

Call for Papers IGEL/SHARD Conference 2027

From June 23rd until June 26th 2027, the International Society for the Empirical Study of Literature (IGEL) will hold its 22nd international conference in Basel, Switzerland. The conference will be co-organized with the end-of-project conference for the [SHARD project \(Shared Reading in the Age of Digitalization\)](#). The organization of the conference is in the hands of Moniek Kuijpers, Tina Ternes and Antonia Vogler.

The broad overarching theme of the conference will be “Shifting Attention”. This theme can be, purposefully, understood in different ways. First, it can be understood as shifts in attention *during* reading, inviting proposals about topics that have a longstanding history within the IGEL community, such as narrative absorption, foregrounding or narrative persuasion. Second, and perhaps more importantly, it can be understood as shifts in what we as researchers pay attention to within our research. With this we hope to invite proposals that critically address the key pillars of our community’s focus: Literature and Science. What do we mean with “literary reading”, what falls under the concept of “literature”? Which approaches do we use to capture effects of reading? In all of this, we hope to see shifts towards reader-centered research, the use of qualitative and ethnographic methods, and broadening, more inclusive conceptualizations of literature and literary reading.

The theme is also reflected in our choice of keynote speakers for this conference. We are very happy to announce our line-up of four incredible keynotes:

- [Beth Driscoll](#) is Professor in Publishing and Communications and Deputy Dean Academic of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Melbourne. She investigates reading cultures and emotion, publishing communities and systems of taste, and arts-inspired methods for researching book cultures.
- [Sarah McGeown](#) is Professor of Literacy (Psychology & Education) at the University of Edinburgh. She is Co-Director of the Literacy Lab, an interdisciplinary research hub focused on supporting reading motivation and engagement, and enriching lives through positive literacy experiences and outcomes.
- [Lovro Škopljanač](#) is Associate Professor at the Department of Comparative Literature at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Zagreb. He is the PI on the research project *Remembering Literature in Everyday Life* that focuses on the memory of literature in the everyday life of non-professional readers.
- [Inge van de Ven](#) is Associate Professor of Culture Studies at Tilburg University’s School of Humanities & Digital Sciences. Together with Anna-Lena Eick and Astrid Ensslin, she also co-chairs the [Postdigital Narratives Network](#). Her research focuses on various types of reading in the post-digital age.

If this line-up has inspired you to submit a panel, paper or poster proposal, here are some general guidelines. More will follow once the submission platform opens in September on our website under this [link](#). Topics that papers might explore include, but are not limited to, the following:

- What is literature or literary reading according to readers?
- How are reading activities influenced by digitalization and AI?
- How can reading help people in unstable times? How is reading itself transformed by unstable times?
- How could literature be made more accessible, in classrooms or outside of them?
- What kind of methodological approaches could we borrow from related fields to expand our knowledge of literary reading and its effects?

Throughout the conference there will also be a special focus on research of social reading practices, because of the SHARD project's focus on digital social reading and Shared Reading. This will be in the shape of a series of panels dedicated to different aspects of this topic. If you are interested in putting together such a panel, please let us know. We are open towards panel proposals that focus on face-to-face social reading practices (such as Shared Reading or other forms of reading together) and those focused on Digital Social Reading. We are also open to receiving panel proposals in different formats: round table discussions, workshops, or a series of thematically linked lectures, for example.

We welcome and prioritize paper proposals (or panel proposals) that explore all of the issues mentioned above, as well as those which address the general concerns of IGEL, namely empirical studies of literature and other narrative media and their reception. We also welcome theoretical papers, but they would have to be related to the field of empirical literary studies. Works in progress are also very welcome, but for those, we recommend sending in a poster presentation proposal.

A paper proposal will be for a paper of 20 minutes with 10 minute discussion, whereas a panel proposal would be for 3 to 4 papers within one session of 1,5 hours. Panels can span multiple sessions, in case larger groups of researchers would like to work together to present research that fits the same theme. The conference will be hybrid, so you can present your work, without being physically present in Basel if for some reason you are unable to travel. All sessions will be accessible remotely and we will ask presenters to record presentations so we can archive them on our members-only platform Concordance, so they can be accessed after the conference.

More details about the formal requirements for submission will be communicated in September once the submission portal is opened up.

Timeline

Opening of submission portal: September 7th 2026

Deadline for panel/paper/poster submissions: December 18th 2026

Date by which acceptance is communicated: March 19th 2027

Opening of registration: March 22nd 2027

End of Early Bird registration: May 1st 2027

End of Registration: June 11th 2027

Registration costs (in Swiss Francs)

Type of fee	Before May 1st	After May 1st
Regular IGEL member	245 € (225 CHF)	275 € (255 CHF)
Discounted IGEL member (i.e., student, retired)	135 € (125 CHF)	165 € (155 CHF)
Non-member	335 € (310 CHF)	370 € (340 CHF)
Online (IGEL member)	free	free
Online (non-member)	30 €	50 €

Important to note

Switzerland is known as an expensive country and we understand that this may make some people hesitant to submit a proposal. However, we have some measures in place to mitigate costs for early career researchers and scholars from economically disadvantaged countries (see information below). Furthermore, Basel is located almost on top of the border with France and Germany, meaning that you could travel to and find accommodation in places just across the border and take a tram or bus into the city center for the conference. As conference organizers we will be sure to provide affordable options for accommodation in Basel, as well as just across the border. In addition, we will compile a list of affordable dinner options and other cost-cutting tips in our city and publish them on our [website](#) before the conference to make sure that we can be as inclusive as possible.

If you are eligible for a cost-reduction on your registration fee due to your country of origin or your status as an early career researcher and you would like to request a lower registration fee, please write to the IGEL treasurer, Marloes Mak:

`h.m.l.mak[at]tilburguniversity[dot]edu`

Bursary fund

IGEL will provide bursaries of maximum 400 CHF for early career researchers with no travel funds. There is a limited number of bursaries available. If you want to know whether you are eligible and you would like to request a bursary, please contact Marloes Mak (email: `board[at]igelsociety[dot]org`) before April 2nd. Decisions about the bursaries will be communicated on April 23rd.

Donations

Donations are welcome from IGEL members who can afford to pay a bit more to support these travel bursaries, so that IGEL can continue to support early career researchers with no travel funds in future conferences.

If you have any questions or queries for the conference organization, please send us an email at [igel2027conference\[at\]gmail\[dot\]com](mailto:igel2027conference@gmail.com)