

**COST Action “Connecting  
Theory and Practical Issues of Migration and Religious Diversity” (COREnet)**

**PhD Summer School  
“Religious and Non-Religious Narratives on Migration”**

**Date: 12 July – 16 July 2023**

**Place: University of Vienna, Schenkenstrasse 8-10, 1010 Vienna**

**Short biographies of the COREnet PhD Summer School Teachers**



**Milda Ališauskienė** is a professor of sociology at Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania. Her research areas include religious diversity, gender and religion, religion and politics in the post-communist society, non-belief, and nones. She has published more than 40 scientific publications and contributed to collective monographs on secularization, social exclusion, and religious diversity in Lithuania. In 2011 M. Ališauskienė and Ingo W. Schroeder co-edited a volume, “Religious Diversity in Post-Soviet Society” (Ashgate, since 2016 - Routledge). In 2017 and 2021, she was a guest editor and co-editor of Nova

Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions, special issues on new religions in Eastern Europe, and religious leadership. Since 2022 she has served as a vice president for the International Study of Religions in Eastern and Central Europe Association (ISORECEA). Currently, she leads the international Baltic research program project „Religion and Gender Equality: Baltic and Nordic Developments. “ Since 2021, she has been a chair of the COST Action 20107 “Connecting Theory and Practical Issues of Migration and Religious Diversity.”



**Sérgio Dias Branco** is Assistant Professor of Film Studies at the University of Coimbra, where he directs the MA in Art Studies and coordinates LIPA - Laboratory for Investigating and Practicing Art. He is a researcher at CEIS20 - Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Coimbra and collaborates with CITER - Research Centre for Theology and Religious Studies at the Catholic University of Portugal. An alumnus of the University of Kent (MA and PhD Film Studies), he is pursuing a MRes in Theology at Durham University. He was

President of the Association of Moving Image Researchers between 2018 and 2020. Among his forthcoming publications is a chapter in *The Oxford Handbook of Theology and Film*. He is the coordinator

of the international research network FID: Film and Interreligious Dialogue (<https://filminterreligiousdialogue.blogspot.com>).



**Aleksandra Djurić Milovanović**, PhD, is a senior research professor at the Institute for Balkan Studies, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Belgrade, Serbia). She received her PhD in anthropology from the Faculty of Philosophy University of Belgrade in 2012 with the topic *Romanian Neo-Protestants in Vojvodina: between religious and ethnic identity*. She was an international fellow at International Dialogue Center KAICIID where she was trained in Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue. From 2019 she is working at KAICIID as Project Coordinator of the Network for Dialogue. Aleksandra was a guest professor at several universities: University College of Cork, University of Zagreb, Trinity Hall Cambridge, Houghton College US, West University Timisoara, Ramon Llull University. She has participated in numerous scientific projects including one ERC project and published three monographs, one manual, edited an international collection of papers and published as an author or co-author a number of papers in journals and collections in Serbian, English, Spanish, Romanian and Russian. Her main research interests are religious studies, religion and migration, interreligious dialogue, minorities in the Balkans, social inclusion of refugees and migrants.

**Orhan Jašić** was born in 1984 (Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina). He studied Theology at the Faculty of Islamic Studies, the University of Sarajevo, where he earned his BA degree in 2007, his MA degree in 2012 (Dogmatics and Comparative religions), and finally his doctoral degree (ThD) in 2016. Orhan Jašić also earned a doctoral degree (PhD) in Philosophy (Ethic/Bioethics) at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the University of Zagreb (Croatia) in 2015. He is the author of two books, two book chapters and many research articles. He teaches different modules at the Faculty of Islamic studies in the field of dogmatics, tasavvuf and comparative religions. Since 2018 he has also worked as an Assistant Professor at the Department of Philosophy and Sociology at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, the University of Tuzla, where he has taught the following courses: Ethic, Bioethics, History of Mediaeval Philosophy and German Classical Philosophy.



