

# LETTER

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EDITORS: INESA SAHAKYAN & MORTEN TØNNESEN  
([POST@NORDICSEMIOTICS.ORG](mailto:POST@NORDICSEMIOTICS.ORG))



## “Creativity – Complexity – Intelligence”

The 14<sup>th</sup> conference of the Nordic Association for Semiotic Studies (NASS) along with the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Lotman Days

*Tallinn, Estonia, June 11–13, 2025*

**CALL FOR PAPERS** *p.2*

The deadline for abstract submissions will be announced in **Autumn 2024**

**NASS offers graduate student grants and a graduate student award.** *p. 3*

*Regular sections:*

**News, CFPs**

**Upcoming academic events**

Please visit our webpage

[nordicsemiotics.org/](http://nordicsemiotics.org/)

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The NASS newsletter normally appears twice a year (Spring and Autumn).

To subscribe (for free), or to contribute with content (e.g. academic news, upcoming events, country report, subfield report) write to [post@nordicsemiotics.org](mailto:post@nordicsemiotics.org)

## First Call For Papers

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# “ Creativity – Complexity – Intelligence”



*Drawing by Juri Lotman, © Tallinn University*

### THE 14TH CONFERENCE OF THE NORDIC ASSOCIATION FOR SEMIOTIC STUDIES ALONG WITH THE 15TH ANNUAL LOTMAN DAYS

*Tallinn, Estonia, June 11–13, 2025*

*Venue: Tallinn University School of Humanities & Juri Lotman Semiotics Repository*

The intricate interplay of signs with the processes of creativity, complexity, and intelligence are immersed in all varieties, modalities, and ecologies of meaning-making. Meaning-making is always creative, complex, and intelligent, in both its agreements, alignments, and continuums, as well as its incompatibilities, controversies, and contradictions.

According to Juri Lotman, one of the defining characteristics of an intelligent semiotic system is its ability to be creative, i.e. the ability to produce new and unpredictable meanings. Lotman noted that this ability is not exclusive to the human mind but can occur in various other systems and at multiple scales, where a sufficient degree of complexity is present.

The role of creativity in learning and development, be it in humans or non-humans, is integrative within patterns of emergence, reproduction, and decay in complex systems, such as nature, culture, or the individual mind.

Intelligence – be it organic or artificial, individual or collective – manifests in various signs and sign systems and is in time creatively transformed through meaning-making. We kindly invite proposals for conference presentations and sessions of presentations on the dynamic relationships between

signs, creativity, complexity, and intelligence and their transformative impact within education, art or the arts, play, and scientific inquiry.

**We welcome papers on the topics of interest, including but not limited to:**

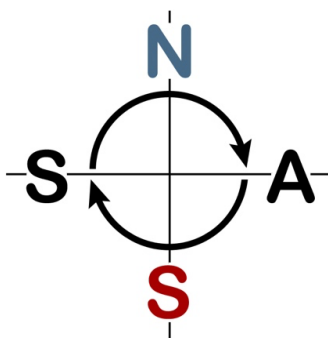
- Semiotic theories of creativity, complexity, and intelligence;
- The nature and culture of creativity, complexity, and intelligence;
- Creativity, complexity, and intelligence in various modalities of meaning-making;
- Creativity, complexity, and intelligence in humans and non-humans;
- The relationships between various cognitive processes and creativity, complexity, and intelligence;
- Agency, the self, and subjectivity within creativity, complexity, and intelligence;
- Creativity, complexity, and intelligence in organic and artificial systems;
- Emergence and decay of creativity, complexity, and intelligence;
- Creativity, complexity, and intelligence in art, play, and science;
- Creativity, complexity, and intelligence in education, learning and development;
- Language and other sign systems in relation to creativity, complexity, and intelligence;
- Digital technologies in relation to creativity, complexity, and intelligence;
- Ecologies of creativity, complexity, and intelligence;
- Futures and prospects of creativity, complexity, and intelligence. (Expectations and anticipations)

**Plenary speakers and prospective deadlines will be announced in autumn 2024.**

### **NASS Graduate Student Award and Grants**

5-10 graduate students presenting a paper at NASS XIV will be supported financially by NASS. Furthermore, a prize along with a diploma for the best graduate student presentation will be awarded at NASS XIV. For further information, please visit our website [nordicsemiotics.org](http://nordicsemiotics.org).

