



Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

@ Brandeis University

Presents

The Merchant of Venice

Faculty

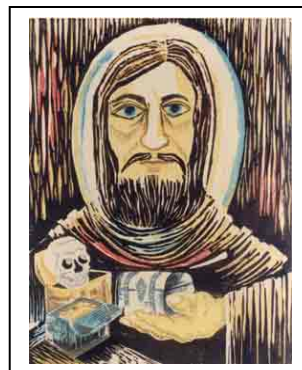
William Flesch, Ph.D.

Brandeis University

Monday through Friday

January 7th to January 11th 2008

9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.



The Lurias in Hassenfeld at Brandeis University

The Merchant of Venice is a comedy, but its resolution doesn't seem comic to all its characters. Everyone else gets a happy ending at the expense of Shylock. Does Shakespeare want us to approve or disapprove of this resolution? Is he ultimately for or against Shylock? Would it be asking the same question to ask whether he is ultimately for or against the Christians who defeat him? How do they defeat him? How much do they need him, and how honest are they about their need for him? Does his status as a stranger or outcast -- because he is a Jew -- parallel or contrast with Portia's status as a woman who has to pretend to be a man? One of the most telling lines in the play is Portia's question: "Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?" Are the Christian merchant and the Jewish moneylender ultimately like or unlike each other? These are some of the subtle and complex questions we will be treating as we read through *The Merchant of Venice*, act by act, and try to get a fix on Shakespeare's own attitude towards his characters and their doings, in this dark and disturbing comedy.

William Flesch, Ph.D., is a professor of English at Brandeis, where he teaches courses on Shakespeare as well as the history of poetry. He is the author of *Comeuppance*, forthcoming January 18, 2008. Among his many other publications are *Generosity and the Limits of Authority: Shakespeare, Herbert, Milton* (Cornell University Press, 1992), "Keats Reading Shakespeare," "Quoting Poetry," "Vicarious experience in Shakespeare's sonnet" and "Helen Vendler's *The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*," as well as articles for the *Boston Globe* Ideas section. He is the recipient of three teaching awards at Brandeis and Cornell and a National Endowment of the Humanities Fellowship. "Billy" has led two previous Brandeis @ BOLLI Seminars on King Lear and Hamlet to rave reviews.

REGISTRATION For Merchant of Venice

(Space is limited. Register early.)

Make check payable for \$175 to Brandeis University

Send registration and check to:

BOLLI Intensives, MS 085, Rabb School, Brandeis, Waltham, MA 02454

Name _____ **Email** _____

Address _____ **Phone** _____

Questions? Contact Carol Allman-Morton
781-736-2992 or callman@brandeis.edu

If you are not a BOLLI member, please tell us if you are:

- A BUNWC Member?
- A Brandeis Alum?
- How you heard about the program?