

# RELIGION

in Peace and Conflict

Master  
Programme

Alumni Newsletter Spring 2021

## Short News

### Uppsala University students and employees return to campus!

The Swedish government announced that the requirement to conduct higher education and other adult education remotely will be removed on 1 June 2021. The Vice-Chancellor Anders Hagfeldt commented on this: "This is very pleasing news, it's time to welcome our students back to campus. The pandemic has been characterized by difficult planning conditions, it's good to receive clearer information now."

For RPC, this gives hope for a campus week on campus in the autumn. We look forward to meeting our students!

### Useful information

#### Feeling anxious during a coronavirus pandemic?

You can find a few tips here:

<https://www.uu.se/en/students/support-and-services/health-care/upsala/anxiety-associated-with-the-coronavirus/>

#### Advice on stress:

<https://uu.se/en/students/support-and-services/health-care/upsala/stress-management/>

#### In case you are looking for a job:

<https://careergate.student.uu.se>

### For Alumni:

We want to know more about **your activities and achievements!** Would you like to **share your story** with other RPC alumni and students? Please send it to [rpc@teol.uu.se](mailto:rpc@teol.uu.se) with "newsletter" in the subject line.

As an RPC graduate, you are also a graduate of Uppsala University.

Therefore, please read more about this here:

<https://www.uu.se/en/support/alumni-network/>

### Tips for RPC students:

Remember that as students at Uppsala University, you have **access to thousands of e-books and articles** in the library! You just need to log in using your student account (user ID). <https://ub.uu.se/?languageId=3>

Online **language tutorials** are available to all students at Uppsala University:

<https://www.sprakverkstaden.uu.se/tutoial/online-tutorial-due-to-the-corona-pandemic/> As an RPC graduate, you are also a graduate of Uppsala University. Therefore, please read more about this here: <https://www.uu.se/en/support/alumni-network/>

Join us!

FACEBOOK: Religion in Peace and Conflict Master's Programme  
INSTAGRAM: rpc\_uu

### Jens Wilhelm Borgland

#### What is your role in the RPC?

So far, I have mostly been involved in the programme as a thesis supervisor, but I have also taught the course "Project in Religious and Ethical Engagement." This year I will teach the course "Religion, Power and Politics."

#### You teach both online and offline, what do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of both forms of teaching?

There is, of course, a significant difference in what kind of interaction one can have with students. Online interaction cannot really replicate or replace the kind of formal and informal contact that is made possible by regularly being in the same room with someone for the duration of course. That being said, online programs make it possible for me to read the work of a much more diverse group of students than those that usually attend the university's campus courses. This was particularly rewarding when teaching the course "Project in Religious and Ethical Engagement." It was really fascinating to see how the students' different backgrounds, both academic and other, resulted in such different and interesting projects.

#### Since the RPC programme is mostly an online program, how (if at all) do you think the pandemic has affected the programme?

While I'm sure the pandemic has affected all of us in more ways than I can even imagine, for me the most noticeable effect on the programme was the impact it had on the thesis work during the spring of 2020. While some students were relatively fortunate to have projects that only relied on written sources, others were suddenly stranded in the field or found themselves unable to conduct the interviews they had planned or to observe the practices they were going to write about.

#### You have academic experience in several countries. How do you think studying in Sweden differs from other countries you know?

The biggest difference for me is the course structure. From Norway I am used to students following several courses at the same time, all of which have exams at the end of the term. Here, students take one course at the time. They write the exam and then move on to the next course. This structure has the advantage of allowing both students and teachers to focus on one thing at the time (although the teachers do tend to teach more than one course at any one time anyway). On the other hand, there is then less time to reflect and let information sink in properly. Reading a course throughout a whole term, instead of just five weeks or so, gives you time to think about the topic and material in a different way.

#### What is your favorite Swedish academic tradition?

The drinking songs? I guess this is not a strictly academic tradition, but I really like the drinking songs.