The conference will be hosted by **Tallinn University School of Humanities and Juri Lotman Semiotics Repository**, and will take place **June 2025 in Tallinn, Estonia**. The official languages of the conference will be English and Russian. All participants are expected to be present on-site, and online participation is not available.



The purpose of **NASS** is to promote the advancement of semiotics as an academic discipline and research domain in the Nordic countries and within the international semiotic community. The **Lotman Days** are an annual conference series that has been held at Tallinn University since 2009. The aim of the Lotman Days is to provide an interdisciplinary platform for scholars who wish to examine the dynamics of our semiotic world from different perspectives and to explore together questions that were central to Juri Lotman's scholarship.

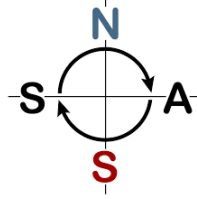


**Participating in the conference implies expressing support for the freedom and territorial integrity of Ukraine.**

## Organizational news

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### NASS ON LINKEDIN



The Nordic Association For Semiotic Studies (NASS) is now on LinkedIn! Follow us [here](#).



If you're not already a follower, you are also more than welcome to follow us on [our Facebook page](#).

### IASS CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

At the general assembly of the International Association for Semiotic Studies (IASS) to be held under the world congress of semiotics in Poland in September, elections for top positions in the IASS will be held. On [this page](#) you'll find candidacy statements.

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS TO STAGE THE 17<sup>TH</sup> IASS CONGRESS (2026/27) – EXTENDED DEADLINE



**The new deadline is: Wednesday, 3 July 2024.**

The International Association for Semiotic Studies (IASS) invites proposals from universities and other research institutions to host the 17<sup>th</sup> IASS Congress in 2026 or 2027. Proposers must be paid-up members of the IASS and should have a good knowledge of the history of the Association and its Congresses. Proposals must be submitted in English, in PowerPoint or pdf format, and include a full projection of costings.

Please send your proposal to both of the following email addresses: [P.Cobley@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:P.Cobley@mdx.ac.uk) AND [kbankov@nbu.bg](mailto:kbankov@nbu.bg) with the title line 'Proposal for 2026/7 Congress'.

Consultation and voting in the IASS Bureau will take place in the month of July 2024 and the results will be announced in the following month in time for the successful proposer to mount a presentation at the Warsaw Congress in September 2024.



## Upcoming Academic Events<sup>1</sup>

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**SEPTEMBER 2024**

**CALL FOR PARTICIPATION EFSS XXVIII 9-12 SEPTEMBER 2024 “THE CULTURAL EXPLOSION OF AI”**

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<sup>1</sup> This list of events, and the academic news presented above are indicative and do by no means pretend to be exhaustive. Therefore, our members are strongly encouraged to send their suggestions to be considered for further editions of the newsletter to the editors at [post@nordicsemiotics.org](mailto:post@nordicsemiotics.org)



**Deadline for registrations: 15 July**

The 20<sup>th</sup> EFSS 2024 is organized by the Southeast European Center for Semiotic Studies and the team of WP3 of European Reform University Alliance (ERUA2), with the support of the STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT FUND of New Bulgarian University.

The XXVI EFSS is an event under the auspices of the International Association for Semiotic Studies (IASS).

More information [here](#)

**OCTOBER 2024****APPROACHES TO SOCIAL SEMIOTICS AND SOCIAL MEDIA***October 4, 2024**Venue: Paris Nanterre University, France*

The 20th century marked many new approaches to linguistic enquiry, including an interest in the interplay between multiple resources to construe meaning, as well as a focus on the social dimension of language and the way language is informed by specific social, cultural and institutional contexts. The interplay between linguistic and non-linguistic resources, and particularly the visual medium, have been the subject of a number of semiotic and multimodal theories. These theories have served multiple types of objects of study (e.g., static/moving; two/three-dimensional; object/space), and include objects as varied as body language (e.g. Ferré 2019), dance (e.g. Maiorani 2020), the printed page, picturebooks (Painter 2017), slide presentations (e.g. Rowley-Jolivet 2004, Zhao, Djonov and van Leeuwen 2014), the spatial organisation of museums and commercial spaces (e.g. Ravelli and McMurtie 2016), video content, toys, video games (Hawreliak 2019) and language learning (Guichon and Tellier 2017). More recently, the attention placed on the digital medium has extended to social media, which play host to many new types of configurations of resources that condition new behaviours, challenge previous categories, and hence warrant specific examination.

