

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM AND MEDIA STUDIES**

MEDIA ETHICS: (IJM 1202)

JULY 2006 SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATION

TIME ALLOWED: 3 HOURS

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

1. Section A is **compulsory**.
2. Answer **any three** questions from section B.
3. Start each answer on a new page.
4. Poor spelling and grammar will be penalised.

SECTION A

Question 1

- a) Read the case study and answer the questions that follow.

A local newspaper was about to reveal that a judge had been accused of committing sexual acts with teenage boys, some of who had appeared before him in court. When told that the newspaper would run the story, the judge threatened that he would commit suicide.

- i) Would you have published this story? Give reasons. **[10 marks]**
- ii) What measures would you take to minimise any harm? **[10 marks]**

- b) Read the case study and answer the questions that follow.

Two teenage girls, ages 16 and 17, were abducted at gunpoint by a fugitive ex-prisoner. He raped both girls, and then threatened to kill them. But the police closed in on the kidnapper's car, shot him to death, and rescued the two girls.

The story was covered intensely, not only by the *Times* newspaper, but also by news organisations across the country. It was another in a series of high-profile kidnappings of children or teens. In this case the girls' names and pictures were widely and extensively used as part of the kidnapping story and subsequent rescue coverage.

But once the police revealed that the girls had been raped, journalists faced a significant ethical challenge.

- i) Identify the ethical challenges facing the journalists in this case study. **[10 marks]**
- ii) What measures should the journalist take to minimise harm in such situations? **[10 marks]**

TOTAL: [40 marks]

SECTION B: ANSWER ANY THREE QUESTIONS

Question 2

Discuss the dangers of relying on utilitarianism as a theory to guide ethical journalism.
[20 marks]

Question 3

“Media ethics should not be enforced by law.” To what extent do you agree with this assertion? Give examples in your answer.
[20 marks]

Question 4

Briefly explain the following terms.

- a) Press embargos [5 marks]
- b) Confidential source [5 marks]
- c) Yellow journalism [5 marks]
- d) Embedded journalism [5 marks]

TOTAL: [20 marks]

Question 5

- a) Under what circumstances do you identify a person who was arrested as a relative of a public figure, such as a local sports star? [10 marks]
- b) An editor bans his reporter from sticking a partisan political bumper sticker on his vehicle, which he uses while working and from wearing a patriotic symbol like a Zimbabwean flag. Is the editor justified? [10 marks]

TOTAL: [20 marks]

Question 6

“Complete fairness and objectivity are necessary in journalism but they are largely unattainable.” Discuss the validity of this statement giving specific examples.
[20 marks]