual as they move through the rhythms of the year and of their individual lives.
- self-aware models of strength and kindness whose actions and leadership model the value that all human beings are created *b'tzelem Elohim* (in the image of God). RRC's curriculum cultivates students' interpersonal skills and their growth in the *middot* (virtues and behaviors) that allow people to live up to this central and demanding Jewish value.
- effective and socially aware leaders who lead in all the settings in which Jews seek meaning and community, and who work for greater justice in the Jewish world and beyond. In order to train students for leadership roles in synagogues, nonprofit organizations and educational settings, the curriculum includes training and internship experiences that develop entrepreneurial, financial and organizational skills.
- healing and helpful pastoral caregivers who will accompany people in times of great joy and great sadness. At RRC, students learn from leaders in the fields of pastoral and spiritual care, and are

supported by teachers, mentors and colleagues as they develop the inner resources that will allow them to support others in their times of need.

Program Overview

The rabbinic program is designed to meet the needs of students who enter RRC with a love of Judaism and a passion for serving the Jewish people, strong undergraduate training in the liberal arts or sciences, and a demonstrated aptitude in the areas of social and emotional intelligence. Students who enter RRC with limited Hebrew skills begin with the Mekhinah Year, which prepares them to succeed in the five-year core program. Students who enter RRC with more extensive experience, knowledge or skills in the areas of Jewish studies, ritual or organizational leadership, and/or pastoral care can modify the program to meet their current capabilities, needs and interests. Our instructors draw on best practices from traditional academic study, traditional Jewish learning, mindfulness practice, and pastoral and professional training to help students cultivate their intellectual, personal, and professional growth and learning.

RRC's current curriculum, which launched in the fall of 2020, is grounded in two core modalities of learning: a) nourishing and rigorous study of the Jewish legacy engaging academic and traditional approaches; and b) field education-based practical rabbinics training in which students develop rabbinic knowledge and skills through coursework and intensive supervised field internships. The structure of the curriculum reflects these two complementary modalities of learning.

Mekhinah Year

RRC requires that some students complete one preparatory year of study before they are admitted to the five-year core program. The Mekhinah Year is designed to accommodate students who lack certain skills required to begin rabbinical study but appear to have excellent potential for service to the Jewish people.

The Mekhinah Year program focuses on intensive study of Hebrew language and literature. Students also devote substantial time to the study of Jewish practices — the *halakhah* of customs, ceremonies, life-cycle events and the calendar — and participate in a learners' *minyan*. Successful completion of the Mekhinah Year qualifies students to continue in the College's five-year rabbinical training program.

Years 1-3

During the first three years of the program, students immerse themselves in the unfolding story of Jewish civilization by studying texts, traditions and lived experience of Jews from antiquity to the present. During these years, students also begin to cultivate pastoral, interpersonal and liturgical skills through field readiness courses that combine classroom study, field observation and service learning. These field readiness courses prepare students to learn and serve effectively in immersive field placements in years 4-5. While the most intensive fieldwork happens in the latter years of the program, students begin to gain rabbinic experience through field readiness courses and less intensive internships in years 1-3. They also gain skills and experience and develop life-long relationships with colleagues and teachers through participation in RRC's rich on-campus community

Years 4-5

After developing their skills and knowledge through academic and traditional modes of study, the focus of student learning shifts from the classroom to the field. During these years, students learn by doing. They continue to develop their practical rabbinics skills and integrate and apply their academic learning through intensive internships in a wide range of Jewish contexts throughout North America and beyond. This field learning is supported and complemented by intensive supervision and ongoing coursework through a range of online modalities.

Throughout the program, students have opportunities to cultivate the personal and spiritual growth that will animate and sustain their work as rabbis. Beginning in 2022-23, all students will participate in semi-annual retreats at RRC's Wyncote campus. These retreats will be an opportunity for connection, community building and learning across cohorts.

Israel summer term program

In the summer of 2021, RRC will launch a summer term program, in partnership with Bina: The Secular Yeshiva, located in Tel Aviv. This required program will combine classroom, experiential and service learning to help students better understand the role of the land and state of Israel in the Jewish civilizational project, especially in the modern and contemporary periods. The program will address the history of the contemporary state of Israel and will focus on fostering an understanding of the diversity of Israeli experiences and perspectives, including the experiences of Palestinians within Israel and the occupied territories. Students are expected to complete the Israel summer term program before entering year 4 of the program.

Clinical Pastoral Education

Beginning with the entering class of 2020, all RRC students are required to do a unit of Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). The cost of CPE is included in RRC tuition, and RRC provides stipends for students completing CPE during the summer.

Areas of study

The RRC course requirements fall into four curricular categories:

Civilizational and thought courses: Civilization courses provide students with knowledge of the major civilizational characteristics of each period of Jewish history and acculturate students to the perspective of Judaism as an evolving religious civilization. In thought courses, students engage with central genres and works of the Jewish theological and philosophical canon. Civilization and text courses are normally taken in chronological order in the first three years of the program. Students can take the courses out of sequence with permission from the instructor. Students taking civilizational courses out of sequence may be required to complete background reading before the course begins to provide them with the necessary historical context.

Hebrew Courses: Beginning in 2020, RRC's Hebrew curriculum consists of a four-course sequence that is designed to support students' textual facility and fluency. The Hebrew courses serve as prerequisites for the text courses that they support.

Text Courses: RRC's text curriculum provides students with the skills to engage in lifelong study of traditional Jewish texts, including Tanakh, Talmud, Midrash and Parshanut. In foundational text courses, students build their language skills and develop their ability to identify technical terminology, idioms, genres and interpretive techniques, and to access and use basic lexica and reference materials. In more advanced text courses, students use these skills to engage more deeply with particular texts or genres. The text curriculum at RRC combines both *beit midrash* and seminar style study, allowing students to use a range of modalities to engage with texts in ways that are spiritually and intellectually nourishing.

Practical Rabbinics: RRC's practical rabbinics curriculum consists of field-readiness courses in years 1-3, in which students develop basic skills and knowledge in the areas of ritual leadership, education, communication, pastoral care and use of selfcare that they will need to effectively learn and serve in immersive field placements in years 4-5. During years 1-3, all students are required to complete one unit of CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education). Students in years 1-3 are encouraged to participate in non-credit group supervision, which is required for students holding RRC-sponsored internships. During the latter years of the program, students will engage in intensive and immersive field education internships in a range of rabbinic settings. Through these internships, which will be supported and augmented by group and individual supervision and practical rabbinics classes, students will develop the skills and knowledge necessary for a successful rabbinate.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

- A minimum of three years of full-time study at RRC (72 credits) or its equivalent (most students complete the program in five to six years).
- Fulfillment of academic and professional requirements, including successful completion of RRC's summer term Israel program and successful completion of one unit of Clinical Pastoral Training.
- Successful completion of RRC's summer term Israel program
- Approval by the faculty

The Rabbinical Program graduation requirements effective for students entering in 2020 consist of the following 120 credits:

Course requirements

Civilization (15 credits)

- Biblical Civilization
- Rabbinic Civilization
- Medieval Civilization
- Modern Civilization
- Contemporary Israel Seminar (part of summer term Israel program)

Text (33 credits)

- Tanakh 1
- Tanakh 2
- Introduction to Rabbinic Literature
- Talmud 1
- Talmud 2
- Talmud 3 (Distribution Requirement)¹
- Parshanut
- Midrash (Distribution Requirement)
- Jewish Mystical Texts (Distribution Requirement)
- Text and Practice (Distribution Requirement)
- Advanced Text (Distribution Requirement)

Thought (12 credits)

- Reconstructionism
- Medieval Thought
- Modern Thought
- Contemporary Thought

Hebrew (12 credits)

- Hebrew 1
- Hebrew 2
- Hebrew 3
- Hebrew 4

Practical Rabbinics (39 credits)

- Field-readiness courses: Tefillah 1-2, Life Cycle shiur, Life Cycle practicum, Year Cycle, Role and Responsibility of the Rabbi, Teaching and Learning, and Rabbinic Communication.
- Clinical Pastoral Education
- Supervision in years 4-5 (12 credits)
- Practical rabbinics seminars in years 4-5 (6 credits)
- Multifaith/Social Justice (distribution requirement) (3 credits)
- Senior experience

Electives (9 credits)

¹ Distribution requirements are requirements that can be fulfilled through enrollment in one or more designated courses. The course listings in the course catalogue and each semester's course offerings identify which courses fulfill distribution requirements.

Additional Requirements include:

- Participation in weekly community davening (years 1-3)
- Participation in community *limmud* (years 1-3)
- Israel summer term program (to be completed by the end of year 3)
- Participation in semi-annual immersive retreats (on hold 2021-22)
- Demonstration of basic liturgy skills (to be completed by the end of year 3)
- Faculty approval of fitness for the rabbinate

Participation in RRC Communal *davening* and learning

Full-time students are required to participate in weekly *davening*, monthly community *limmud* sessions and other required RRC community events every semester of years 1-3. Students who remain in Philadelphia during years 4-5 are welcomed and encouraged to attend these activities but are not required.

Part-time students who are not accelerating their RRC program are required to fulfill this requirement for six semesters. Part-time students who are accelerating their RRC program are required to fulfill one semester of participation in RRC *davening* and learning for each 12 credits that they earn at RRC, exclusive of credits earned during their senior year.

Students who spend a semester or a year in Israel during years 1-3 are exempt from weekly davening, community *limmud* and other required RRC communal events while they are in Israel.

Basic Liturgy Skills

By the end of Year 3, all students are assessed for basic liturgical competence covering:

- Weekly services
- Shabbat services
- Life-cycle rituals
- Torah cantillation
- *Birkat Hamazon, Hallel* and Haftarah cantillation

The materials and skills for performance of weekly and shabbat services, life cycle rituals and Torah cantillation are addressed and assessed in the Tefillah and Life Cycle courses.

Students are assessed for:

- Fluent reading with correct pronunciation
- Ability to apply appropriate *nusach*, as well as contemporary melodies
- Phrasing conveying basic comprehension

Students may not begin Year 4 until they meet the liturgy skill requirements. Students who spend both semesters of Year 3 in Israel may petition the FEC to extend the deadline for liturgy skills to the end of August preceding Year 4.

Israel Program

RRC's core values include:

- *Ahavat Yisrael*: Love of Israel
- *Ahavat Am Yisrael*: Love of the Jewish People
- We share responsibility for the flourishing of the Jewish People
- *Ahavat Eretz Yisrael*: Love of the Land of Israel
- We value the Land and State of Israel as a spiritual, intellectual, and historical center of the Jewish people.

Israel and Reconstructionist Rabbinical Training

RRC aims to train rabbinical students to understand and appreciate the importance of Israel in Judaism and Jewish life, in Reconstructionism, and for rabbinic leadership; to help them acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to speak about Israel with informed sensitivity to and for their diverse communities; and to help them enable others, Jews and non-Jews, to engage in constructive study, dialogue and action related to Israel.

Israel Year Requirement

While RRC encourages all rabbinical students to spend a semester or year living and studying in Israel, RRC requires all students to participate in our summer term Israel program before the beginning of year 4. The RRC Israel program is designed to cultivate the following objectives:

- Demonstrate familiarity with Israel's place in the history of Jewish civilizations and knowledge of the complexities of Israel and Israeli society.
- Gain familiarity with practical resources based in Israel for use in the Reconstructionist rabbinate.
- Develop Hebrew-language skills to increase facility with classical texts and maximize achievement of the other Israel Program objectives.
- Establish a foundation for an ongoing, lifelong relationship with Israelis and Israel

The Israel program, which will be designed and implemented for RRC by Bina: The Secular Yeshiva, will combine classroom and *beit midrash* study with experiential and service learning to help students meet these objectives. Students will earn at least six credits during the summer term program. All students will fulfill the Israel Civilization Seminar requirement (3 credits). The allocation of the other three credits will depend on the details of the program as they develop and on students' individual educational choices.

Tuition and fees for the Summer 2021 Israel program will be announced by March 2021. Students who are enrolled at least half-time (minimum of six credits each semester) during the academic year prior to their Israel summer will receive a grant from RRC that will cover 100% of the tuition and fees for the six-credit academic program, which includes cocurricular activities. Participants are expected to pay for their own travel and living expenses. Students who choose to fulfill additional credits while in Israel will be charged on a per-credit basis.

Completion of Incompletes Before Departure for Israel

Students going to Israel during the academic year can carry one incomplete. If the one-year deadline for the incomplete falls while they are in Israel, they have until the next incomplete date.

Exemptions from and Postponements or Reductions to the Israel Requirement

A student can request a full exemption from the Israel requirement if they have lived in Israel for a minimum of nine months after college within five years of matriculating at RRC. Upon matriculation, students granted full exemptions under this policy are required before the beginning of Year 4 to address unmet objectives of the Israel program through alternate means approved by the FEC. These requests are subject to the approval of the Dean.

The FEC also considers petitions for a reduction of the requirement when a student is able to demonstrate significant personal hardship. In considering personal hardship petitions, the committee weighs the fulfillment of all the objectives of the program against the mitigating factors presented. Personal hardship for this purpose does not include financial need.

Students requesting exemption from the Israel program as an accommodation for a disability should follow the procedure detailed in Section 32.