\*read about drinking songs in Uppsala here

<https://tagged4.uu.se/2018/11/21/nation-songs-meaning/>



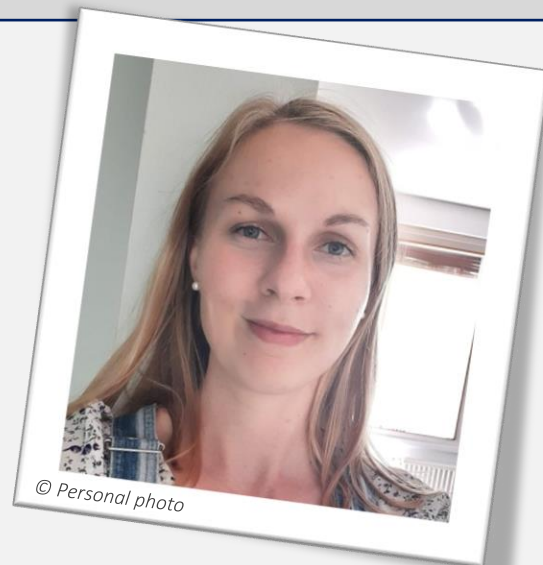
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# Meet our Alumni!

We asked several of our alumni about their current jobs and how RPC has helped them in their careers. Please meet our colleagues Aino, Jennifer, John and Marianna!

## Marianna Kemppe

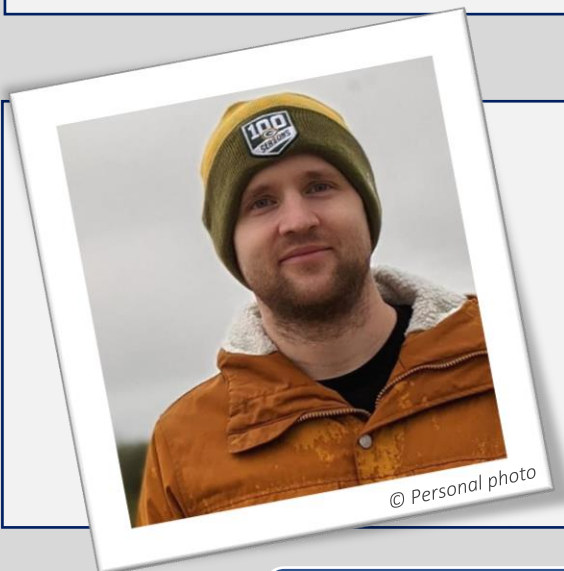
It's been nearly 3 years from my graduation from the RPC programme. After graduation I still had no idea of what I wanted to do. Or perhaps I knew but thought it would be the Mission Impossible. However, three years later, here I am, having a job of my dreams. I work as an immigration coordinator and I'm responsible for the immigration and refugee work in three small cities in Southern Finland. I welcome and help new immigrants to settle in, to find their place in the society and making sure that the available services respond to their needs. I coordinate different networks, make decisions upon refugee intake, design integration policies and plans, and just communicate a lot with all different types of officials, from municipal to government level.



I think the RPC programme gave me a lot - it really taught me how to work in a multicultural and – religious environment. I learned multiple communication and coping skills that I can now utilize in my daily work. Studying with people from various professional (and international!) backgrounds gave new insights and widened up my perspective. I believe that understanding the concept of variety and of change, and of different morals and mindsets really is the key for working with people from various backgrounds and circumstances. And it's because of the RPC that I ponder upon and try to keep these things in mind every day that I work. All in all, it all comes back to how we can solve a conflict and I guess the answer is to discuss and to empower 😊

## John LaChine

I'm currently working as a union organizer with SEIU in the USA where I lead workers in struggle for better wages and benefits. Some things I do everyday include building worker's political awareness and understanding of unequal power structures, moving workers to take action, and coaching them on how to speak and write in resonating ways. I'm amazed just how well the Religion, Peace and Conflict programme prepared me for the work I do every day!



## Aino Juhola

I'm currently working for a Finnish government role as consultant so I would say RPC did help me in my career. RPC helped me to discover and deepened my knowledge in human rights and human resources work which I studied for undergrad. Moral leadership course was one of my favourite subjects and has helped me in dealing with difficult issues at work.



