Experience the Difference

ACCELERATED DEGREE
Our three-year program—the only one of its kind in the country—means lower cost and faster entry into the cantorate.

PLURALISTIC APPROACH
We encourage all individuals to contribute their unique voice and vision to the Jewish community.

TRADITION AND INNOVATION
Our curriculum integrates traditional Jewish text, liturgy, and practice with musical and spiritual innovation.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
Cantors ordained at Hebrew College graduate with a Master of Jewish Education, empowering them to lead their communities in study as well as in worship.

PEER INTERACTION
You'll have the opportunity to study, interact, and learn with students from Hebrew College’s highly regarded Rabbinical School.

RICH AND DIVERSE FACULTY
The cantorial program draws on renowned faculty from three Hebrew College schools—the School of Jewish Music, the Shoolman Graduate School of Jewish Education, and the Rabbinical School—as well as resources from our interfaith partner institutions.

PROXIMITY TO BOSTON
You’ll live and learn in one of the country’s leading regions of Jewish innovation, entrepreneurship, and musical creativity.

Program Leadership

Cantor Dr. Brian J. Mayer
Dean
Brian J. Mayer, a recognized scholar of hazzanut (cantorial music), has served as dean of the School of Jewish Music since 2011. Prior to his appointment at Hebrew College, he taught for fourteen years at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. Mayer also serves as cantor of Temple Emanu-El in Providence, Rhode Island.

Cantor Melissa Adleman
Assistant Dean
Melissa Adleman joined Hebrew College in 2015. She continues to serve Temple B’nis B’rith in Kingston, Pennsylvania, and teaches locally at Temple Shir Tikva in Wayland. Adleman is a cum laude graduate of McGill University, and earned ordination at Hebrew Union-College–Jewish Institute of Religion. She is currently pursuing a doctorate at Lesley University.

Cantor Lynn Torgove
Head of Vocal Arts
Lynn Torgove is a mezzo-soprano and stage director, and has had an international career as a soloist in many genres of classical music. She has served on the opera faculty at the New England Conservatory and the Boston University Opera Institute, and currently teaches at the Boston Conservatory Vocal and Choral Institute, and the Longy School of Music of Bard College.

Cantorial Ordination for Spiritual and Educational Leadership
A three-year pluralistic program designed to meet the needs of the twenty-first-century Jewish community.

School of Jewish Music
160 Herrick Road
Newton Centre, MA 02459
617-559-8643
hebrewcollege.edu/cantorial
Meeting the Challenges of Today’s Judaism

Jewish communal life in the twenty-first century requires talented, knowledgeable, and innovative spiritual leadership. We need cantors who are thoroughly trained in the liturgical history of the Jewish people, and who can, at the same time, address the needs of an increasingly complex and diverse Jewish world.

Cantors sing, but are not only singers. They teach, but are not only teachers. Hebrew College ordains cantors who can communicate a Judaism that is both authentic and accessible, and create vibrant and inclusive spiritual communities.

Our students, who come from diverse Jewish backgrounds, are actively encouraged to explore their own and each other’s beliefs and practices in an atmosphere of open inquiry and honest conversation. They graduate with an appreciation for the beliefs and practices in an atmosphere of open inquiry and honest conversation. They graduate with an appreciation for the beliefs and practices of Judaism that is both authentic and accessible, and create vibrant and inclusive spiritual communities.

A Rich and Innovative Curriculum

The Cantorial Ordination for Spiritual and Educational Leadership curriculum is notable for its academic rigor and spiritual depth—a rich blend of cantorial and education classes, private voice lessons, and cantorial coaching. The first year of the program places a particular emphasis on acquiring a foundation in Torah, Talmud, and advanced Hebrew text skills. During this period, you’ll study side-by-side with rabbinic students and our interfaith partners, giving you the opportunity to interact with those who most share your ideals and aspirations.

In the second and third years, students delve deeper into the history and practice of Jewish liturgical music. Traditional forms are blended with innovative approaches to music and spirituality, broadening the horizons and expanding the career options of our graduates. Students also fulfill a cantorial internship and an educational fieldwork placement during this period. During their matriculation, students participate in two intensive summer sessions of eight weeks each. Learning with a variety of Hebrew College and guest faculty members, you’ll study nosach ha-tefillah, liturgy, contemporary models of tefillah leadership, accompanied repertoire, choral conducting, and composing and arranging. The sessions also include a communications and presentation practicum—a class unique to our program.

A Vibrant Community

Hebrew College students and faculty are a community, both within and beyond the walls of the college. We study together, engage in communal prayer and celebration, and share the rhythms of the Jewish year and of each other’s lives. Student leadership and initiative is actively encouraged, and we seek ways to draw forth the distinctive contributions of each member of our community. As a result, our graduates are inspired to create vibrant and inclusive communities wherever they serve as cantors.

Social Responsibility

Judaism teaches us to engage with the world around us. Through study, prayer, education, activism, organization, community service, and interfaith leadership, we seek to address pressing human issues and bring healing to the world.

Musical Exploration

Cantorial students have ample opportunity to perform and participate in musical programming. Students sing with the Hebrew College chamber choir, participate in regular voice recitals, and are eligible to sing with Hebrew College’s choir-in-residence, the Zamir Chorale of Boston.

A Foundation for Success

Graduates of the cantorial program are ideally positioned for success in spiritual leadership. Our alumni currently serve as cantors, educators, and music directors at affiliated and independent congregations throughout Greater Boston and across the United States.

Our faculty and professional staff support you every step of the way during the job search, from drafting resumes and cover letters to preparing for interviews and negotiating contracts. In addition, you’ll receive a full year of ongoing supervision and support from the college after graduation.

Graduates of the cantorial program are eligible to apply for membership in both the Cantors Assembly and the American Conference of Cantors, which provide additional opportunities for mentorship, professional development, and personal growth.

Rav-Hazzan Program

Hebrew College recently introduced a first-of-its kind ordination program designed to prepare rabbis and cantors for leadership in the twenty-first century Jewish community.

As more cantors are being asked to fill pastoral roles, and more rabbis are being asked to take on the musical leadership of their congregation, the time has come to merge innovative musical education and pluralistic rabbinic training.

Through a blended five- or six-year curriculum, the Rav-Hazzan (rabbi-cantor) program will award both rabbinic and cantorial ordination.

2014 cantorial graduates include, from left, Richard Lawrence, cantor at Temple Emanuel in suburban Cleveland; Hinda Eisen Labovitz, cantor-educator at Ohr Kodesh Congregation in Chevy Chase, Maryland; and Rebecca Weiler Ribak, assistant cantor and choir director at Temple Sinai in Sharon, Massachusetts.