**Ansgar Jödicke, prof. tit.**, studied philosophy, sociology of religion, and social history in Munich and Zurich. He holds a PhD in the Study of Religions from the University of Zurich and is a senior lecturer in the Department of Social Sciences at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. His area of research is religion and politics in two fields: first, the politics of religious education in Switzerland and Europe; second, the political role of religious groups in the countries of the South Caucasus. In his recent works he focuses on the effects and aims of religious politics. Relevant publication: Humanitarian Action, Forced Displacement and Religion. Contemporary Research Perspectives. In: V. Hudson and Lucian N. Leustean (eds.): Religion and Forced Displacement in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, Amsterdam University Press 2022, 35-57.



**Regina Polak** is Associate Professor studied philosophy, Catholic theology, and spiritual theology in interreligious context in Vienna and Salzburg (Austria). She is the head of the Institute of Practical Theology at the Catholic-Theological Faculty at the University of Vienna. Her research foci are religion and migration, practical theology of migration, values research including religion and values, interreligious dialogue between Jews, Christians and Muslims. She is serving as Personal Representative of the OSCE on combating racism, discrimination, and intolerance, with a special focus on discrimination against Christians. She is also theological advisor of the migration commission of the German Conference of Catholic Bishops. She has published 2 monographs and numerous articles on religion and migration (mostly in German). Among her English articles the following should be highlighted: Polak, Regina (2019): "Migrants as Agents of Social and Religious Innovation," in: Bieler, Andrea/Karle, Isolde/Kim-Cragg Hye Ran/Nord, Ilona (eds.): Religion and Migration. Negotiating Hospitality, Agency and Vulnerability. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 61–77.



**Aybiçe Tosun** received her B.A. (2007 - Theology) and M.A. (2010 - Religious Education) from Ankara University (Turkey). She holds a Ph.D. degree on Religious Education from Ankara University. During her PhD education, she was a visiting researcher at University of New Brunswick, Canada between 2014-2015. She worked as research assistant at Eskişehir Osmangazi University Faculty of Education between 2009-2012 and Faculty of Theology between 2012-2015. She is working as an assistant professor at Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Faculty of Theology, Department of Religious Education since 2015. Her main areas of interest are worldview education, multicultural education and creative drama. She improved her experience in multicultural education environments by attending Vienna Inter-Cultural International Summer University (VICISU) in Vienna in 2012 and Christian-Islamic Spring Academy in Tutzing in 2014. She is a member of international religious education societies ISREV (International Seminar on Religious Education and Values) and REA (Religious Education Association).



**John Klaasen** is Associate professor at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa, and former Head of Department of Religion and Theology. He serves as Professor in The Kjell Nordstokke Chair in Community development at VID Specialized University in Norway. As a practical the intersection between praxis and theory has occupied his research for the last decade. He has researched and published extensively within theology, community development and narrative. Aspects such as narrative, embedded knowledge, participation, and the non-rational tradition of knowledge are some of the areas that occupy his research outputs. Narrative as both a research and pedagogical approach forms a significant part of his theoretical framework and has resulted in a intercontinental book publication on Reconciliation within South Africa, Canada and Nordic countries and a ongoing research project on Migration between institutions of higher education in South Africa and The Netherlands.



**Dr. Yuval Katz-Wilfing**, M.A. B.Sc., is the CEO of the Austrian committee for Christian-Jewish Cooperation and is regularly lecturing and writing about interreligious dialogue from a Jewish perspective. He is also a postdoctoral fellow at the Austrian Academy of Sciences and his main research interests relate to the history of ideas, identity construction, Giur, Jewish history and diaspora, rabbinics, interreligious phenomena, and interreligious dialogue. He has a Ph.D. from the Jewish studies department of the University of Vienna (His dissertation describes the reception history of Genesis 12:5 and follows the

development of the ideas of soul and conversion in Jewish thought). Yuval also has an M.A. in religious studies from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and a B.Sc. in computer science from Tel Hai College. Yuval has numerous publications on issues ranging from robust computer communication systems to the Jewish community in Vienna to the image of Ruth in the Zohar. He lives with his wife and three children in the second district of Vienna.