All students petitioning for a reduction or exemption of the Israel requirement must submit a petition to the FEC describing the grounds for the request, as well as a study proposal that addresses the learning objectives of the Israel program. The study proposal must be approved by the student's advisor and the director of the Israel program or another designated faculty member before the student submits the petition. If the petition is granted, students must fulfill the proposed program of study in order to be exempt from the full Israel requirement.

Students who want to postpone fulfillment of their Israel requirement beyond the summer of Year 3 must submit a petition to the FEC describing the reason for the request before the end of the fall semester of Year 3. The petition must include approval by the advisor.

Wyncote-Based Program

RRC is committed to exploring issues related to Israel and the Reconstructionist rabbinate in its Wyncote-based curricular and cocurricular programs, including required and elective courses, Community Limmud programs, practical rabbinics and advising.

Fitness for the Rabbinate

Successful completion of coursework and of other graduation requirements that ensure the development of intellectual and technical skills is a necessary part of preparation for the Reconstructionist rabbinate, but it is not by itself sufficient. The preparation for the rabbinate includes development of personal qualities, in addition to the fulfillment of curricular requirements. RRC expects its students to possess these qualities at a reasonable level. These qualities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Dedication to the Jewish people and rootedness in Jewish tradition

- Spiritual maturity and depth
- A commitment to ongoing self-care and personal growth
- Psychological stability and self-awareness, including the capacity to self-assess and recognize personal limits, and to establish and maintain appropriate boundaries
- Strong interpersonal skills
- The capacity to function well under conditions of high stress and uncertainty
- Good judgment, flexibility and creativity
- Integrity, humility, gentleness, courage, kindness, reliability and other traits of fine moral character

These aspects of fitness for the rabbinate are critical to faculty decisions about students in the program. Fitness for the rabbinate is essential not only for success while at RRC, but also for success as a rabbi. RRC has a special and weighty responsibility to those who will have contact with a graduate; to individual rabbis, the RRA and the RRC community; to congregations and organizations that a graduate might serve; and to society. RRC's judgments about fitness for the rabbinate are made with awareness of that responsibility.

Residency Requirements and Time Limits

Students who have met a significant proportion of the objectives of the curriculum through prior graduate study or professional experience, and who may therefore be exempted from many course requirements, are nevertheless normally required to enroll at RRC for a minimum of six semesters and complete a minimum of 72 credits at RRC to be fully prepared for the Reconstructionist rabbinate. Students determine which courses to study at RRC on an individual basis, with faculty approval.

Full-time students are expected to complete the program in no more than eight years. Students attending part-time must complete their coursework in no more than 10 years.

Credit Policy

One RRC credit unit represents three hours of student work, normally including a minimum of one hour of instructional time per week over a 15-week semester or the equivalent amount of work over a different period of time.²

For educational experiences in other formats (intensive courses, supervised internships, spiritual direction), RRC applies the above formula, rounded down to the nearest 1/3 credit to allocate credit.

For the purposes of RRC financial aid and other internal matters, RRC considers a minimum of nine credits over the course of a semester to be full-time.

N.B. Prior to the 2020-21 academic year, RRC used a credit system that differed from the federal credit system. For details of this credit system, please contact RRC's Director of Academic Administration.

² RRC semesters normally include the equivalent of 13 weeks of classes, reading days and finals.

Program Offerings

Mekhinah Year Program

Jewish Traditions/Halakhah 1-2

Rabbi Vivie Mayer

(1.5 credits per semester)

Open to Mekhinah Year students and Foundation Year 1 students only

In this two-semester course students will explore traditional Jewish beliefs and practices. Through primary texts (Bible and Mishnah) in translation, students will encounter the fundamentals of prayer, *kashrut*, Shabbat and festival observance. This course also investigates the phenomenon of *halakhah* (Jewish lived practice) and how it evolves through ever-changing times.

Mekhinah Learners' Minyan 1-2

Staff

(non-credit)

Required Mekhinah and Year 1, as based on assessment

In these biweekly sessions, students experience and practice the daily morning prayer service at a beginner's pace. They encounter the standard *nusakh* (intonation) of the prayers and contemporary folk melodies as they build their reading fluency. They encounter the standard format of the weekday service and increase their familiarity with the *siddur* and the daily prayers.

Mekhinah Modern Hebrew 1-2

Sharon Gershoni, Ph.D.

(four credits per semester)

Required Mekhinah Year students

This course uses a multimedia approach to develop Hebrew comprehension and communication skills. Through daily conversation, instruction and engagement with texts and spoken material from contemporary Israeli culture and media, students develop their ability to speak, understand, read and write Modern Hebrew.

Mekhinah Rabbinic Hebrew: 1-2

Rabbi Vivie Mayer

(four credits)

Required Mekhinah Year students

This course introduces students to the poetic language of classical, Rabbinic-era prayer through central texts of the *siddur*. Additionally, it introduces students to the discursive language of the Mishnah through selected texts in Tractate Berachot. Students build vocabulary and learn to recognize syntactical and literary forms. The students encounter central theological themes of the prayers through the exploration of the selected prayers and *mishnaic* texts.

Mekhinah Tanakh 1-2

S. Tamar Kamionkowski, Ph.D.

(four credits per semester)

Required for Mekhinah Year students

This two-semester course introduces students to the language and literary features of the biblical texts. Over the course of the year, students learn the vocabulary, grammar and stylistic elements of biblical Hebrew that will allow them to read and translate the narrative texts of the Bible.

Required Civilizational Courses

Biblical Civilization

Elsie Stern, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Required, normally taken in Year 1 (taken in conjunction with Tanakh 1)

This course explores the history, literature and thought of the biblical period. Students will trace the evolution of the Bible and devote special attention to the emergence of a distinctive Israelite worldview in the context of the ancient Near East.

Contemporary Israel Civilization Seminar

Staff

(three credits)

Required, part of summer term Israel program

This seminar offers an exploration of contemporary Israeli society, politics and history with particular attention to the history of the Israel-Palestine conflict, and to pluralism and diversity within Israeli society.

Medieval Civilization

Rabbi Jacob Staub, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Required, normally taken in Year 2

This comprehensive survey of medieval Jewish civilization covers the period of the Geonim to the dawn of the Emancipation (seventh to 17th centuries). The institutions and literature of social, political, spiritual, *halakhic* and intellectual movements are studied in their historical contexts. The course makes special reference to the interactions of Jewish communities with neighboring societies; to the ever-changing forms of Jewish communal structures, beliefs and practices; and to diversity and controversy within the communities.

Modern Civilization

Reena Friedman, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Required, normally taken in Year 3

This survey of modern Jewish history, from the mid-17th century through the mid-20th century, will explore the transformation of Jewish identity and communal life in response to the unprecedented challenges of the modern era. Emphasis will be placed upon the evolution of a rabbi's role in a changing world.

Rabbinic Civilization

Rabbi Mira Wasserman, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Required, normally taken in Year 1 (taken in conjunction with Introduction to Rabbinic Literature)

Pre-requisite: Biblical Civilization

An exploration of the religious cultures of the Jews during the Second Temple and rabbinic periods. We will begin by investigating the diversity of Jewish communities in Roman Palestine and the diaspora while the Temple still stood, examining different conceptions of Jewish identity, of Scripture, and of the biblical past among different Jewish groups. For most of the semester, our focus will be on the texts, institutions and culture of the Rabbis who came to define Jewish life following the destruction of the Temple. How did rabbinic Judaism come to be the dominant expression of Jewish life? How do rabbinic institutions and ideas emerge in interaction with Hellenistic Rome, Christianity and Sasanian Babylonia? We will study the historic conditions that were the context for the emergence of the rabbinic textual tradition and explore the complexities of using rabbinic texts as evidence for the cultures of the Jews in late antiquity.

Required Thought Courses

Contemporary Thought

Rabbi Jacob Staub, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Taken in Year 3 to Senior year

Pre-requisite: Modern Thought

This course is a survey of the leading Jewish thinkers in the post-Holocaust period, as well as a discussion of the challenges of contemporary developments (e.g., Israel, feminism, liberation theology) to Jewish thought.

Medieval Thought

Joel Hecker, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Required, normally taken in Year 2

This comprehensive survey of medieval Jewish civilization covers the period of the Geonim to the dawn of the Emancipation (seventh to 17th centuries). The institutions and literature of social, political, spiritual, *halakhic* and Intellectual movements are studied in their historical contexts. The course makes special reference to the interactions of Jewish communities with neighboring societies; to the ever-changing

forms of Jewish communal structures, beliefs and practices; and to diversity and controversy within the communities.

Modern Thought

Joel Hecker, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Required, normally taken in Year 3

Jewish thinkers in every period have re-examined and re-interpreted Jewish ideas and texts in light of shifting intellectual currents. In the modern period, the integration of Jews into western society and the Jewish absorption of western culture and values have necessitated a profound rethinking of classical elements of Judaism. Belief in a Creator and Revelation, Jewish chosenness, the sacred authority of Scripture — these and other central tenets of Judaism were rendered problematic for many Jews and could no longer be upheld in traditional terms. Reading texts in translation, we shall examine various expressions of this phenomenon. The seminar will concentrate upon a number of Jewish thinkers and their writings on Judaism in light of contemporary philosophical and religious speculation and with an eye to the ways in which older conceptions have been transvalued.

Reconstructionism Rabbi Jacob Staub, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Required, normally taken in Year 1

This course surveys the history of the Reconstructionist movement and places particular emphasis on the basic categories of Mordecai M. Kaplan's thought. Students become acquainted with the categories that differentiate the Reconstructionist approach to Judaism and reflect upon their continuing relevance.

Required Text Courses

Introduction to Rabbinic Literature

Rabbi Sarra Lev, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Required, normally taken in Year 1 (taken in conjunction with Hebrew 2)

Pre-requisite: Hebrew 1

This course is designed to introduce students to the major forms and genres of rabbinic literature. Students will touch on a few of the best-known texts, learn what questions to ask, learn how to read and understand them, and discuss why they matter, even millennia later. Texts will be studied in the original language; the class will consist primarily of reading and interpreting the selected texts.

Talmud 1

Rabbi Sarra Lev, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Required, normally taken in Year 2

Pre-requisite: Introduction to Rabbinic Literature

This class initiates students into the study of the Babylonian Talmud, using selected passages from the Babylonian Talmud. Students will be introduced to resources, skills and habits that can serve as the

foundation for lifelong engagement with Talmud study, as both a spiritual practice and an academic pursuit. The course focuses on developing skills for analyzing *halakhic sugyot* (units of dialectical legal argumentation); some of the semester will include other kinds of discourse that are common in the Bavli, including narrative and biblical interpretation.

Talmud 2

Rabbi Sarra Lev, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Required, normally taken in Year 2

Pre-requisite: Talmud 1

This class continues to develop the skills learned in Talmud 1, including how to discern the historical layering, how to determine what each part of the argument is doing, how to understand relationships between the rabbis and how to make meaning of it all at the end of a *sugya*.

Tanakh 1

S. Tamar Kamionkowski, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Required, normally taken in Year 1 (taken in conjunction with Biblical Civilization and Hebrew 1)

Students will work with lexical resources and critical commentaries to build biblical Hebrew translation skills and to cultivate the ability to recognize nuances in the text. The course engages readings that explore biblical texts from a variety of perspectives. Course includes Beit Midrash.

Tanakh 2

Elsie Stern, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Required, normally taken in Year 2

Pre-requisite: Tanakh 1

Students will work with lexical resources and critical commentaries to build biblical Hebrew-translation skills and to cultivate the ability to recognize nuances in the text. The course engages readings that explore biblical texts from a variety of perspectives. During the first semester, students will focus on narrative texts; during the second, they will focus on passages from Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

Parshanut

Rabbi Jacob Staub, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Required, normally taken in Year 3.

Pre-requisite: Biblical Civilization and Medieval Civilization

This course is a study of the commentaries on selected biblical texts of such medieval commentators as Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Radaq, Rambam, and Sforno. Attention is focused upon the presuppositions and methods of medieval biblical exegesis in general, and upon the particular concerns of each of the commentators.

Distribution Requirement Courses

Animals in the Talmud

Rabbi Mira Wasserman, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Prerequisite: 2 years of Talmud study or permission of instructor, Hebrew 3

Fulfills Advanced Text credit

This class will study three complex passages from the Babylonian Talmud that are crawling with animal life: Baba Metzia 83b-86a; Sanhedrin 55a-b; and Avodah Zarah 22a-b. In these passages, animals function in a variety of ways — sometimes as objects, sometimes as subjects, and sometimes as figures or symbols. Examining the Talmud's construction of a human-animal divide will serve as a foundation for considering other kinds of boundaries that are drawn and also breached in these passages: between men and women; between Jews and non-Jews; and between God and creation.

Bereishit Rabbah

Rabbi Mira Wasserman, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Prerequisite: Introduction to Rabbinic Literature and Hebrew 3

Fulfills Midrash credit

This course studies selected passages from Bereishit Rabbah, a collection of rabbinical homiletical interpretations of the Book of Genesis.

