

Call for Papers:  
**14th International Conference of Young Folklorists**  
**“Humble Theory and Power of the Vernacular”**  
**September 25–26, 2025**  
**University of Tartu, Estonia**

***Plenary speakers:***

Dorothy Noyes (Ohio State University)

Mariya Lesiv (Memorial University of Newfoundland)

We invite submissions for the traditional conference, encouraging young folklorists to explore and redefine the theoretical frameworks that guide our discipline. This conference seeks to engage participants in a dialogue with “humble theory”, outlined by Dorothy Noyes (2016) as a theoretical and methodological approach, born in the “middle territory between grand theory and local interpretation”. Humble theory prioritizes the ethnographic and practical aspects of folklore research over grandiose theoretical constructs and focuses on studying the meanings driven from the vernacular. It is equally important to address the anxieties and challenges faced by folklorists in positioning their work within broader academic and social contexts. Among many questions, we suggest addressing,

- How can folklorists cultivate a theory that is rooted in practice and ethnography?
- In what ways can humble theory help us navigate our disciplinary identity?
- How might our historical and institutional contexts shape our theoretical aspirations and practices?
- How does humble theory hold up in digital realms and realities shaped by algorithms and AI?

We welcome case studies that exemplify the application of humble theory in folkloristic practice, original research findings, and theoretical reflections on the issue. We also encourage papers that address our traditional topics, such as transmission, performance, and differentiation.

Cited:

Noyes, Dorothy. 2016. *Humble Theory: Folklore's Grasp on Social Life*.  
Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

We ask you to submit the titles of your papers, abstracts of 200-250 words, and information about your affiliation via the **Registration Form** <https://forms.gle/5L6SpeNnSYabwy8t6> at the latest on March 15, 2025. Notifications of acceptance or rejection will be sent out by April 10. There is no conference fee, but participants are expected to cover their travel and accommodation expenses. This is an in-person conference, a hybrid or virtual participation is not possible. Each speaker is allotted 20 minutes to present, followed by 10 minutes of discussion. The working language of the conference is English.

**Organisers:**

Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu.  
Tartu Nefa Group

In cooperation with:

Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore  
Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, University of Latvia  
Folklore Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Helsinki  
International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR)

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In the name of the **Organising Committee:**

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