

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SCIENCE
DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM AND MEDIA STUDIES
POPULAR CULTURE: THEORIES AND PERSPECTIVES (IJM 4201)
MAY 2006 EXAMINATION
TIME ALLOWED: 3 HOURS**

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

1. Answer **any four** questions.
2. Start each answer on a new page.
3. Poor spelling and grammar will be penalised.

Question 1

Critically interrogate the view that popular cultural consumption is an important site of ongoing social struggle in which dominant meanings are challenged by subordinate meanings. **[25 marks]**

Question 2

Responding to the Frankfurt School's indictment of the 'culture-industry' and its negative effects on working-class consciousness, cultural studies scholars have worked to reinterpret the popular culture audience, showing that people are more active, even, critical readers than has been assumed (Bird 1992:202). Discuss. **[25 marks]**

Question 3

The authority of the state can be backed up by the diffusion of popular symbolic forms which seek to cultivate and sustain a belief in the legitimacy of political power (Thompson 1995:15). Examine this statement with specific reference to Zimbabwe. **[25 marks]**

Question 4

Bourdieu contends that the tabloid press feed a style of reporting capable of mobilising prejudice against those who are already stigmatised, an aspect equitable to 'symbolic lynching', as the readers cease to be addressed as citizens or active participants in democracy and are perceived instead as mere consumers, eager to be diverted by gossip or scandal (cited in Macdonald 2003:57). Evaluate this view citing examples. **[25 marks]**

Question 5

Discuss how the application of popular culture perspectives offers new prisms through which to view and better understand the practice of journalism. **[25 marks]**

Question 6

With reference to Zimbabwean and Western popular music, critique the view that popular culture is ideological in that it reinforces and repairs hegemony, defining a reality that citizens freely accept and take for granted (Schudson 1987:53) **[25 marks]**