Beyn Adam Le-Havero

Rabbi Mira Wasserman, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Prerequisite: Hebrew 3

Fulfills Advanced Text credit

In this course students will study core Jewish teachings about human relationships and about justice. Texts will be drawn primarily from classical rabbinic literature, including both narrative and legal material. In *hevrutah* and in class discussion, students will enlist textual study and dialogue to help define and refine responsibilities to others, and to explore how ancient texts can speak to the challenges of contemporary social life.

Biblical Call Narratives

S. Tamar Kamionkowski, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Prerequisite: completion of Tanakh 1 and Tanakh 2 and Hebrew 3

Fulfills Advanced Text credit

This course examines the call narratives of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Call narratives provide a frame within which the character of the prophet can be explored. These narratives give clues as to the broader biblical traditions and social locations that influence the theologies/messages of the book.

Biblical Theology: God

S. Tamar Kamionkowski, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Prerequisite: completion of Tanakh 1 and Tanakh 2 and Hebrew 3

Fulfills Advanced Text credit

Biblical theology is a robust subfield of biblical studies for Protestant scholars; however, no single work by a Jewish biblicist explicitly addresses biblical theology. This course will explore how a Jewish biblical theology might look. The course will include careful readings of a number of texts about God in the Bible and will also include secondary literature about biblical theology.

Biblical Theologies of Exile: A Hands-On Approach

S. Tamar Kamionkowski, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Prerequisite: completion of Tanakh 1 and Tanakh 2 and Hebrew 3

Fulfills Advanced Text credit

In recent years, scholars have argued that most of the Hebrew Bible can be read through the lens of the trauma of exile. This course will examine various biblical texts that offer theological responses to the experience of dislocation, exile and resettlement. Students will use class time to conduct close readings of biblical texts in their ancient context and to reflect on service-learning projects. Students are expected to participate in community service related to the needs of displaced persons and immigrants.

Creation in Tanakh

Tamar Kamionkowski, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Prerequisite: completion of Tanakh 1 and Tanakh 2 and Hebrew 3

Fulfills Advanced Text credit

This course studies how biblical narratives and poems about creation reveal assumptions about the nature of God, the origins of humanity, and relationships between God and humanity. More importantly, creation stories reveal the values and ideologies of those who tell the stories. In this course, students will immerse in biblical creation texts to become sensitive readers of stories of origins – whether biblical, personal or institutional. Students will also explore how rabbis can use personal stories of origin in a variety of rabbinic settings.

Eicha Rabbah

Rabbi Mira Wasserman, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Prerequisite: Introduction to Rabbinic Literature, Rabbinic Civilization and Hebrew 3

Fulfills Midrash or Advanced Text credit

Midrash Eicha Rabbah is a work that explores human and divine responses to destruction and loss. It opens with a series of *petihtas* that imagine God in wildly diverse ways. In this course, students will study a selection of *petihtas* and other key passages, examining the ways midrash conveys theological ideas. In

what ways can Eicha Rabbah serve as a resource for us as we confront the losses and traumas of our own age?

Hasidut

Joel Hecker, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Prerequisite: Hebrew 3

Fulfills Jewish Mystical Texts or Advanced Text credits

This course addresses issues such as Hasidic prayer and Torah study, mystical leadership, worship through materiality and mystical union in the movement's early texts. These will include texts written by students of the Baal Shem Tov, the Maggid of Mezeritch and Ya'aqov Yosef of Polonoyye, and from their students, including Menahem Mendel of Vitebsk, Levi Yitshaq of Berditchev, Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl, Elimelekh of Lizhensk and Shneur Zalman of Liadi. The course will conclude with teachings of Rebbe Nachman of Brazlav and Rabbi Mordekhai Yoseph Leiner (the Ishbitzer).

Heretics!

Joel Hecker, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Prerequisite: Hebrew 3

Fulfills Advanced Text credit

This course will study texts written by (or about) figures that skirted the boundaries of "legitimate" religious discourse and practice. Students will consider the following questions: What are the lines of doctrine/praxis that deem a person heretical? What are the historical patterns that lead towards the symbiotic relationship of heresies and orthodoxies? When does ostensibly heretical thought slip past "the censors"? Students will examine *midrashic* texts dealing with Korah, *talmudic* texts discussing Elisha ben Avuyah, and works by Spinoza and Nathan of Gaza (the pamphleteer for Shabbatai Zvi), exploring the crossed lines that rendered these figures "heretical." Students also will study texts by Maimonides, Rebbe Nahman of Brazlav and Rabbi Mordekhai Yoseph Leiner (the Ishbitzer), examining these figures who drew condemnation and admiration with their radical writings.

High Holyday Mahzor

Rabbi Vivie Mayer

(three credits)

Prerequisite: Hebrew 3

Fulfills Text & Practice or Advanced Text credit

In this course students will study essential liturgical texts of the High Holy Day Mahzor. The focus will be Hebrew language, theological expression, and translation of these texts into contemporary American idiom through the creation of framing *kavvanot*, sermonettes and sermons.

Hilkhhot Berakhot

Joel Hecker, Ph.D

(three credits)

Prerequisite: Hebrew 3

Fulfills Text & Practice or Advanced Text credit

This course engages in some of the primary texts (primarily rabbinic and *halakhic*) that led to the establishment of the regimen of daily, periodic and occasional blessings. The Talmud, in the name of Rabbi Meir, says that people are obligated to recite 100 blessings a day. While many of these are liturgical, students will focus on *birkhot ha-nehenin* (blessings regarding pleasure -- including food), *birkat hamazon*, and blessings on wondrous events. The intent of the course will be to learn about and try out using blessings as a way to enhance one's own spirituality.

Hilkhhot Evel

Rabbi Vivie Mayer

(three credits)

Prerequisite: Hebrew 3

Fulfills Text & Practice or Advanced Text credit

This course will explore all 14 chapters of Hilkhhot Evel in Maimonides' Mishneh Torah. Students will build reading comprehension by reading substantial portions of Hebrew text in class each week. The course will also engage with the array of *halakhic* issues that arise around death and ritual mourning. While the course will focus on understanding the *peshat* of the text and covering ground, it will also consider the material from a practical rabbinics point of view.

Hilkhhot Pesah

Joel Hecker, Ph.D

(three credits)

Prerequisite: Talmud 1 and Talmud 2 and Hebrew 3

Fulfills Text & Practice or Advanced Text

This course will lead students through some of the core texts as well as practical *halakhah* regarding ritual practices of Passover. Students will spend several weeks studying the ways in which *hametz* is defined, and how the Talmudic and *halakhic* traditions delineate the modes through which one eliminates it — in other words, dealing with the laws of *kashrut* through the narrow lens of leaven. Subsequently students will study the laws of the seder as discussed from first sources in Scripture, Mishnah and Talmud, and proceeding through Rashi, some Tosafot, Rambam and Shulhan Arukh. Please note that while homiletical interpretations may inform some of the texts that are studied, the course is intended to provide rigorous text study of the laws of practice on Pesach.

Hilkhot Shabbat

Rabbi Jacob Staub, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Fulfills Text & Practice or Advanced Text credit

Prerequisite: Hebrew 3

In this course students will learn about the basic principles underlying the laws of Shabbat as codified by Rambam, Shulhan Arukh, and others. The goal of the course will be to understand the broad parameters of these laws with an eye to developing and reflecting upon students' own Shabbat practice. Included will be readings from the original Hebrew texts, some of which will be unvocalized, further strengthening students' reading abilities.

Holiness Code

S. Tamar Kamionkowski, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Prerequisite: Tanakh 1 and Tanakh 2 and Hebrew 3

Fulfills Advanced Text credit

In this course students will engage in a careful reading of Leviticus 17-26, known by scholars as the Holiness Code. Particular attention will be focused on the interplay between ethics and ritual, and to the code's unique view of God.

Hosea and His Legacy

Tamar Kamionkowski, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Prerequisite: Tanakh 1 and Tanakh 2 and Hebrew 3

Fulfills Advanced Text credit

The Book of Hosea is a notoriously difficult book with which to engage. The content ranges from the sublime to the pornographic. Given these challenges, however, the Book of Hosea is a profoundly important book in several respects. It is a source for a number of liturgical Jewish texts, from *haftarah* readings to the traditional wedding ceremony. Hosea, as one of the earliest prophets, also provides metaphors and prophetic themes from which his successors build, so understanding Jeremiah and Ezekiel is enhanced through an appreciation of Hosea's writings.

In this course, students will engage in an intensive reading of most of the Book of Hosea, using some traditional Jewish commentaries, modern historical-critical commentaries and contemporary feminist analyses. Students will be expected to read, translate and analyze the primary texts alongside parallel texts from later prophets and alongside a host of post-biblical readers of Hosea.

Introduction to Jewish Mystical Texts

Joel Hecker, Ph.D.

(two credits)

Required for students who matriculated before 2020, normally taken in Year 4

Prerequisite: Hebrew 3

Fulfills Jewish Mystical Texts credit

“Mysticism” is a cross-cultural phenomenon in the world’s different religions, adopting different idioms, images and symbols in its various manifestations. Jewish mysticism tends to focus on the ways in which divine names, classical texts, and normative and non-normative practices are used to induce mystical experiences (visual, auditory, contemplative, unitive) and to have “positive” impact upon Divinity and the world. In this course students will read highlights from the historical scope and range of genres of Jewish mystical texts. Throughout, they will consider the meaning of mystical experience and practice from its dawn in the chariot vision of Ezekiel and Sefer Yetzirah; its prominent early medieval expressions in Heikhalot literature and Sefer ha-Bahir; a focus on Sefer ha-Zohar, the central and canonical text of Jewish mysticism; the *kabbalah* of 16th century-Tsfat; concluding with Hasidism. All along the following questions will be asked: What is mystical experience in a Jewish context (and with comparison to other pre-modern forms of mysticism)? Who were the figures behind these texts? For what purposes and audiences were they written? How might they speak to religious seekers today?

Isaiah ben Amoz

S. Tamar Kamionkowski, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Prerequisite: Tanakh 1 and Tanakh 2 and Hebrew 3

Fulfills Advanced Text credit

In this course students will engage in close readings of portions of the Book of Isaiah 1-39. We will explore the theological messages of Isaiah against the backdrop of Assyrian expansion and the fall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Particular attention will be given to the poetic techniques of the writer.

Netivot Shalom

Rabbi Jacob Staub, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Prerequisite: Hebrew 3

Fulfills Jewish Mystical Text or Advanced Text credit

Rabbi Shalom Noach Berezovsky (1911–2000), the Slonimer Rebbe in the last decades of the 20th century, wrote this Hasidic text that also combines *mitnagdische* elements, including *mussar*. This course focuses on the section on prayer.

Parashanut HaMikra: Divine-Human Encounters

Rabbi Jacob Staub, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Pre-requisite: Hebrew 3

Fulfills Advanced Text credit

This advanced *parshanut* course will study commentary about biblical texts that describe divine-human encounters—dreams, *malakhim* and prophecy. The course will focus primarily on the perspectives of Rashi, Rashbam, Ibn Ezra, Radak, Ramban, Sforno and Ralbag.

Parashat HaShavuah

S. Tamar Kamionkowski, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Pre-requisite: Hebrew 3

Fulfills Advanced Text credit

In this course sections of each week's Torah portion are read. Students will study the content of each *parashah*, focus on certain *pesukim* that have a rich textual legacy, strengthen their biblical Hebrew reading skills and explore creative applications of the weekly *parashah* to contemporary issues.

Politics, Power and Prophecy in the Nevi'im Rishonim

Elsie Stern, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Pre-requisite: Tanakh 1 and Tanakh 2 and Hebrew 3

Fulfills Advanced Text credit

The Nevi'im Rishonim contain intriguing and surprising stories about human and divine power. In this course, we will read selections from the books of Judges, 1-2 Samuel and 1-2 Kings that explore the roles of kings, prophets and God in stories about the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The course will cultivate language and interpretation skills, and explore the relevance of these texts to contemporary times.

Psalms

S. Tamar Kamionkowski, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Pre-requisite: Tanakh 1 and Tanakh 2 and Hebrew 3

Fulfills Advanced Text credit

This course engages in close readings of selected psalms, devoting particular attention to the poetic features of these texts, their original settings and functions, and how they might be reinterpreted and utilized in contemporary Jewish life.

Rabbi as Text-Broker

Elsie Stern, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Pre-requisite: Hebrew 3

Fulfills Advanced Text credit

Rabbis act as mediators, interpreting Torah texts for their constituents. This course will examine the idea of rabbi as text-broker and explore a range of genres through which contemporary rabbis broker experiences with Torah. These genres include *d'var torah*, communal text study, TED talks and Bible performance. The class will be structured as a workshop. Each week, a few students will perform in one of these genres; the rest of the class will offer feedback.

Whose Responsibility Is It Anyway?

Sarra Lev, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Prerequisite: Talmud 1 and Talmud 2 and Hebrew 3

Fulfills Talmud credit

This class continues the skill-building of Talmud 1 and 2 through exploration of Talmudic *sugyot* that explore cases in which responsibility is ambiguous or in question.

The Role of Shame in Damages

Sarra Lev, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Prerequisite: Talmud 1 and Talmud 2 and Hebrew 3

Fulfills Talmud credit

This class continues the skill-building of Talmud 1 and 2 through exploration of Talmudic *sugyot* that address the issue of shame in the context of claims of damages.

