

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF JOURNALISM AND MEDIA STUDIES

POLITICS AND THE MEDIA (IJM 4214)

MAY 2012 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

- a) Identify five factors that put pressure on news objectivity, resulting in bias. **[5 Marks]**
- b) Define political bias. **[2 Marks]**
- c) Define structural bias. **[2 Marks]**
- d) What is a preferred reading? **[1 Mark]**
- e) Explain how preferred readings can be constructed into news stories. **[15 Marks]**

TOTAL: [25 MARKS]

Question 2

In modern society, the term “fourth estate” is normally used to refer to the idea of the news media acting as a public watchdog. Critically discuss critical theorists’ view that it’s not possible in most societies for the media to effectively play this role.

[25 marks]

Question 3

- a) Why do some scholars believe the Internet will enable the media to better fulfill their normative expectations? Try to consider what some scholars have called the “vulnerable potential” of the Internet (cf. Coleman & Blumler, 2009). **[13 Marks]**
- b) Why do critical theorists challenge these beliefs? Consider the challenges posed by, among other obstacles, the digital divide and the question of universal access to these technologies. **[12 Marks]**

TOTAL:

[25 MARKS]

Question 4

Cultural populists believe that tabloidisation is promoting the media's creation of a public sphere. To what extent is this true in Zimbabwe? **[25 Marks]**

Question 5

- a) What roles has Zimbabwe's public media tended to play in the past? **[10 Marks]**
- b) What roles has Zimbabwe's private tended to play in the past? **[10 Marks]**
- c) Have these roles changed under the new political dispensation? Use real examples to illustrate. **[5 Marks]**

TOTAL:

[25 MARKS]

Question 6

- a) Identify five reasons why local journalists failed to adequately cover the Gukurahundi atrocities in Zimbabwe from 1983-1987. **[5 Marks]**
- b) Would say *The Chronicle* played its role as a newspaper in the first decade of Zimbabwe's independence, vis-à-vis the normative roles and expectations discussed in this course. Consider the Gukurahundi atrocities and the Willowvale Scandal in your discussion **[10 Marks]**
- c) Define embedded journalism and explain why its practice has been criticised in coverage of the Iraqi conflict. **[5 Marks]**
- d) Explain why the Wikileaks phenomenon is proving contentious. **[5 Marks]**

TOTAL:

[25 MARKS]