

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM AND MEDIA STUDIES

JOURNALISM I – FOUNDATION SKILLS: (IJM 1104)

DECEMBER 2004 EXAMINATION

TIME ALLOWED: 3 HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- i) Section A is **compulsory**. Answer any three questions from Section B.
- ii) Start each answer on a new page.
- iii) Common Dictionary is permitted.
- iv) Poor spelling and grammar will be penalised

SECTION A: COMPULSORY

Question 1

- 1a. Using the information below, write a hard news article of NO MORE than 250 words, including by-line and dateline.**

You are the chief general reporter for *The Morning Gossip* newspaper. You receive the following information now by Telex from Reuters. Today is October 6 2004. The incident takes place October 5 2004. The story is for today's paper.

A jail outside the port city of Durban, South Africa. The prison authorities there issued a high alert. 603 inmates are ill. They have cholera. This information is released by Mr Russell Mamabolo, a spokesman for the prison. So far 199 people have died in a cholera epidemic. It started in the South African province of KwaZulu-Natal and has been going on since August 2004.

Mr Mamabolo, who is married with three children, says the prisoners, who are the lowest of the low, have got a doctor. The doctor is treating them for diarrhoea, vomiting and dehydration. The outbreak is taking place at the Westville Medium B Prison, about 15 kilometres west of Durban. He says: "We are taking this very seriously."

“It’s the first time since the outbreak that we are experiencing it in a prison. If the situation gets worse, we will have to bring in additional medical personnel from other prisons in the province.” Even though he dislikes the prisoners, he proudly announces that they are responding well to the treatment.

KwaZulu-Natal has a high incidence of cholera. So far 92,315 (including the 199 that died) people have been infected. The outbreak began in on the 2nd of August 2004. These statistics have been given to you (today) October 6 2004 by the KZN provincial health administrator, Dr JP Sweart.

Mr Mamabolo also says: “One prisoner, however, whom we suspect could be the original carrier, is still being treated at an outside hospital and is in a serious condition.”

Mr John Borora, of the Durban Water Supply Authority, says that tests are being done to check the facility’s water supply.

Mr Mamabolo also says the prison is being cleansed. “The focus is mainly in toilets and kitchens. Prisoners will be encouraged to bath with medical fluid soap to curb the spread of the epidemic.”

A doctor at the hospital, who cannot give his name for ethical reasons, said only four jailbirds have died so far. All other prisoners who arrive and who are leaving the gaol are being screened for the disease.

A prison warden, who refuses to be named, tells you in a private telephone conversation from Durban, that the disease shouldn’t spread much further, but there are no guarantees. “It doesn’t really matter,” he says, “Cos these are all the scum of the earth and they get what they deserve.”

[25 marks]

1b. In no more than 30 letters and spaces per line, write a suitable head of two decks for the story above. You will be penalised if the head busts.

[5 marks]

1c. You are asked by your news editor to change the story to a Zimbabwean slant, for tomorrow updated backgrounder. WITHOUT writing the story, explain what you would do to give it a local flavour.

[10 marks]

[Total: 40 marks]

SECTION B: ANSWER ANY THREE QUESTIONS

Question 2

If we allow a newspaper to publish only news, it will never get read. Discuss this statement in terms of what comprises a newspaper.

[20 marks]

Question 3

You have been asked to brief a new reporter on her duties. What advice would you give to her in terms of your community, your company policy, her attitude and other responsibilities?

[20 marks]

Question 4

Statistics worldwide have shown that newspapers are losing ground to the broadcast media. What, in your view, should today's newspapers be doing to counter this competition? Use local examples where possible in your answer.

[20 marks]

Question 5

The pressures on reporters and editors from beyond the walls of the newsroom are enormous. Where do you believe these pressures come from and what should journalists do to keep them at bay? You may use local examples in your answer.

[20 marks]

Question 6

Although journalism students are taught the traditional categories of news, in today's developing communities alternate categories are also encouraged. Why do you think this is important? Give at least FOUR examples of alternate categories in your answer.

[20 marks]