

**VOICES ACROSS LANGUAGES,
LITERATURES AND CULTURES**

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Breaking Cassandra's Curse: Crisis Prediction through Literature

Prof. Dr. Jürgen Wertheimer
6:30 pm, October 17, 1020 Rowe Bldg.
Reception to follow

Image from A. Leibowitz' photo of Susan Sontag in the ruins of the Sarajevo National Library, 1993

The name 'Cassandra' (from the cursed Trojan seer of the Iliad, whose predictions were never believed) invokes one of our largest behavioral defects – our inability or unwillingness to observe true and valid warnings.



Photo: Helge Thun

Project Cassandra is based on the thesis that literary texts can help identify tensions and regional and societal potentials for violence in their 'latency phase' – years in advance. As unsparing registers of reality, they provide the primary source needed to reach that which is so often slain and buried under numbers, dates and facts – the human factor, the individual.

Professor Wertheimer proposes literary insight as the means to fill the gap between quantitative (big data) and qualitative approaches – a link between the world of politics and culture, life sciences and humanities.

Dr. Wertheimer is a celebrated Professor emeritus of Modern German Literature and Comparative Literature at the University of Tübingen. Since 2015 he has led the "Project Cassandra – Early Crisis Detection through Literature Evaluation" (supported 2017-2020 by the German Ministry of Defense). Recent books include „Confidence - an Uncertain Feeling“, 2016. „Europe. A History of its Cultures“, 2020. (3rd enlarged edition in 2022) „,Sorry Cassandra': Why We are Unteachable“, 2021, and „Immanuel Kant. Der Magier der Vernunft“, 2023.



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