The Sefas Emes on the Parashah

Joel Hecker, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Pre-requisite: Hebrew 3

Fulfills Jewish Mystical Texts or Advanced Text credit

This course will focus on Sefas Emes, the classic Hasidic work by Rabbi Yehudah Leib Alter of Ger. The text became popular in modern times because of the Gerrer Rebbe's emphasis on the *nequdah penimit*, the inner point of each individual (Jew) that retains its connection to and knowledge of God under all circumstances. Throughout this course, students will consider the distinctive ways the Sefas Emes develops Hasidic themes and think about the way a Hasidic homily functions as Biblical interpretation. Students will be reading in the Hebrew from Arthur Green's volume in class throughout; it is expected that the English translation will be used as an aid in preparation. No previous study of Hasidic literature is expected.

Shunning as a Disciplinary Tool

Sarra Lev, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Prerequisite: Talmud 1 and Talmud 2 and Hebrew 3

Fulfills Talmud credit

This class continues the skill-building of Talmud 1 and 2 through exploration of Talmudic *sugyot* in which shunning is employed as a disciplinary tool.

Sotah: The Ordeal of the Suspected Adulteress

Sarra Lev, Ph.D.

Prerequisite: Talmud 1 and Talmud 2 and Hebrew 3

Fulfills Talmud credit

This class continues the skill-building of Talmud 1 and 2 through exploration of the construction of the Sotah ritual in the Babylonian Talmud.

Torment and Ecstasy in the Teachings of Rebbe Nahman of Brazlav

Joel Hecker, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Prerequisite: Hebrew 3

Fulfills Jewish Mystical Texts or Advanced Text credit

Rebbe Nahman of Brazlav oscillated between despair and joy, acknowledging the theological inevitability of the former and always striving for the breakthrough to the latter. This course will study Liqqutei Moharan, the primary text of Rebbe Nahman's discourses. Students will explore his world, probing the parallels between his and our theological meanderings.

Trauma Literature: The Book of Ezekiel

S. Tamar Kamionkowski, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Prerequisite: Hebrew 3

Fulfills Advanced Text credit

Students will read major portions of the book of Ezekiel, exploring the book's themes against the crisis of the Babylonian exile. The primary reading lens will be trauma theory. What kind of theology emerges from traumatic experiences?

The Yanuqa--Wunderkind of the Zohar

Joel Hecker, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Prerequisite: Hebrew 3

Fulfills Jewish Mystical Texts or Advanced Text

Stones, trees, caves and rivers of light. These and many more biblical images are used in the kabbalah of the Zohar to describe Divinity, its internal life and the romance of its constituent aspects. They are also the portals through which the kabbalists serve, know and experience God. In this course students will read primarily from the Zoharic section of "the Yanuqa", which describes the child kabbalist whose own mystical illumination outshines that of his guests, prominent senior kabbalists. He is particularly interested in matters having to do with meals; however, as a son of a great kabbalist, the Yanuqa plays the role of spiritually gifted son, allowing the Zohar to use him as a counterpoint to Jesus. In this way, the Zohar both internalizes Christian typologies and subverts them in covert anti-Christian polemics. The course will open by examining Yosef Gikatilla's Sha'arei Orah, a kabbalistic code book. The aim of this course will be to more fully familiarize students with the exegetical methods of this literature, its

understanding of the commandments, and to understand the mystical techniques employed by the Zohar's fictional characters.

What is God? Divine Presence in Tanakh

S. Tamar Kamionkowski, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Prerequisite: completion of Tanakh 1 and Tanakh 2 and Hebrew 3

Fulfills Advanced Text credit

This course explores a range of topics related to the concept of divinity including the assumed dichotomy between divine and human; God and gender; how divine presence is manifest; the family of YHVH; angelic messengers, demons, and ghosts. The explorations will include readings of primary texts, secondary literature and ancient cultural/religious artifacts.

Hebrew Language

Hebrew 1

(three credits)

Required, normally taken in Year 1

In Hebrew 1, students solidify their skills analyzing verb forms of all *binyanim* and all *gezerot* (weak roots) on vocalized texts and to a lesser extent on unvocalized texts. Students become adept at identifying parts of speech, and they begin developing skills in recognizing word order and syntax in complex sentences. Students translate the Hebrew of easy to intermediate level rabbinic texts. Students also become familiar with the most common idioms and phrases of classical Hebrew. By the end of this course, students should be able to declaim vocalized texts with accuracy and steady pacing.

Hebrew 2

(three credits)

Required, normally taken in Year 1

Pre-requisite: Hebrew 1

In Hebrew 2, students gain more skills in translating intermediate level Hebrew rabbinic texts. Students are also exposed to additional genres of classical Hebrew literature including *Mishneh Torah*, *parshanut*, modern Hebrew literature and *hasidut*. Students build their vocabulary so that relatively common words and phrases can be identified without use of a lexicon or dictionary. By the end of this course, students should be able to declaim vocalized texts with accuracy, steady pacing and a confident voice. Students will also be able to declaim unvocalized texts to demonstrate that they recognize the parts of speech in a sentence.

Hebrew 3

(three credits)

Required, normally taken in year 2

Pre-requisite: Hebrew 2

In Hebrew 3, students begin identifying different genres of classical literature by recognizing idioms, distinctive vocabulary and syntax. Students continue to develop skills in translating texts from the following categories: rabbinic materials, *halakhah*, *hasidut*, *parshanut* and modern Hebrew. By the end of this course, students will be able to declaim specialized texts for practical rabbinics including *ketubbot* and *mi shebayrakh*, and will be able to modify the Hebrew for gender and number.

Hebrew 4

(three credits)

Required, normally taken in Year 3, 4, or 5

Pre-requisite: Hebrew 3 or equivalent

Hebrew 4 builds on the skills and objectives of Hebrew 3 to improve students' fluency in navigating more advanced texts across canonical genres, liturgical texts and contemporary Hebrew texts relevant to the North American rabbinate.

Practical Rabbinics – Field Readiness

Life Cycle 1 - Text

Rabbi Vivie Mayer

(1.5 credits)

Required, normally taken in Year 2

In this class students will study some of the classical material – narrative, ritual, legal and liturgical – associated with the life-cycle rituals. Students will examine sources in the Tanakh, Mishnah, codes literature and the Siddur. This material will be discussed through lenses of socio-anthropology, halakha, liturgy, ritual and spiritual-psychology. Course includes *beit midrash*.

Life Cycle 2 - Practicum

Rabbi Vivie Mayer

(1.5 credits)

Required, normally taken in Year 2

Pre-requisite: Life Cycle 1- Text

In this course students will take their understanding of traditional (e.g. *b'rit milah* and baby namings, Bar and Bat Mitzvah, weddings, get ceremonies, funerals, unveilings) and newly developed Jewish life cycle rituals (e.g. LGBTQ rituals, menarche and menopause rituals, funerals for pets) and learn how to plan them and officiate at them. Through officiating at life cycle rituals in class, observing rabbis officiating at life cycle rituals in the larger community, and developing new life cycle rituals to share with the class, students will acquire the skills for officiating at various traditional life cycle rituals and for developing new life cycle rituals. Through reading and discussion, students will also increase their understanding of the many possible roles of the rabbi in life cycle events.

Rabbinic Communications/Homiletics

Rabbi Linda Holtzman

(1.5 credits)

Required, Years 1-3

Students will develop skills for a variety of public-speaking opportunities. Students will present sermons, *divrei torah*, life-cycle talks and general talks that their classmates will then critique. Students will also have the opportunity to observe local rabbis giving talks.

Role and Responsibility of the Rabbi

Rabbi Elisa Goldberg

(1.5 credits)

Required, Year 1

The rabbinic role requires a high level of interpersonal awareness and the ability to engage people with a variety of complex needs, expectations and agendas. This course will focus on the individual roles and responsibilities of the rabbi. Through academic reading, observation and conversations with rabbis in the field, we will introduce and explore the foundational skills, conceptual frameworks and values that help rabbis provide effective care, establish healthy boundaries and function with both self-reflection and self-compassion.

Teillah 1

(1.5 credits)

Required, normally taken in Year 1

In this class, students will encounter the texts and practices of the daily prayers. Students also will compare the daily prayers to the Shabbat prayers. For students who are not yet fluent in the performance of the *tefillot* in *nusach*, this will be a place where they can achieve this competence. For students who are already fluent in the above, this *shiur* will be a place to further explore issues of language and/or *halakha* as related to the practices of prayer. Course includes *beit midrash*.

Teillah 2

Rabbi Vivie Mayer

(1.5 credits)

Required, normally taken in Year 2

Pre-requisite: Tefillah 1

This course builds on the *Tefillah shiur* with a primary focus on the performance of the liturgy. Each week, the class will begin with davening, and continue with discussion and opportunities for practice.

Teaching and Learning

Alexandra Corwin, M.A.

(1.5 credits)

Required, Years 1-3

This course introduces students to fundamental elements of educational theory, course design and teaching strategies for students across the life span. During the course, students will have the opportunity

to observe skilled educators at work, and explore connections between theory and practice. They also will have the opportunity to design an educational experience that incorporates the learning they do in the course.

Year Cycle

Staff

(1.5 credits)

Required, Years 1-3

This course is designed to give students greater depth of understanding and appreciation of Jewish holidays and the holiday cycle. Jewish holiday celebrations and their confluence with secular holidays are explored. Students will gain greater awareness of the political and social issues implicit within Jewish holidays and will develop creative celebrations for various calendar events. The "rabbinic experience" of Jewish holidays will be explored.

Practical Rabbinics – Advanced³

Entrepreneurship

Cyd Weissman, M.A.

(1.5 credits)

Normally taken in Years 3- 5

This project-based course introduces students to the skills and knowledge necessary to successfully launch entrepreneurial projects, both within existing organizations and outside of them. Skills include articulating and honing a compelling vision and brand; creating and implementing projects that actualize these visions; developing partnerships; and cultivating supporters. The course will also introduce students to the core financial and organizational skills necessary to implement new ideas.

Fieldwork Supervision A

Staff

(two credits)

Required for all students in RRC-sponsored internships. Fieldwork Supervision A fulfills the supervision requirement credit for all students who matriculated in 2019 or earlier. It is non-credit bearing for students matriculating in 2020.

Supervision groups are intended to help students maximize the learning experience inherent in their internships and fieldwork. Group supervision helps participants analyze and address problems and opportunities that arise in the course of their work. Supervision also provides the opportunity for students to apply and integrate their learning from academic and practical rabbinics courses with their field experience.

³ For 2020-21, advanced practical rabbinics courses, with the exception of supervision, fulfill practical rabbinics seminar requirements.

Field Supervision B

Staff
(three credits)

Field supervision B is a three-credit supervision course that combines weekly group supervision with individual supervision at least bi-weekly. The individual supervision sessions are designed to help students address their individual learning goals.

Group Work

Staff
(1.5 credits)
Normally taken, Year 4 or 5

Success as a rabbi depends in part on leadership skills. This course will acquaint students with the nature of groups and their leadership through reading texts on family therapy, systems theory, organizational behavior and group work. Class sessions will be used to discuss the readings and to examine issues that have arisen in groups to which the students belong. A major portion of each session will be devoted to discussing examples of leadership, problem-solving, decision-making and intervention from students' current experiences. The course will examine how groups form, function and maintain themselves; and how to organize groups, facilitate decision-making and handle challenging individuals. Students will analyze family, board and large-group situations to develop the skills and insights needed to lead groups effectively. Students also will explore the differing missions and values of groups.

Jewish Landscape

Staff
(1.5 credits)

This seminar surveys the 21st-century community in terms of its demography, sociology, institutions, problems and prospects. Discussion will focus on methodological questions, on the nature of the American Jewish community and on the practical implications of the material studied.

Pastoral Counseling

Rabbi Elisa Goldberg
(1.5 credits)
Pre-requisite: Foundations of Rabbinic Relationships & Ethics

Jewish pastoral caregivers need to integrate knowledge of psychology, spirituality and Jewish tradition to offer comfort and support, and inspire healing and growth, in individuals and relationships throughout the life cycle. Topics covered include the dynamics of healing relationships; transference and counter-transference; developmental theory; *teshuvah* and the process of change; rabbis as *midrashic* healers; addiction and recovery; psychological and spiritual dimensions of loss and grief, suffering and resilience; and prayer as a pastoral resource. Students will write short reflective papers, as well as participate in experiential exercises and role-playing in class. Drawing on their pastoral work in the field, students will each present a verbatim during the semester. Students are always encouraged to bring experiences from internships and other rabbinic work into class discussions.

Rabbi as Leader

Rabbi Mordechai Liebling and Rabbi Tamara Cohen

(1.5 credits)

Rabbis lead in a variety of contexts, and each individual must develop an approach that is appropriate to the context and is authentic to the self. This class is based in the teachings of transformational leadership and is highly experiential. Students develop clarity of their own personal mission; spiritual, emotional and social intelligence skills; the “soft arts” of organizing (listening, empathy and thoughtfulness); and skills for self-care.

