



The Department of Linguistics and Language Practice invites you to a public lecture by the world-renowned biosemiotician, **Prof Kalevi Kull**, from the University of Tartu in Estonia.



# Semaphylls, and other means of interspecies sign relations

Date: **17 June 2024** | Time: **15:45** | Venue: **Modlec Room 6**

Meeting ID: **984 6892 5673**  
Passcode: **484173**



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To what extent are biosemiotic processes responsible for ecosystem dynamics, its structure and diversity? The answer requires distinguishing between semiotic and non-semiotic processes. Some interactions between organisms are semiotic – those that are based on interpretation. The organisms' interpretation processes lead to semiotic fitting, and, as a consequence, stabilize (through communication and semiostasis) the structure of multispecies community, which is largely made of semiotic bonds. Semiotic ecology provides alternatives to models based on the neo-Darwinian concept of reproductive success.

*Semaphylls* are the leaves that are interpreted as signs by nectar-seekers. This concept and term were introduced – along with the terms *semataxis*, *telesemeion*, *trophosemeion* – by a biosemiotician Elmar Leppik in the 1950s. I will use his concepts to illustrate the changes that biosemiotic perspectives have brought to understanding the workings of ecosystems and the nature of communities.

We come to explain why the old native communities are the most valuable in terms of biodiversity, cultural persistence, and also aesthetics.

**BIOGRAPHY** **Kalevi Kull** is Professor of Biosemiotics at the University of Tartu. His research interests include biosemiotics, general semiotics, theoretical biology, and ecology. His publications include “Evolution and semiotics” (1992), “Introduction to Uexküll” (2001), “Choosing and learning: Semiosis means choice” (2018), “On the theoretical biology between mathematics and semiotics” (2019).

If you will attend in person, please RSVP to [biosemiotics2024@ufs.ac.za](mailto:biosemiotics2024@ufs.ac.za) by 13 June 2024.

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