This conference aims to bring together scholars who integrate semiotic and multimodal analysis into their linguistic analyses, and to take as a common object of study the example of social media content. The main purpose of the conference is to compare and contrast various theoretical approaches, and to engage a conversation in terms of epistemology. One axis of enquiry will be to explore the heritage of social semiotic theory as developed within the framework of systemic functional linguistics (e.g., Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 2005; Van Leeuwen 2005; Zhao, Djonov, Björkqvall and Boeriis 2017), exploring the potential of the applications of its “grammar of visual design”, and comparing it with other approaches. The discussion will be further enriched by general digital discourse theory (e.g., Combe 2019; Jones 2020; Jones and Hafner 2021; Paveau 2017; Tagg 2015), and by studies relating to content produced in an English and/or French language context.

The organisers welcome proposals which explore for instance:

- the interplay between linguistic (text) and non-linguistic resources (e.g., image, photograph, video) engendered by social media content within a specific platform or across platforms (e.g. Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, Twitter/X, etc.);
- the new configurations of meaning born out of new digital discourse practices;
- the influence of built-in technical options (captions, music, filters etc.) in social media video, and, more generally, the influence of technical constraints (e.g., algorithms);
- applications within the fields of literacy, visual literacy, media literacy (first and second-language learning);
- the impetus placed on the visual medium within contemporary (digital) communication culture.

**Plenary speaker: Sumin Zhao, University of Edinburgh**

Languages of the conference: English and French

The conference is organised by the French Association of Systemic Functional Linguistics AFLSF (Association française de linguistique systémique fonctionnelle) in association with the research Centre in English Studies (CREA - EA 370)

Deadline for Proposals (250-300 words - to be submitted to Fiona Rossette (rossette@parisnanterre.fr) and Clive Hamilton (clive.hamilton@u-paris.fr) May 31, 2024.

Further information and bibliographical references are available [here](#).

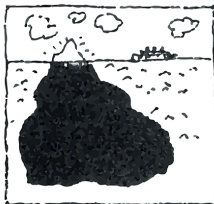
## Semiotic Publications

### Books

#### [CHOICES: Never-Ending Dilemmas in Everyday Life](#)



**Authors:** ARTHUR ASA BERGER, *San Francisco State University*



This book is about the never-ending need we have to make choices. If you think about it, we have to decide what time to wake up every morning, what to wear (unless we need to wear a uniform), what to have for breakfast (if we eat breakfast), lunch and dinner (and if we eat in restaurants, what to order), and our need to make all kinds of other choices all day long.

Some of our choices are mundane, like what to have for breakfast (if we eat breakfast): to have coffee or tea (and if so, plain or with milk), cereal, toast or a bagel (and if so, what kind: plain, with poppy seeds, with everything) or a sweet roll, eggs (if so, fried, soft boiled, scrambled), and so on. Most of the choices we make are not important, and we often develop habits to relieve us of having to think about our choices. For example, I have the same thing for breakfast every day: a bowl of oatmeal with chia seeds and flax seeds, hot milk, a cup of espresso coffee with hot milk, and half a bagel with butter. Occasionally, I have a soft-boiled egg, as well.

But other choices we have to make are life-changing, such as how to live (single, living with a partner, or getting married), what kind of education to get, what kind of job or profession to choose, where to live and what kind of house to buy (if you can afford a house), whom to vote for, and so on. After reading this book, you will better understand the role that the choices we make play in society and culture and in our everyday lives.

#### **Book reviews:**

Arthur Asa Berger has done it again. He has written a book that is a philosophical treatise in ontology, a semiotic analysis of the objects and events of everyday life, and a practical guide to the meaning and logic of our unconscious activities, seamlessly uniting all these threads into a masterpiece of purveyance of life's meaning. And he does all this in user-friendly language, explaining and practically illustrating profound ideas from philosophy, semiotics, and cultural analysis in an enjoyable way, as well as critiquing them when they need to be critiqued, making the book truly a great “read.”