Senior Seminar 1

Rabbi Linda Holtzman

(one credit)

Required Senior Year

This course is designed to help prepare students for their transition from "RRC student" to "Reconstructionist rabbi." The course focuses on self-reflection about rabbinic identity formation, introduces some key practical areas of best practice for clergy and offers opportunities to learn from and interact with a diverse set of visiting rabbinic colleagues.

Senior Seminar 2

Rabbi Mira Wasserman, Ph.D.

(one credit)

Required Senior Year

This course prepares students to serve as ethical leaders and guides in their rabbinate. Students will review the ethics code of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association, paying special attention to the ethical challenges that are particular to the rabbinical role. Students will investigate traditional Jewish teachings and Reconstructionist approaches in key areas in which rabbis are called upon to offer ethical guidance to others. Students will cultivate practices for ethical deliberation in our personal and professional lives, and develop skills for facilitating ethical decision-making among those we serve. Students will practice engaging with one another as caring, respectful colleagues.

Senior Capstone

Staff

(two credits)

Required Senior Year

This course will begin with reading short spiritual memoirs that will inspire students' own reflections. Class time will include dedicated writing practice with prompts. Students will each complete a personal theological essay that will be read in advance by their classmates and discussed during that student's designated week.

Multifaith/Social Justice Courses

Congregation-Based Community Organizing

TBD

(1.5 credits)

Fulfills Social Justice credit

This three-day workshop will explore the basic skills and arts of CBCO, training students to create covenantal communities based on relationships. The workshop will address the use of power and relationships in public life, how rabbis can identify and develop leaders, and how to bring the synagogue into the public square.

Exploring a Jewish Theology of Liberation

Rabbi Mordechai Liebling

(three credits)

Fulfills Social Justice credit

In this course, students will explore creating a Jewish Theology of Liberation by looking at Jewish thinkers, and then Liberation Theology as it has been developed by Latin American, Black, Womanist, Feminist and Eco-Feminist thinkers. Students will raise questions as to how applicable these ideas are to the Jewish communities they want to address.

Food Justice

Rabbi Mordechai Liebling

(three credits)

Fulfills Social Justice credit

This course will examine the production, consumption and distribution of food and food's connection to our physical, emotional and spiritual lives. The course will explore traditional Jewish and Christian teachings about food in relationship to *eco-kashrut*, and current food justice and sustainability issues. It will equip you to raise justice issues every time food is served.

Jewish Art for Resistance and Social Change

Sharon Gershoni, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Fulfills Social Justice credit

Art fosters civic engagement and has real social impact. It promotes awareness, dialogue, understanding, healing and action. Art can bring change. In this course students will see how artists shaped Jewish identity and brought about community engagement and social change in the past and the present. Students also will make art in a range of modalities and explore ways rabbis can use art to teach and to engage the community.

Jewish-Christian Encounter for Clergy

Instructor: TBD

(1.5 credits)

Fulfills multifaith credit

In conjunction with Princeton Theological Seminary, this course will bring together Jewish and Christian seminarians and clergy to explore the history, theology and contemporary issues related to the encounter between our two communities. Jews and Christians will meet separately for the first and last sessions; intermediate sessions will provide opportunities for relationship building and skills development through visits to each other's campuses, and field placements, text study in pairs, creative worship in common, case study discussions and more.

Jewish-Christian Dialogue for Emerging Religious Leaders

Rabbi Rena Blumenthal

(two credits)

Fulfills multifaith credit

This class will focus on the challenges and opportunities of contemporary Jewish-Christian dialogue. The core of the class will be attendance at the 4½-day Emerging Religious Leaders Intensive Seminar, run by the Institute for Islamic, Christian and Jewish Studies (ICJS) and the Washington Theological Consortium. In the weeks prior to the Seminar, there will be assigned readings and two video class sessions (for rabbinical students only) which will introduce a basic history of Jewish-Christian relations and explore some of the dynamics of Jewish-Christian dialogue today. The Seminar itself will include presentations from Jewish and Christian faculty members; small group study of Jewish and Christian sacred texts; explorations of how race has impacted Jewish-Christian encounters; and ample opportunity for inter-religious conversation and dialogue.

Jewish-Christian Hevrutah

Rabbi Melissa Heller

(1.5 credits)

Fulfills multifaith credit This course, offered in partnership with the United Lutheran Seminary, is centered on the traditional Jewish study practice of *hevrutah*, in which students study traditional texts with a partner. The course will include an introductory dinner and *hevrutah* workshop, guided *hevrutah* sessions, an opportunity for interfaith reflection and a closing dinner and program.

Money in Our Lives and in Society

Rabbi Mordechai Liebling

(three credits)

Fulfills social justice credit

The Talmud teaches: "One who wishes to acquire wisdom should study the way money works, for there is no greater area of Torah study than this. It is like an everflowing stream ... " Students will examine how money works in their own lives, in institutions they serve, in Jewish history and in larger society. They will examine traditional Jewish sources, in addition to current economic and financial teachings for practical and theoretical lessons. There will be an experiential component to the class.

Muslims in America: A Course for Rabbis

Staff

(three credits)

Fulfills multifaith credit

After a brief introduction to Islam as an evolving religious civilization, this course will focus on American Muslims today: the diversity of Muslim communities (black American, immigrant, Sufi); the

unprecedented freedom of American society giving rise to new expressions of Islam; how 9/11 and the subsequent “war on terror” have impacted the experience of Muslims; Muslims and U.S. politics; the evolution of interfaith dialogue from Judeo-Christian to “Abrahamic”; feminism; and LGBTQ issues in Muslim life. Emphasis will be placed on the relationship between Muslims and Jews in this country, exploring commonalities, conflicts and complexities. Sources will include lectures by guest Muslims (in person and via Skype), blogs, podcasts, autobiographies, fiction and films. Students will be paired with Muslim graduate students at Penn with whom they will visit a mosque, engage in *hevrutah* and teach a session about Islam in a Jewish venue.

Rabbis as Activist Leaders for Environmental Sustainability and Justice

Rabbi Mordechai Liebling (three credits)

Fulfills social justice credit

The course will combine text, experiential exercises and activist involvement. It will cover fundamental teachings on Judaism and the environment, a deepening of our personal connection to the earth and the basics of nonviolent direct action. A unique and influential component will be activism. During the course of the semester, all matriculated students will be required to devote at least eight hours to an environmental campaign.

Electives

Advanced Limmud B’Ivrit

Rabbi Vivie Mayer

(three credits)

Prerequisite: Completion Hebrew 3 or permission of instructor

This course is a “Limmud B’Ivrit” initiative. We will study Bamidbar, chapters 10-12, with Rashi and some *midrashic* commentary. The course will be conducted exclusively in Hebrew, integrating biblical, rabbinic and spoken Hebrew. Preparation and homework will not exceed four hours per week. This course is geared to help prepare students for studying in a Hebrew-speaking environment.

Art of the Shaliach Tzibur

Staff

(1.5 credits)

What makes a masterful leader of communal prayer? Students will develop a range of skills, including: how to select appropriate music; themes and prayer styles for a variety of settings; becoming familiar with leading traditional and experimental modalities; and developing effective approaches for performance anxiety, ego issues, managing energy flow and responding with flexibility to shifting needs of the group. Students will prepare, practice, lead others, receive feedback and integrate their learning. Emphasis will also be placed on cultivating a personal prayer practice, towards the end of discovering how such practice is at the heart of authentic prayer leadership.

Contemplative Reading of Jewish Texts

Rabbi Jacob Staub, Ph.D.

(1.5 credits)

Students will enact a Reconstructionist adaptation of the Christian practice of *lectio divina*. Each week, students will read a short passage, write about the thoughts that arose during the daily reading and read the same text together during the two-hour class session. The course will treat sacred texts as conduits of inspiration and insight, develop the ability to read such texts without reference to their literal meanings or historical contexts and form a shared vocabulary of sacred discourse. Students will engage with texts from all eras of Jewish history.

End of Life: Pastoral, Ethical and Theological Perspectives

Staff

(three credits)

This course will prepare students to work with individuals who are nearing the end of life. Students will examine their own feelings and perspectives about death and dying, and will explore texts on the ethical dimensions of end-of-life decision-making, and on the experience of dying and life after death. Students will develop skills in accompanying dying people by observing settings where people are facing the end of life, role-playing and case analysis.

Ethics of Speech

Rabbi David Teutsch, Ph.D.

(three credits)

Jewish tradition teaches that “life and death are in the power of the tongue.” This course will explore *leshon hara* and *rekhilut*; the nature of promises and verbal agreements; the obligation to offer reproof (*tokhekhah*); and the challenge of truth-telling. Students will read traditional texts, discuss cases and apply contemporary ethical methodologies.

Jewish Biomedical Ethics

Rabbi David Teutsch, Ph.D.

(three credits)

This course will explore Jewish approaches to health, medicine and medical research; study the major issues in biomedical ethics; and formulate Jewish-based positions on these matters. Students will gain knowledge of basic approaches to biomedical ethics, learn how to research and formulate a substantial Jewish approach to biomedical issues, and analyze and evaluate moral arguments concerning these issues.

Jewish Contemplative Practice

Rabbi Jacob Staub, Ph.D.

(1.5 credits)

Students will be introduced to the practices of mindfulness meditation, contemplative prayer, sacred chant, contemplative listening, and *mussar hitlamdut*. Class sessions will include experiential practice, and homework will include experiential practice and journaling at home.

Jewish Sexual and Family Ethics

Rabbi David Teutsch, Ph.D.

(three credits)

This course will explore traditional Jewish sexual ethics and contemporary alternatives. Students will consider individual rights and obligations, as well as the creation and maintenance of family structures and communities, as part of their investigation of sexual ethics.

Immersive community-wide retreats

Beginning in 2022-23, RRC will hold semi-annual retreats for all students and faculty. These retreats will provide opportunities for communal learning, worship and connection across cohorts.

Curricular Highlights

Beit Midrash

The recommended form of preparation for text courses is *hevrutah* (partnered) study in our Beit Midrash setting. Foundational Year students spend a minimum of three hours per week in the Beit Midrash as part of their coursework. In addition, specific times are designated each week during the semester for Beit Midrash study, when the Beit Midrash director and student interns who have achieved an advanced level of text competence are available to assist fellow students in their text study. The Beit Midrash is also the locus for Torah *lishmah* (volunteer learning opportunities). On any given week, students and faculty gather informally to study the weekly Torah portion or traditional texts related to a particular holiday or ritual practice.

William H. Fern Field Education Program in Field Education: Practical Rabbinics, Field Education and Student Employment

Since its founding, RRC has been a leader in practical rabbinics training. Historically, students have developed their skills through coursework and employment in rabbinic contexts throughout their time at RRC. Our current curriculum, which is launching in 2020-21, builds on this historic strength and integrates best practices and exciting innovations in clergy training and other fields of professional education. In the current curriculum, field education, which centers on learning by doing, is the guiding framework for practical rabbinics training.

Practical rabbinics, field education and student employment in Years 1-3

In the early years of the program, practical rabbinics training will center around field readiness courses. These courses help students develop the skills and knowledge they will need to continue to learn and serve in intensive field placements in the latter years of the program. While field-readiness courses center on *beit midrash* and seminar style learning, they also incorporate field observation, service learning and ample opportunities to learn from master practitioners in the field. In years 1-3, most students also will secure jobs or internships that allow them to both use and develop their rabbinic skills. Non-credit supervision groups are available for all students in years 1-3 and are required for students who hold RRC-sponsored internships. Supervision provides a valuable opportunity for students to reflect on their work experience with peers and a skilled practitioner/facilitator. Supervision is a place where students can troubleshoot challenges, celebrate successes and maximize the rich learning that comes from their work.

Practical rabbinics, field education and student employment in years 4-5

In years 4-5, students will engage in immersive field education internships supported by individual and group supervision, as well as ongoing practical rabbinics coursework. These paid internships can be in a wide variety of rabbinic contexts throughout North America and beyond. Since this phase of the program will be implemented fully in 2023-24, we do not yet know what placements will be available, but we anticipate that there will be internships available in congregational, campus, education, chaplaincy and organizational settings. We also anticipate that there will be a variety of funding structures as is currently the case. Some internships will be fully funded by RRC; some will be sponsored jointly by RRC and placement site; and still others will be fully sponsored by the placement site. More information about the principles and standards that are guiding the development of these field education internships is available on request from the office of rabbinic formation.

Throughout the program, RRC provides a variety of services to support students as they gain professional skills through student employment and field experience. The Office of Rabbinic Formation organizes a student placement service that enables students to find employment and fieldwork that supports their growth as future rabbis. The Director of Rabbinic Formation is available to support students in their search for jobs, as well as their exploration of long-term goals and their development of professional skills. RRC supervisors, who facilitate group supervision, help students reflect on their work and glean as much learning as possible from their internship experiences. They also work with students' supervisors in the field to help students succeed in their placements and grow in their skills. Finally, advisors help students identify learning goals and areas for growth, and support students in their rabbinic identity formation.

Overview of Types of Employment and Field Experience

The paragraphs below describe the typical contours of field placements when placements are operating face-to-face. The contours of placements while pandemic restrictions are in place vary.

