**The Tempest**

Art, Life and the Theater

**Description**

*The Tempest* is generally, and correctly, considered Shakespeare's farewell to theater. It wasn't quite his last play, but is rightly considered the play in which he reflects for the last time on the relationship between the stage, and the actual lives and experiences of his audiences. The relationship between his art and real life turns out to be *tempestuous*, due to theater’s peculiar talent for intensifying time, tempus in Latin. Thanks to the enduring power of Shakespeare’s storytelling and the magic of his stagecraft, *The Tempest* is both a testimony to time’s elusive nature, and a witness to what is shared in human experience. We'll talk about one act per day, tracing how the Bard’s recounting of the last few hours on Prospero's island makes precious the time that remains.

**About the Instructor**

William Flesch is a professor of English at Brandeis, where he teaches courses on Shakespeare, on the history of poetry, and on film. He is the author of *Comeuppance: Costly Signaling, Altruistic Punishment and Other Biological Components of Fiction*, which made book critic James Woods' list of 10 best books for 2008. He is the recipient of three teaching awards and a National Endowment of the Humanities Fellowship.

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