## Jennifer Jakob



I am working at the University College of Teacher Education in Vienna (KPH Wien/Krems), the largest private University College of Teacher Education in Austria with a unique ecumenically oriented approach. There I am responsible for the education of protestant religious education teachers. I am coordinating the programme and I am teaching RE [religious education] didactics. I am also working on my PhD-project, which is about RE-teachers' attitudes towards sustainability.

How did RPC helped me?

First, there is a practical benefit: for my actual position I needed at least a master's degree, also for the PhD-Programme a master's degree is a requirement.

On the other hand, the reflections in the programme helped me finding my way and opened new perspectives for me of what I could do – taking the new job and starting a PhD-project.

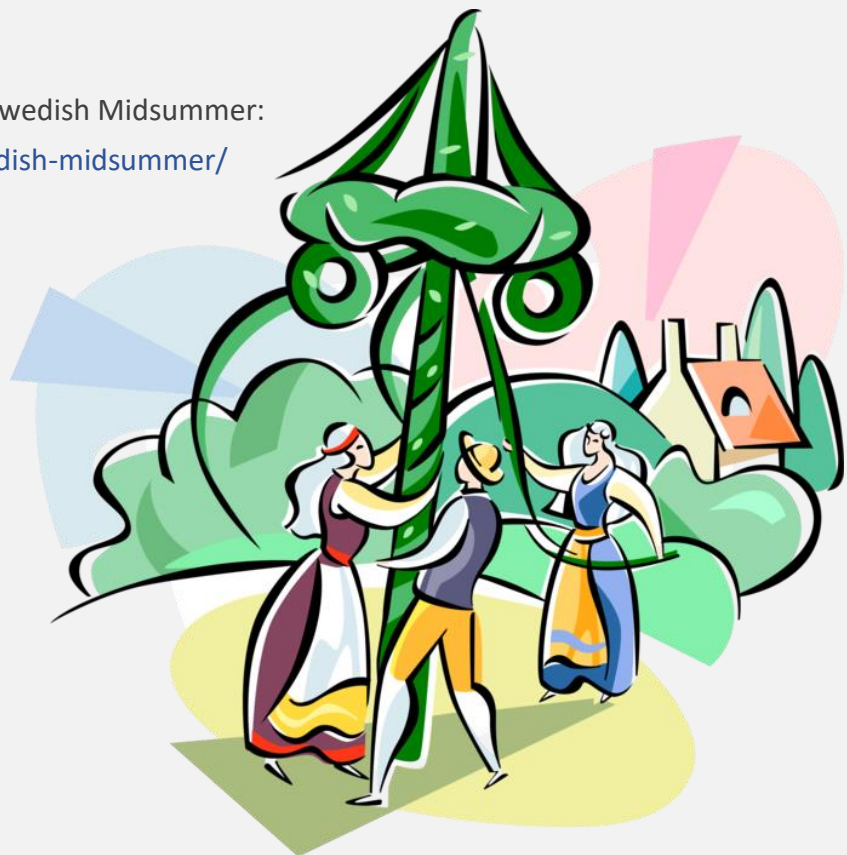
The University College of Teacher Education in Vienna is the only institution in Austria where religious education teachers of all legally recognized religions are educated (Christian denominations, Islam, Alevite, Jewish, Buddhist). Thus, interreligiosity and interreligious dialogue is a main emphasis here. The reflections about religion in various contexts we had in the programme is a useful basis for the everyday life here.

**One of the holidays most beloved and adored by Swedes, Midsummer, is approaching. Want to know more about it?**

Read here How to experience a classic Swedish Midsummer:

<https://tagged4.uu.se/2017/06/20/swedish-midsummer/>

**Happy  
Midsummer  
Everyone!**



**Take a 3-minute musical journey to Uppsala and listen to Alfvén:**

Finale from The Prodigal Son, Royal Swedish Academy Orchestra (2021)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NI63obm4n3A>