Congregational Positions

Congregational internships generally involve multiple weekend-long visits, when the congregation is outside of the Greater Philadelphia area or a set number of weekly or monthly hours, when the congregation is in the Greater Philadelphia area. Congregational student rabbis lead prayer services, conduct adult and children's education activities, and build community. Some internships include work with the congregational board or committees, *b'nei mitzvah* preparation, pastoral counseling or other rabbinic roles. Certain congregational internships required advanced skills and may be restricted to advanced students. Employment opportunities in congregations may also be offered for more limited roles, such as leading one or more prayer services or programs.

High Holiday Positions

High Holiday positions are available leading services for adults, teens, and/or children in congregational, campus and community settings. Faculty members are available throughout the summer to help students plan for their High Holiday positions. High Holiday student rabbinic work may be one component of an ongoing position or may be freestanding.

Chaplaincy Positions

RRC encourages all students to explore chaplaincy work, regardless of rabbinic vision. Paid chaplaincy internships are available in long-term care facilities, hospices and through local social-service agencies, and focus on providing pastoral care. Some chaplaincy internships also include service leading and teaching.

Campus Work

Students have an opportunity to gain experience as campus professionals through work as Jewish student advisors or more specialized positions (e.g., Judaic educator) on local college campuses.

Some positions are developed and supervised jointly with Hillel of Greater Philadelphia. Campus-based positions enable the intern to learn about the campus rabbinate while working with college students on learning opportunities, social and cultural programs, prayer services, intergroup and social-justice projects, and individual counseling.

Social-Justice, Multifaith and Other Organizational Work

Several RRC students work as employees or interns in a variety of Jewish community organizations, especially those focusing on social justice. In these jobs and placements, students participate in administrative, planning, educational or programming work. Students have served local communal agencies, such as federations and community centers, and national organizations. In addition, students have served as employees or interns at organizations that are not specifically Jewish but are engaged in social-justice or multifaith work.

Internships at RRC and for the Reconstructionist Movement

Many students serve as part-time employees or as interns for RRC for various programs. On-campus internships offered annually include admissions and recruitment, student life and Beit Midrash. RRC also employs students to assist with projects of the Reconstructionist Movement. Students have provided service in such areas as education and congregational services. Work opportunities in youth and camping are also available through Havaya summer programs.

Education Positions

RRC students serve in a variety of education jobs, including teaching students of all ages. RRC students might teach religious-school or adult-education classes or tutor b'nai mitzvah students. Frequently, they serve as education directors, provide family education or oversee children's services.

Life-Cycle Officiation

RRC receives requests for student rabbis to officiate at one-time life-cycle events, such as baby-naming ceremonies, weddings, b'nai mitzvah or unveilings.

Community-Service Placements and Other Volunteer Positions

Occasionally RRC receives requests for student rabbis to provide rabbinic services on a volunteer basis. These include opportunities to speak on a topic, to lead holiday services in a nursing home or to provide the invocation at an event. When available, these are posted through the Office of Rabbinic Formation or the Office of Student Life.

Multifaith and Social-Justice Programs

RRC is a pioneer and leader in the areas of multifaith engagement and social justice. In addition to course offerings in these areas, RRC offers students many opportunities to participate in retreats, workshops and conferences with leaders and emerging leaders in the fields of multifaith engagement and social-justice activism. Through curricular and extracurricular learning experiences, robust internship opportunities, and mentorship and professional supervision from our program directors, RRC students build the skills and relationships that are crucial to effective work in these exciting and demanding fields.

NUSAKH AND LITURGY COACHING

Additional support is available to students as needed to assist with skills acquisition in all areas of liturgy, including Shabbat and weekday *nusakh*, High Holiday preparation, Torah reading and life-cycle officiation.

Guest Speakers and Community *Limmud* (Learning)

The Community Limmud period is an integral part of the academic calendar, providing opportunities for students, faculty and guest speakers to lead community-wide conversations that further enrich college life. Shared celebrations of Shabbat and holidays within the student community are an important part of the RRC experience, and several times each year Shabbatonim—seminars and retreats for students and faculty—afford opportunities for extended discussion, study and celebration.

Jewish Spiritual Direction

In 1998, with the support of the Nathan Cummings Foundation, RRC pioneered a new program in Jewish spiritual direction. Spiritual direction is a contemplative practice that assists those seeking to discern God's presence in their lives. Although the program is completely voluntary, 75 percent of RRC's student body participates each year, substantially informing their discussion of God and spirituality. The student defines what he or she is seeking to discern: God, the *shekhinah*, the divine, the power that makes for salvation, ultimate meaning. It is not the job of the spiritual director to impose his or her beliefs on the student. Rather, the director's role is to listen openly with no personal agenda, noting where God emerges in the student's narrative and shining light on those moments. These conversations are absolutely confidential; no member of the faculty, therefore, may serve in this capacity, as faculty members evaluate students. The role of the spiritual director is to provide a safe and open space, free of judgment or analysis.

Students may earn .25 elective credits yearly for work in the College's spiritual direction program. Students may also participate in the programs without earning credit. This program consists of 8 hour-long monthly meetings with a spiritual director between September 1 and June 30. A student who meets with their spiritual director eight times earns .25 elective course credits. Students may choose from among several spiritual directors.

The Reconstructionist Student Association

The Reconstructionist Student Association (RSA) supports students and their evolving needs at the College by providing a forum in which students can share ideas and concerns with their colleagues, as well as address issues of student life at RRC.

The RSA meets monthly during the academic year and organizes activities within the student community and the wider College community. Students chosen by the RSA participate in the College's governance by serving on various committees. In addition, the RSA elects a student to serve as a nonvoting representative to the college's board of governors. The student representative attends all board meetings to report on student life and concerns, and serves on the board's College Committee. The RSA also elects student representatives to Reconstructing Judaism's Joint Israel Commission and the Tikkun Olam Commission. Students also organize efforts around social action, community concerns, holiday and other celebrations, and other areas of student life. The RSA meets monthly while school is in session. Any RSA member may submit agenda items to the RSA president in advance of the meeting.

Funded Fellowships and Internships

JOHN BLISS CAMPUS INTERNSHIPS

Through the generosity of William Fern, Ph.D., three 10-month internships are available on campuses in the Philadelphia metropolitan area. Each intern is jointly supervised on site and at RRC to maximize learning.

JOHN BLISS SCHOLARSHIPS FOR CLINICAL PASTORAL EDUCATION

Through the generosity of William Fern, Ph.D., who has chosen to honor his life partner, John Bliss, RRC is able to offer eight stipends for full-time students engaged in a summer CPE unit or an extended unit of CPE.

THE CHAPLAINCY INTERNSHIP

An anonymous donor has graciously made it possible to fund student internships in chaplaincy.

WILLIAM FLESHER COMMUNITY INTERNSHIPS

Three 10-month internships are available through Hillel of Greater Philadelphia and Philadelphia-area Jewish community centers. Each intern is jointly supervised on site and at RRC to maximize learning.

OR HADASH RRC ENDOWMENT

This fund (established by Arthur and Jan Goldman, and Joanne Deutchman) supports the activities of the annual RRC Or Hadash *Shabbaton* and other opportunities for RRC students at Or Hadash.

NO'AR HADASH/CAMP HAVAYA INTERNSHIPS

Funds are provided to support the work of RRC students at Camp Havaya and with No'ar Hadash, the Reconstructionist Youth Movement.

KLEINBAUM CONGREGATIONAL INTERNSHIPS

Through the generosity of William H. Fern, Ph.D., two congregational internships were established in honor of Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum, '90.

THE WIENER FELLOWSHIP AT CAMP HAVAYA

This endowed fellowship provides an RRC student with an extra stipend for summer work at Camp Havaya and provides the camp with an additional outstanding teacher-specialist and Jewish role model.

THE HERMAN SILVER AND DR. LEE WINSTON FELLOWSHIP

Through a bequest of the estate of Herman Silver, z"l, the Herman Silver and Dr. Lee Winston Fellowship helps support an internship at a college in Greater Philadelphia.

V. FACILITIES, SURROUNDINGS AND STUDENT RESOURCES

Campus Facilities

Ziegelman Hall

Ziegelman Hall, the College's main building, is conveniently located and ideally equipped for the College's use. The red-brick, slate-roofed Georgian mansion houses classrooms, seminar and conference facilities, faculty and administrative offices, the College Beit Midrash, a community kitchen area, a lounge, and faculty and student mailrooms. Its high ceilings, fireplaces, grand entrance foyer, wood paneling and custom details add warmth and beauty to the campus environment.

The Center for Jewish Ethics

The Center for Jewish Ethics, Levin-Lieber Program in Jewish Ethics, was established in 1994 to address the Jewish people's struggle for ethical learning and their need for guidance as they encounter the ethical demands of contemporary life.

Directed by Rabbi Mira Wasserman, Ph.D., the center hosts the groundbreaking, pluralistic Academic Coalition for Jewish Bioethics, which mounts an annual conference and a related journal. In 2020-21, the Center for Jewish Ethics will conduct inquiry and develop resources related to the intersections of Judaism, race and racism in Jewish communities and continue to develop resources related to the ethical questions raised by the Covid-19 pandemic.

THE GOLDYNE SAVAD LIBRARY CENTER

The Goldyne Savad Library Center, completed in 1999, houses the Mordecai M. Kaplan Library, the Ira and Judith Kaplan Eisenstein Reconstructionist Archives, and faculty office space. The library is housed on the main and lower levels of the Savad Library Center, and supports student and faculty curricular and research needs with its excellent collection of Judaic and Hebraic resources, Reconstructionist movement publications, computer facilities, electronic resources, and study space for both *hevrutah* (partnered) and independent study. Open stacks allow users to browse freely, and an online catalogue provides searchable access to the complete holdings.

Although the library's first responsibility is to the College's students, faculty, alumni and the Reconstructionist movement, it also offers its resources to residents of the region and to scholars worldwide. Members of the public are invited to visit the library and may register to borrow materials. As a member of several consortia, the library provides access for its students and faculty to research materials nationwide. Reciprocally, the library offers its resources to researchers nationwide through interlibrary loan.

THE IRA AND JUDITH KAPLAN EISENSTEIN RECONSTRUCTIONIST ARCHIVES

Papers of several of the founding leaders of the Reconstructionist movement are housed in the Ira and Judith Kaplan Eisenstein Reconstructionist Archives. The largest collection contains the papers of Mordecai M. Kaplan. A preliminary catalogue of Kaplan's correspondence files has been published, and future plans call for the publication of a complete catalogue of holdings. Other major collections include the papers of Ira Eisenstein and Judith Kaplan Eisenstein.

The RECONSTRUCTIONIST PRESS

Reconstructing Judaism maintains an academic press and publishes a range of materials for audiences interested in the ongoing exploration and expression of Reconstructionist ideas. The Press publishes a number of monographs and books. Among its publications is the dynamic *Guide to Jewish Practice* series, in which the Center for Jewish Ethics of RRC provides a Reconstructionist perspective on contemporary Jewish practice — from keeping kosher to bioethics. Other Ethics Center publications discuss issues such as decision-making at the end of life. Visit www.JewishReconBooks.org

Campus Surroundings

Philadelphia is the birthplace of the nation's second-oldest synagogue (Congregation Mikveh Israel) and is home to a vibrant Jewish population and a wealth of Jewish institutions. The diverse sections of the city offer RRC students a wide variety of living, educational and congregational settings within relatively close proximity. The large Jewish community also offers excellent internship and employment opportunities in synagogues; a diverse network of Jewish schools, college campuses, geriatric centers and hospitals; and a wide range of other Jewish community organizations. The College's suburban location makes a car the preferred form of transportation; most RRC students drive to campus or carpool with fellow students. Greater Philadelphia boasts an extensive network of commuter trains that links the city center with surrounding suburban communities.

Philadelphia is rich in institutions with religious resources. Gratz College, the nation's oldest nondenominational school for Jewish learning, is located in Melrose Park, just minutes away from the RRC campus. Both Temple University and the University of Pennsylvania maintain strong graduate programs in religious studies and, along with Penn's Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Studies, provide a wealth of highly specialized libraries and research collections. RRC's partnership with the United Lutheran Seminary provides exchange privileges for RRC students attending classes there.

Other seminaries within easy distance of the College include Palmer Theological Seminary, Moravian Theological Seminary, United Lutheran Seminary, Princeton Theological Seminary and St. Charles Borromeo Seminary. RRC students and faculty have ample opportunities to connect and learn with students and faculty at these seminaries. Through participation in the Interseminary Initiative of Interfaith Philadelphia and membership in the Southeastern Pennsylvania Theological Library Association, the College's Mordecai M. Kaplan Library benefits greatly from access to the research and circulating collections of the two participating area institutions.

CHELTENHAM TOWNSHIP

The College itself is located across the street from a 45-acre arboretum in Cheltenham Township, 10 miles northwest of Center City Philadelphia in a tree-lined community close to parks, playgrounds, libraries, public tennis courts, YMCA facilities, health-club facilities and a skating rink. Cheltenham's 32 religious institutions include three Conservative, three Reform and two Orthodox congregations. Or Hadash, a Reconstructionist congregation, is located in nearby Fort Washington. The township is home to a wide range of Jewish schools, including the Perelman Jewish Day School, a Solomon Schechter affiliate for kindergarten through eighth grade; Jewish Learning Venture, which trains and supports area synagogues and schools; and Gratz College, which offers high school, undergraduate and graduate programs for students, and has cooperative programs with RRC, providing several joint degrees. Houses and apartments tend to be charming and older.

