Taming of the Shrew Lessons

Who's Who In Padua—Due: 5/7
Act 1 introduces a number of characters, several are in love, some adopt disguises, and some have particular relationships with others.

- Draw a diagram to show as clearly as possible who’s who, who’s pretending to be someone else, and the chief relationships among the characters.
- The list of characters at the beginning of the play will help you.
- It should be on unlined paper, take up the whole page and be easy to read.

Character Study—Due: 5/11

- Choose a character from the play to illustrate. Based on the information given in the text, draw a picture or find one in a magazine or online that shows what the character either looks like or is like or both.
- Find a line or a few lines from the play that describe the character and write them on the Character Study
- Write words that come to mind to describe the character. Traits.

You will be graded on:
- Visual presentation – how much time and effort fill up white space neat and attractive.
- Understanding of character
- Clear engagement with text
- Accuracy of analysis of character

Do the Clothes Make the Man—Due: 5/17
Many of the character in the Taming of the Shrew are in disguise—either literally assuming someone else’s identity or at least appearing to be something other than they are. These disguises allow the characters to cross barriers in social position and class, and for a time, each of them is successful.

Make a chart that illustrates how each of the following characters is “in disguise”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Appearance</th>
<th>Reality</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Katherina</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bianca</td>
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<tr>
<td>Petruchio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lucentio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hortensio</td>
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<td>Gremio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tranio</td>
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</tbody>
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Questions by Act (AKA take home test)—Due: 5/19
Must be typed, 1.5 spaced or handwritten in ink.

Act I
1. Where is the play set? What difference does this make?
2. Which character is described as an “irksome brawling scold?” Is this a fitting description?
3. Why does Bianca have so many suitors? Who are they?
4. What happens when Lucentio arrives in town?
5. What is Petruchio’s chief goal for his arrival in Padua?

Act II
1. In what ways does Kate attack Bianca? How does Bianca respond? What does this tell us about the characters?
2. Do you think Kate and Petruchio enjoy their first meeting? Why or why not?
3. What evidence can you give to support the view that Kate and Petruchio are well matched, even though they spar verbally and appear to be hostile to one another when they first meet?
4. Is Petruchio attracted to Kate, or is he merely interested in her because she is wealthy?
5. When he gives Baptista an account of Kate’s behavior, Petruchio is not entirely honest. Analyze the speech that begins, “Be patient, gentlemen, I choose her for myself, ” and show how Petruchio is both clever and ironic in what he says.

Act III
1. After reading Kate’s speech lines 8-20. How much sympathy do you think the other characters feel towards her at this point?
2. Read through from line 63-115. Once again Tranio is the one who tries to explain what Petruchio is up to, although he doesn’t get very far. What meaning do you think there is in Petruchio’s strange attire?
3. Read Katherina’s speech lines 190-210. In this speech Kate fights back-and loses. She says she has ‘a spirit to resist’, and tries a number of different tactics during the scene. How is her behavior similar and different from her behavior in previous scenes?
4. Go back and review the language of this scene. Why do you think Shakespeare didn’t show the wedding on stage? In the film Franco Zefferelli did show this scene and it is very funny. Do you think that is a good idea? Why?

Act IV
1. What are two examples of how Petruchio tries to tame Kate in scene 1? What is he doing? Why is he doing it this way? Is it funny? Why?
2. What are two instances where Petruchio shows anger in scene 1? Who is the anger directed toward and why does he show it?
3. In scene 2, what decision does Hortensio make regarding his suit for Bianca? What does this show us about Hortensio’s view of women and love? What does it say about his societies views of love and marriage?
4. Examine the way Petruchio treats the servants and the way he treats Kate in scene 1. Explain the difference between Petruchio’s treatment of the servants and his treatment of his wife. What does this mean?
5. In scene 1, what does Petruchio mean when he says he knows how to “kill a wife with kindness”?

6. Prove that the reason Tranio gives the pedant for assuming Vincentio’s identity is clever.

7. Explain what is going on in the dialogue between Katherine and Grumio. What do you think Petruchio would think of this?


9. What do you think Katherine is thinking and feeling during the scene with the Tailor and Haberdasher?

10. What do you think is going on with Baptista and the pretend Lucentio & Vincentio? What does this show us about the role of women in society?

11. Read lines 74-106 Biondello’s conversation with Lucentio (the real one). What purpose do these lines serve? What would be lost if the whole passage was cut, as it is often done in performance? (It is completely gone in the film version)

12. Is Biondello smarter than his master, Lucentio? What other examples are there where the servant seems to be more knowledgeable than the master? What purpose does this serve?

13. After viewing the film version, why do you think that Zefferelli (the director) cut Hortensio out of this scene? What is his purpose in this scene?

14. How does Petruchio test Katherine’s acceptance of his authority? What is he trying to prove?

15. How do you think Katherine feels about her actions in this scene?


Act V

1. Describe the situational irony of the first scene.

2. How do the disguises provide comedy in this scene?

3. What is the conclusion of the subplot?

4. How many arguments are there in Act 5? Which couple is the notable exception?

5. What does Kate say in her final speech?

Critical Essay: Due 5/21

For your final assessment choose ONE of the following topics and write an essay of at least 5 well developed paragraphs with a controlling thesis statement.

1. Analyzing a Character. Characters may be dynamic or static. Dynamic characters undergo and important change in attitude, values, or behavior. In contrast, static characters remain pretty much the same throughout a play, novel, or short story. Select one of the following characters and write an essay showing that the character is either dynamic or static: Kate, Bianca, Petruchio, Lucentio, Baptista, Tranio. Support your position by specific references to the characters words and actions. Do not merely retell the story.

2. Analyzing a Favorite Scene. Certain scenes have stronger appeal than others and yield enjoyment when they are remembered after the plays reading or performance. What is your favorite scene in The Taming of the Shrew? Write an
essay explaining the scenes appeal to you. Consider elements such as humor, irony, suspense, conflict, character, props, language, and theme.

3. **Is this Play Sexist?** Think about the play as a whole and the discussions that we have had in class. In an essay of several paragraphs discuss this question and offer evidence (from the text) to support your interpretation.