

# The Merchant of Venice.

Actus primus.

## “Getting by with a little help from his friends: Shylock’s Lawyers down through the centuries”

First Folio at FIU

### A Lecture by Richard H. Weisberg

Cardozo School of Law, Yeshiva University



While they may still be a minority, many well-known lawyers and judges have defended Shylock against that beleaguered character’s prosecutors. What are the legal and moral arguments mounted in favor of the Jew and against those Venetians who persecute and prosecute him? These remarks trace the long and distinguished history of “Shylock’s Lawyers.” In so doing, the lecture treats *The Merchant Of Venice* textually, emphasizing not only the contract formation scene (I. iii) and the trial scene (IV. i), but also the often disregarded “resolution” of this complex comedy in Act V.

Richard H. Weisberg is the Walter Floersheimer Prof. of Constitutional Law.

A current White House appointee to the Commission on the Preservation of America’s Heritage Abroad, he has helped litigate successfully in American federal courts on behalf of Holocaust survivors and their heirs, providing a measure of justice for World War II victims of anti-Semitism. President Sarkozy of France awarded him the Legion of Honor in 2008. Weisberg is a pioneer in the growing Law and Literature movement worldwide, and his books *The Failure of the Word*, *Poethics*, and most recently *In Praise of Intransigence*, often treat the subject of Shakespeare and the Law. He serves currently on the Executive Committee of the MLA discussion group on Literature and the Law. He has taught that subject in graduate and undergraduate departments in the US, at law schools around the country, and in France, Denmark, Germany, Australia, and China. His stagings of legal dilemmas in great fictional works have won notice from the *New York Times*, the *National Law Journal*, and the *New Yorker* magazine. He has been a Guggenheim Fellow and recipient of Rockefeller Foundation (Bellagio Center), NEH, and ACLS grants.

Fri., Feb. 12

11 a.m. — 12:30 p.m.

Rafael Diaz-Balart Hall  
Ceremonial Courtroom (Rm. 1000)  
Modesto A. Maidique Campus  
11200 S.W. 8th Street  
Miami, FL 33199

Sponsored by the College of Law, Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs, and the College of Arts, Sciences & Education

This event is part of FIU programming scheduled around the Folger Shakespeare Library’s national traveling exhibition *First Folio! The Book that Gave Us Shakespeare*. First Folio at FIU is presented by the College of Arts, Sciences & Education, the Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum, and FIU Libraries.

First Folio at FIU sponsors include the College of Architecture + The Arts, FIU Foundation, Inc., Steven J. Green School of International and Public Affairs, Office of the President, Office of the Provost, Margarita P. Muiña, J.D., L.L.M., The Betsy-South Beach, Blue Martini, British American Business Council Miami, Dranoff 2 Piano Foundation, and Miami City Social. Sponsorship opportunities are available to support this exhibit’s only appearance in Florida.

Learn more at [folio.fiu.edu](http://folio.fiu.edu).

### Department of English

Modesto A. Maidique Campus | 11200 SW 8th St, DM 453, Miami, FL 33199  
305-348-2874 | [english.fiu.edu](http://english.fiu.edu)

**FIU** FLORIDA  
INTERNATIONAL  
UNIVERSITY