MOUNT AIRY AND GERMANTOWN

Some RRC students choose to live in the Mount Airy community, 4.5 miles from the College. This historic neighborhood marries 18th- and 19th-century architecture to the tempo of modern life in a community

that is culturally and ethnically diverse. Housing includes apartments, single-family homes and grand historic homes on tree-lined streets close to parks. The neighborhood includes a full-service food co-op.

WEST PHILADELPHIA

Many RRC students also live in the vibrant and progressive neighborhoods of West Philadelphia. West Philly's neighborhoods are home to the University of Pennsylvania, Drexel University, the Reconstructionist synagogue Kol Tzedek, as well as many community and arts organizations, restaurants and shops.

GREATER PHILADELPHIA

Center City Philadelphia boasts a large array of cultural activities. Housing options include older brick townhouses, apartments and condominiums. The Jewish Community Centers of Greater Philadelphia offer classes, special programs and Israeli dancing. Synagogues in Center City include the Reconstructionist Congregation LeYv Ha-Ir in the center of the city, Society Hill Synagogue on its east side, and Kol Tzedek, a West Philadelphia synagogue near the campus of the University of Pennsylvania.

[Directions to RRC](#)

Our beautiful wooded campus is located just north of the Philadelphia city line at Church Road and Greenwood Avenue in Wyncote, Pa. RRC is easily accessible from various metropolitan areas — from New York City, Center City Philadelphia and Baltimore/Washington, D.C.

FROM NEW YORK CITY:

- Take NJ Turnpike South to Exit 6 (PA Turnpike-Route 276).
- Take PA Turnpike to Exit 339 (Fort Washington).
- Take 309 South for about 5 miles. At the sign "Expressway Ends," get in the left-turn lane.
- Turn left onto Greenwood Avenue. At the first light, bear to the right to continue on Greenwood. At the next light, turn right onto Church Road. The college's driveway will be on your left.

FROM CENTER CITY PHILADELPHIA:

- Take Schuylkill Expressway West (towards Valley Forge).
- Exit at Route 1 North-Roosevelt Boulevard (Exit 340B).
- Exit at Broad Street Route 611 North (on right). At the dead end, turn left onto Broad Street (Route 611 North).
- Drive 2.4 miles. Bear right onto Old York Road (611 North).
- Continue for two miles and then turn left onto Church Road.
- Follow Church Road past Washington Lane. You will see RRC on your right (before you reach the next traffic light).

FROM BALTIMORE AND WASHINGTON, D.C., VIA ROUTE 95:

- Take 95 North.

- Exit onto 476 toward Plymouth Meeting. Continue until the end of the road, and then take Pennsylvania Turnpike East (toward New Jersey).
- Get off at Exit 339 (Fort Washington).
- Take 309 South for about 5 miles. At the sign “Expressway Ends,” get in the left-turn lane. (Trilogy Apartments will be on your right).
- Turn left onto Greenwood Avenue. At the first light, bear to the right to continue on Greenwood. At the next light, turn right onto Church Road. The college’s driveway will be on your left.

FROM CENTER CITY OR WEST PHILADELPHIA, VIA TRAIN:

- Take the West Trenton, Warrington, Doylestown or Lansdale train from Center City Philadelphia (Suburban Station, Jefferson Station or 30th Street Station) to Jenkintown/Wyncote Station. Walk one mile west on Greenwood Avenue. Turn left at Church Road to enter RRC’s driveway.

Grading System

The instructor assumes responsibility for the ongoing evaluation of student work during the course of each semester. In cases of student deficiency, the instructor is strongly encouraged to meet with the student in a timely manner to discuss ways of remedying the situation. The substance of this meeting should be recorded in a memo for the student’s file, with a copy sent to the student and the student’s advisor.

At the end of the semester, instructors are asked to evaluate the student in terms of the following: progress towards course objectives; progress towards development of primary competencies; rabbinic formation and development (areas of strength and areas for growth); and additional feedback. Students may receive the following grades as part of the evaluation of their coursework at the end of each semester:

(P) Pass

The grade of pass indicates that a student has fulfilled the stated course requirements (e.g., attendance, assignments, *hevrutah* requirements, etc.), and has satisfactorily met the learning objectives of the course.

(LP) Low Pass

The grade of Low Pass is given to indicate that a student has not fully met the course objectives and/or has not fulfilled the stated course requirements (e.g., attendance, assignments, *hevrutah* requirements, etc.), but will not be required to retake the course. Permission to retake or rewrite the work additional times is at the discretion of the instructor.

If the student submits the work by the last day of the semester in which they were enrolled in the course, and if the grade of LP is submitted by the instructor after the semester’s deadline for submitting grades, the student will have an additional semester to resubmit the work.

(F) Fail

A failing grade is given to indicate that a student has not met minimal course requirements. In the case of a required course, students must retake the course (or its equivalent) or do additional work as determined by the instructor and the vice president for academic affairs.

(XF)

When a student who has received a grade of F in a course retakes the course and passes it, the original grade will be changed to a grade of XF, and the original grade will not be grounds for keeping the student on academic probation.

(AU) Audit

Students may register to audit courses with permission of the instructor, who will determine requirements for auditing the course. A student may request permission from the instructor to change from audit status to credit status. This request must be made by the 12th week of classes. Students may register to audit a maximum of two courses per semester.

(W) Withdrawal

This grade indicates that the student withdrew from the course after the end of the drop/add period. For more information on withdrawals, see Section VI.7.

(I) Incomplete

When a student does not satisfactorily complete all the required work for a course by the end of the semester, they may ask the instructor for a grade of Incomplete.

(AF) Administrative Failure

When a student misses a deadline for completion of assigned work without submitting an approved extension form, the student's grade will be changed to an AF by the registrar. If the work is subsequently completed and the AF is changed to a grade of P, a written record of the circumstances of the grade change will be placed in the student's file.

Policies for Grades of Incomplete

When students complete course requirements on time, instructors are expected to submit grades and evaluations and to return written work with comments three weeks after work is submitted or three weeks after the last day of the semester, whichever comes last.

Required work for a course must be completed by the date designated by the instructor. If a student cannot complete the course work by the deadline or if the work is unsatisfactory, the student may request an extension. The instructor is not obligated to grant an extension. Extensions may be granted by the instructor for up to one year from the end of the semester in which the course was taken. The length of the extension appropriate under the circumstances will be determined by the instructor, but is limited by leave policies and senior deadlines.

If the instructor grants the extension, the student must submit an incomplete extension form to the instructor. The instructor should then submit the extension form, signed by both the instructor and the student by the deadline for student evaluations.

If the student does not complete the work for a course and does not present to the instructor an extension form, the instructor may complete an extension form without the student's signature by the date required.

All work in courses for which a student has received a grade of Incomplete must be completed no later than one year after the end of the course. The student and the instructor may agree to one of the following five dates for the submission of work: Aug. 10, Oct. 10, March 10 and the last day of each of the semesters. The instructor must then submit a grade and an evaluation form, and return the work submitted with comments within three weeks of the due date (Graduating seniors who miss the March 10 deadline must submit the work by the final date for submission of work by seniors.) If a student will not be able to submit work by the date agreed upon on the Incomplete extension form, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor and submit a new Incomplete extension form with a new agreed-upon date (if the instructor agrees), signed by the student and the instructor on or before the old deadline. If, for some reason, the instructor cannot sign the extension form, they can indicate approval by email to the director of academic administration. If the assignment is not satisfactorily completed by the designated time, the student will receive a grade of AF.

Students with one incomplete cannot enroll for more than more than 12 credits. Students with two incompletes cannot enroll for more than 10 credits. If a student has outstanding work in more than two classes, they may not attend classes in the program. (To attend classes, outstanding work must have been submitted but not necessarily yet evaluated.) If the student completes the overload by handing in the outstanding work after the start of the semester, they will only be allowed to enroll in those courses in which they have missed no more than two classes and may do so only with the permission of the instructor. Students notified within two weeks of handing in their outstanding work that their work is not passing will again be treated as having an incomplete unless they receive a grade of LP or F. If this results in a student carrying more than two incompletes, they will be barred from attending classes.

All grades of Incomplete/AF must be removed and outstanding requirements in liturgy skills must be completed before a student is permitted to begin the senior year of study. The deadline for completion of all work is Aug. 10. Under no circumstances will a student be permitted to begin the senior year unless all outstanding work is completed before the first day of classes.

Rising seniors must complete any outstanding work by August 10. In addition, seniors may not carry any incompletes into their final semester. Seniors may not attend classes if they have not completed all work by the beginning of the semester.

Seniors must satisfactorily complete spring-semester requirements no later than one month before the date of graduation. Students are required to continue preparing for and attending class after the senior deadline for the submission of assignments.

Appeal of Grades

A student who believes that they have unfairly received a grade of LP or F may initiate an appeal by proceeding as follows:

- The student shall speak directly with the instructor and may request that a written record of that conversation be placed in their student file. If the student chooses, a regular faculty member of the student's choice may be invited to join that discussion.
- If the student and the instructor cannot come to an agreement, the student can appeal in writing to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. After receiving the written appeal, the Vice President for Academic Affairs shall set up a meeting to discuss the grievance among the student and the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Director of Rabbinic Formation and a regular faculty member of the student's choice. The Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Assistant Vice President for Enrollment and Rabbinic Formation, and the faculty member chosen by the student shall then meet with the instructor. The three may choose to play a mediating role in resolving the dispute before they make a decision. If mediation proves unfruitful, the three shall investigate in a preliminary way to determine if there are reasonable grounds for an appeal. If a majority of the committee does not find reasonable grounds, the Vice President for Academic Affairs shall so advise the student and the instructor in writing. If the instructor is the Vice President for Academic Affairs, or the Assistant Vice President for Enrollment and Rabbinic Formation, then the President shall appoint another member of the regular faculty to serve in their place.
- If mediation fails and the majority finds reasonable grounds for the appeal, then the three shall serve as an arbitration panel and shall conduct a thorough investigation, at the conclusion of which the student and the instructor shall be advised in writing of their binding decision.
- This appeal process, beginning with step (a), must be initiated no later than two months after receipt of the grade.

Academic Probation and Dismissal

Academic probation is considered a warning to students that they are in danger of becoming subject to dismissal unless their academic work improves.

A student may be placed on academic probation under any of the following circumstances:

- Receiving one F
- Receiving two LPs
- A faculty decision that the student's academic performance warrants probation

If a grade of F or LP is subsequently changed or replaced as a result of the student's additional work for the course, the student's probationary status will be reviewed.

Students are subject to academic dismissal under any of the following circumstances:

- Receiving two Fs from two instructors
- Receiving three LPs from more than one instructor and in more than one semester
- Persistent probationary status
- A faculty decision that the student's academic performance warrants dismissal. Although the above factors for academic probation and dismissal apply generally, each student's academic performance and progress will be evaluated individually, and decisions about academic probation and dismissal will be made on an individual basis.

Non-Academic Probation, Suspension and/or Dismissal

The faculty of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College reserves the right to dismiss a student at any time for cause.

Except in extraordinary cases, it will be the practice before dismissal to place the student on non-academic probation, for a period to be determined by the faculty, in which a supervisory faculty committee is appointed to work with the student about the faculty's concerns. The student may choose to invite their faculty advisor to any or all of the student's meetings with the supervisory faculty committee. When invited, the faculty advisor will attend without speaking. It should not be presumed that the faculty advisor will automatically advocate on the student's behalf at subsequent faculty deliberations.

Extraordinary circumstances may warrant immediate expulsion. The faculty reserves the right to determine whether a period of non-academic probation is appropriate in any given situation. If the committee and the regular faculty believe that the concerns are remediable, the student may be suspended for a period of time, definite or indefinite, and given the option to apply for readmission at the end of that period or when the concern has been adequately addressed.

When a student is placed on non-academic probation, the faculty will treat that fact as confidential.

When a student is dismissed on non-academic grounds, it will not be treated as confidential.

When a student is suspended on non-academic grounds, the faculty will decide whether or not to treat the situation as confidential on a case-by-case basis. (The decision about whether non-academic suspension is to be kept confidential is based on factors such as, and including, the following: the likelihood of the student doing harm to others in the RRC community; the message the College wants to deliver to the RRC community; the moral issues involved; the potential damage to the reputation of RRC and to colleagues; and legal obligations/potential RRC liability.)

As part of the faculty's final consideration of the suspension or dismissal of a student, a hearing will be held by an ad hoc committee approved by the regular faculty. The committee will include the president of the Reconstructionist Student Association or, if the RSA president cannot serve, another student designated by the RSA president. The committee shall be convened on a case-by-case basis as the situation warrants. The committee will make a recommendation to the regular faculty.

Student Resources

STUDENT HANDBOOK/ FINANCIAL RESOURCES GUIDE/POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Students receive the Student Handbook upon matriculation. This handbook provides information and regulations supplementary to this catalogue. Policies regarding satisfactory progress, requirements, community expectations, academic standards and instructions on applying for financial aid are posted in the Policies and Procedures section of RRC's website.