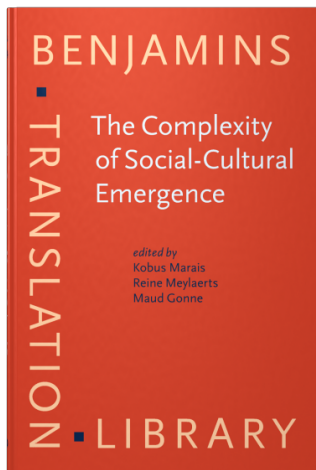
*Marcel Danesi, Professor Emeritus, Anthropology University of Toronto*



Drawing from influential theories like semiotics, this invaluable book delves into the power and mechanism of choices we make. It offers practical insights into decision-making, shedding light on the pivotal role of choice in our society, culture, and personal lives, where some choices we make shape our destinies.

*Dr. Yoshiko Okuyama, Professor, Japanese Department of Languages, University of Hawaii at Hilo*

### ***The Complexity of Social-Cultural Emergence. Biosemiotics, semiotics and translation studies***



**Editors: Kobus Marais, Reine Meylaerts & Maud Gonne**

Based on previous work that linked biosemiotics, semiotics and translation studies, the book "The Complexity of Social-Cultural Emergence. Biosemiotics, semiotics and translation studies" further explores a variety of factors that play a role in social-cultural emergence. The volume entails an interdisciplinary complex of perspectives, drawing on quantum physics and informatics as well as new materialism and a number of perspectives from semiotics and ecosemiotics in its investigations. More info [here](#).

## **Proceedings**

### **PROCEEDINGS OF THE 12<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SEMIOTICS "SIGNS OF EUROPE: DISCOURSES, MYTHOLOGIES, POLITICS OF REPRESENTATION"**

Proceedings of the 12th International Conference on Semiotics "Signs of Europe: discourses, mythologies, politics of representation", can now be downloaded by following [this link](#).

The volume is divided into 6 parts:

- I. Media Discourses
- II. Values and Techniques of connectivity
- III. Grander Narratives
- IV. Representations And Allegories
- V. Visual Arts And Their Politics
- VI. Social Practices And Their Mythologies



## JOURNALS

### [Sign Systems Studies](#)

Vol. 51 No. 3-4 (2023)



We are pleased to announce that Sign Systems Studies' current issue **“Classics of semiotics revisited”** (51-3/4), is now out.

*Sign Systems Studies* is an international journal of semiotics and sign processes in culture and living nature. It publishes original scientific papers, review articles and book reviews on semiotics of culture and nature. Since 2009, each volume includes four issues. The official languages are English and Russian, Estonian for abstracts. The journal is indexed in Web of Science Core Collection (Clarivate Analytics), in Scopus and other relevant databases. **All the articles are available for free download at the journal's [website](#).**

### [Southern Semiotic Review](#)

Southern Semiotic Review is a peer-reviewed journal founded in 2013, and has an established editorial team. It aims to meet a need for a dedicated English journal in the Southern Hemisphere, while maintaining an inclusive international reach. It publishes general and special issues.

Its latest **issue n°19 2024**, has now been published and can be accessed fully [here](#).



Southern Semiotic Review

## Semiotica



Journal of the International Association for Semiotic Studies / Revue de l'Association Internationale de Sémiotique

Editors-in-chief: Stephanie Walsh Matthews, Massimo Leone, Jamin Pelkey

Latest issues – all Open Access:

[Volume 2024 Issue 256, February 2024](#)

[Volume 2024 Issue 257, March 2024](#)

[Volume 2024 Issue 258, July 2024](#)

# SEMIOTIKA

New issue of *Semiotika* out now! (Vilnius University Press), Vol. 18.

## Call for Papers

**punctum.**  
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SEMIOTICS

Call for papers: [Punctum – International Journal of Semiotics](#), 11(1), “The Semiotics of Humor” (Editors: Villy Tsakona & Jan Chovanec)

This special issue aims to collect studies on the semiotics of humor in various genres, including (but not limited to) internet memes, online videos and websites, online chat, TV shows, sitcoms, films, animation, cartoons, sociopolitical satire, and graphic novels.

**Deadline for abstracts: July 31, 2024**

More info [here](#).