VI. TUITION AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Please visit www.rrc.edu/tuition for tuition and financial assistance information.

Full tuition payment is due at the beginning of each semester. If this presents a hardship, a student can obtain information on tuition payment plans from the controller (215.576.0800, ext. 142).

Financial Assistance

RABBINICAL PROGRAM

Approximately 45 percent of revenues collected from tuition are distributed in the form of financial assistance, helping 70 percent to 80 percent of students. Typical awards in recent years have been \$3,000 to \$16,000, although the range has extended from \$1,000 to full tuition.

RRC provides scholarship aid to incoming rabbinical students on the basis of need. Endowed scholarship funds also provide merit-based awards. In subsequent years, rabbinical students may receive two categories of grants: strictly need-based, and assistance based on a combination of need and merit.

The College is fully accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, making RRC students eligible for federally guaranteed student loans through the Federal Direct Student Loans Program. Requirements for loan eligibility and additional information regarding federal loan programs can be found at <https://www.rrc.edu/federal-direct-loans-reconstructionist-rabbinical-college>. The office of the Executive Vice President (215.576.0800 ext. 150) can also provide further information regarding federal loan programs.

STUDY IN ISRAEL

The College offers financial aid to matriculated rabbinical students who are studying in Israel. For more information about assistance while studying in Israel, contact the Executive Vice President at 215.576.0800 ext. 150.

Financial-Aid Award Deadlines

Only candidates who have been admitted to RRC can apply for need-based scholarship aid. The financial-aid application form demonstrating need must be completed and received by RRC no later than April 15. Financial-aid application forms are sent to candidates who have been admitted.

Candidates who wish to apply for financial aid are advised to apply for College admission by Feb. 1 to allow sufficient time for administrative processing. Please note that candidates who submit an application for admission after Feb. 1 may not be able to apply for financial aid by the April 15 deadline. Late financial-aid applications will be accepted from applicants who are admitted after April 10, but an award cannot be guaranteed.

RRC will assist enrolling students with the process of applying for federal loans.

Need-Based Scholarships

Students with demonstrated financial need are eligible for scholarships to help defray educational costs.

Admitted students who wish to be considered for scholarships must fill out a financial-aid application form provided by the College. Application forms and supplementary materials must be completed and submitted by April 15. Students admitted after April 1 will be given an extension to the April 15 deadline. Please note, late applications will be accepted, but may be at a disadvantage. We encourage all students to apply for financial aid by April 15 if possible.

Merit-Based Scholarships for Incoming Students

Merit scholarships that can be used toward tuition are available for incoming students. Each year, up to two *Marjorie and Aaron Ziegelman Scholarships* are given to especially promising incoming rabbinical students. In addition, one *Judith and Ira Eisenstein Scholarship* may be offered each year. All admitted students will automatically be considered for these prestigious merit scholarships; there is no separate application process.

Merit-based scholarships also are available each year for returning students who demonstrate overall excellence, as nominated by the faculty. Although there is no separate application form, students wishing to be considered for merit-based scholarships should fill out the regular financial-aid form.

Additional Scholarships

NEED-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS (AVAILABLE TO BOTH NEW AND RETURNING STUDENTS)

The Rabbi Amy Bernstein Scholarship

The Rabbi Steven Carr Reuben Scholarship

The Nathan Cogan Scholarship

The Beverly Bain Scholarship: Beverly Bain, z"l, was a longtime leader of the Reconstructionist movement in Southern California.

The David Teutsch Israel Scholarship: This scholarship was established in honor of Rabbi David Teutsch, Ph.D., for decades of leadership and contributions to the growth and dynamism of liberal Judaism. This scholarship supports rabbinical students during their study in Israel.

The Brin Scholarship: The late Ruth and Howard Brin provided a gift to establish the Brin scholarship. They were the parents of RRC graduate, Rabbi Deborah Brin.

The Leona Nelkin Brochin Scholarship: Disbursements from the fund provide scholarship support to an RRC student.

The Rabbi Jeffrey Eisenstat Scholarship: This scholarship was established by the family, friends and congregants of Rabbi Jeffrey Eisenstat in his honor. Rabbi Eisenstat is a graduate of RRC.

The Frieda Abelson Green Scholarship: The Green Scholarship was endowed in honor of the special birthday of Frieda Abelson Green, mother of former president Arthur Green.

The Anna Weber Gross Scholarship: This scholarship was endowed by RRC board member Mark Nussbaum in honor of the 99th birthday of his grandmother, Anna Weber Gross, z"l.

The Max and Rita Haber Scholarship: This scholarship was established by Max and Rita Haber, longtime supporters of RRC.

The Fred and Naomi Hazell Scholarship: The Fred and Naomi Hazell Scholarship is awarded to a student who has lived or is living in Delaware County, Pa.

The Myron H. Kinberg Scholarship: The scholarship was established by Mrs. Joan Bayliss in memory of Rabbi Myron Kinberg z"l, father of RRC graduate, Rabbi Yohanna Kinberg.

The Kleinbaum Scholarship: Rabbi Kleinbaum is a graduate of RRC and longtime rabbi at Congregation Beit Simchat Torah. The scholarship is given in Rabbi Kleinbaum's honor by members of her congregation.

The Dorothy and Myer Kripke Scholarship Fund: The Kripke Scholarship Fund was established by Rabbi Myer and the late Dorothy Kripke of Omaha, Nebraska, who spent a lifetime committed to Jewish education, Dorothy as an author of Jewish children's books, and Myer through a 30-year distinguished career as a rabbi. Rabbi and Mrs. Kripke both benefited from highly subsidized Jewish educations, which motivated their commitment to provide scholarships to RRC students.

The Benjamin William Mehlman Scholarship: The Mehlman Scholarship was endowed by the friends and admirers of Bill Mehlman, z"l, a founder of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, and a longtime, dedicated and beloved member of the RRC board of governors.

The Lewis and Alice Schimberg Memorial Scholarship: The funds for this scholarship were to provide assistance to RRC students.

The Semanoff Scholarship: The funds for this scholarship were raised by the board of governors to provide scholarship assistance to RRC students.

The Allen A. Stein Memorial Scholarship: This scholarship provides support for a student who demonstrates financial need.

The Emet Faye Tauber, z"l, Memorial Scholarship Fund: In his short life, Emet was a fierce advocate for the rights of all individuals in the transgender and disabled communities. Emet was particularly

committed to supporting the Jewish community. Emet wanted to recognize the warm and loving community at RRC, and establish an annual needs-based scholarship in his name. Emet wanted each recipient of this scholarship to deepen their knowledge of the community of people with disabilities. The stipulations of this scholarship require that each participant spend a minimum of one hour per month during the semesters to which the scholarship applies either by studying Jewish texts with a teacher who is an expert in Jewish approaches to disabilities or by volunteering with an appropriate agency.

The Congregation Tikvoh Chadoshoh Scholarship: The Congregation Tikvoh Chadoshoh scholarship was established as a living memorial to the congregation whose members were German survivors of and refugees from the Holocaust.

The Judith and Arthur Winston Scholarship: This scholarship was originally established by Arthur Winston in memory of his wife Judith Winston. After Arthur's death, the family renamed the scholarship to honor both Judith and Arthur.

Need- and Merit-Based Scholarships

The Dorothy and Sidney Becker Israel Scholarship Fund: Through the generosity of Dorothy and Sidney Becker, z"l, lifelong committed Reconstructionist Jews, a fund has been established for students studying in Israel. Students with outstanding Hebrew knowledge and fluency are given preference. The scholarship is awarded based on academic excellence and financial need.

The Fran Berley Memorial Scholarship: The stipulations of the Berley Scholarship require that the recipient visit the Reconstructionist Congregation of the North Shore on Long Island.

The Jeannette Henigson Cowen Scholarship: This scholarship fund was one of the original endowed funds at RRC. It was established through a bequest from the estate of Jeanette Cowen and the generosity of her family and friends.

The William H. Fern Program in Field Education Program Scholarship: This scholarship was established through the generosity of William H. Fern as part of the launch of the *The William H. Fern Program in Field Education*.

The Joseph & Frieda Hellenbrand Memorial Scholarship: The Hellenbrand Scholarship is given to a student who shows commitment to the promulgation of high ethical standards and a humanistic approach to Judaism.

The Herman and Shirley Levin Scholarship: The Levin scholarship was established through the generosity of the late Herman and Shirley Levin.

The William and Ruth Levy Endowed Scholarship Fund

The Leslie Reggel Scholarship: The stipulations of this scholarship require that the recipient make one weekend visit to Congregation Dor Hadash in Pittsburgh. Reggel Fellows have been appointed since 1984, under the terms of a bequest from the estate of Mr. Reggel. The College has benefited from the bequest to help support its students and to give them community outreach opportunities. Congregation Dor Hadash has benefited from the visits of students by maintaining its communication with the College,

engaging with evolving liturgy and *midrash*, and offering its support to people who are preparing themselves for career service to the Jewish people.

The Harriet Saalheimer Scholarship

The Dr. Lee Winston and Herman Silver Israel Scholarship: A scholarship from Dr. Lee Winston, z”l, and Herman Silver, z”l, is awarded annually to a student or students studying in Israel. Academic excellence and financial need are taken into consideration.

The Joseph and Miriam Singer Scholarship: Through the generosity of Miriam Singer and Joseph A. Singer, z”l, a founder of the College, a scholarship has been established, and is awarded annually on the basis of academic merit and financial need to a student or students studying in Israel.

The Edith G. and A. Walter Socolow Scholarship: The funds to make this scholarship possible were contributed by the late Edith G. and A. Walter Socolow, longtime supporters of the movement and the College.

Tuition Refunds

In all cases, it is the student’s responsibility to keep current on tuition-refund schedules. Tuition refunds for students are given on a prorated basis. Students who withdraw from a class before the add/drop deadline receive a full refund. Students who withdraw before the end of the fourth week of classes receive a 50 percent refund. Students who withdraw before the end of the seventh week of classes receive a 25 percent refund. Students who withdraw after the seventh week of class do not receive any refund. Refunds are calculated based on the day of withdrawal. If a student withdraws from a class after the add/drop deadline as a result of a serious illness or medical condition that arose during the semester, they may request a tuition credit by speaking with the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

This policy also governs tuition refunds for students who receive federal Title IV funding, including federal direct loans. Refunds as a result of official withdrawal will be made according to the federally regulated schedule provided to all recipients of Title IV financial assistance at the start of the academic year. Activity, library and medical fees are not refundable. No refund will be issued for unauthorized withdrawals.

VII. GRADUATION AND EMPLOYMENT DATA

For the 2019-20 academic year, the college had a retention rate of 96.5% and 100% employment of its 5 graduates in congregational, campus or organizational settings.

VIII. 2020-21 ACADEMIC CALENDAR

| AUGUST '20 | | | | | | |
|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | Th | F | S |
| | | | | | | 1 |
| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | 31 | | | | | |

25-27 New Student Orientation
 28-29 Opening *Shabbaton*
 31 Opening Day Program

5 Drop/Add Deadlines
 26 Purim*
** Note: Decision for Purim celebration date at RRC will be made in the fall.*

| FEBRUARY '21 | | | | | | |
|--------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | Th | F | S |
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| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | | | | | | |

| SEPTEMBER '20 | | | | | | |
|---------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | Th | F | S |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | | | |

1 **Classes begin**
 7 Labor Day (No Classes)
 8 Monday classes
 17 Constitution Day
 18 Drop/Add Deadlines
 19-29 RHYK Break (no classes)

29-31 Passover Break (no classes)

| MARCH '21 | | | | | | |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | Th | F | S |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

| OCTOBER '20 | | | | | | |
|-------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
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| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |

3-4 Sukkot
 10 Shemini Atzeret
 11 Simchat Torah

01-02 Passover Break (no classes)
 29 **Last day of classes**
 30 Make-Up Day

| APRIL '21 | | | | | | |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | Th | F | S |
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | |

| NOVEMBER '20 | | | | | | |
|--------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | Th | F | S |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | | | | | |

3 Election Day (No Classes)
 25-29 Thanksgiving Break

3 Make-Up Day
 5-9 Reading Period
 10-11 Exam Days
 17-18 Shavuot (closed)
 20 **Last day for papers**
 23 **GRADUATION**
 31 Memorial Day (closed)

| MAY '21 | | | | | | |
|---------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | Th | F | S |
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| 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| 30 | 31 | | | | | |

| DECEMBER '20 | | | | | | |
|--------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | Th | F | S |
| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | |

- 16 Make-Up Day
- 17 TUESDAY classes
- 17 Last day of classes
- 18-22 Reading Period
- 24-25 Closed
- 31 Closed

June 1-Aug. 5 Summer Session
(TBD)

| JUNE '21 | | | | | | |
|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | Th | F | S |
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| 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | | | |

| JANUARY '21 | | | | | | |
|-------------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | Th | F | S |
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| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 | | | | | | |

- 1 New Year's Day (closed)
- 5-6 Exam Days
- 6 Last day for papers
- 11-14 Workshops (TBD)
- 18 MLK Day (closed)
- 25 Classes begin

5 Closed

| JULY '21 | | | | | | |
|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| S | M | T | W | Th | F | S |
| | | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |

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