



# CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

FAITH • INTEGRITY • EXCELLENCE

JANUARY SEMESTER RESIT EXAMINATION: 2020/21

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION STUDIES

COMS 204: MEDIA ETHICS

3 Credits

TIME ALLOWED: 2 HOURS

STUDENT ID No. ....

### INSTRUCTIONS:

**CIRCLE THE CORRECT ANSWER IN SECTION A.  
FILL IN THE BLANKS IN SECTION B ON THE SPACES PROVIDED ON THE  
PAPER**

**DO NOT TURN OVER THIS PAGE UNTIL YOU HAVE BEEN TOLD TO DO SO BY  
THE INVIGILATOR.**

Lecturer: Dr. R. Kimani

**SECTION A: Circle the correct answer**

**(1 mark each)**

1. Which of the following defines establishing and following standards of conduct and making moral judgments?
  - A. Editorial gatekeeping
  - B. Agenda-setting
  - C. Ethics
  - D. Public relations
  
2. One of the goals of public journalism is to do which of the following?
  - A. Make horse-race coverage of politics more interesting.
  - B. Publish information desired by political elites rather than the general public.
  - C. Encourage people to participate in democracy.
  - D. Emphasize the voices on the extremes of the political spectrum and not the center.
  
3. The founders of the Constitution considered media, and proposed the idea of objectivity. What does objectivity in news reporting mean?
  - A. Describing something according to the feelings of the person reporting.
  - B. Describing an object in the same way one would describe an idea.
  - C. Describing something according to the characteristics of the thing being described.
  - D. Describing two sides of an argument in exactly the same way.
  
4. Which are the two main components of objectivity?
  - A. Absence of emotion and adherence to routine.
  - B. Absence of bias and adherence to routine.
  - C. Absence of bias and accuracy.
  - D. Absence of emotion and accuracy.
  
5. Which of the following best defines morality?
  - A. What is considered as correct within a society
  - B. Making the right decisions where there is a chance to do wrong
  - C. Defining what is right and wrong for an individual or a community
  - D. Where individuals have a conscious choice to make a right and ethical decision
  
6. Which of the following does not deal with mass media ethics codes?
  - A. Specifics.
  - B. Timeliness.
  - C. Accuracy.
  - D. Fairness.

7. Which of the following best describes the attitude most news organizations have about credibility?
- A. People depend on news media for their information, and media must be credible to succeed as businesses.
  - B. People get information from multiple sources other than the news media, so no one will be hurt if news organizations make mistakes now and then.
  - C. Almost no one believes the news media, so a lack of credibility does not put an organization at a competitive disadvantage.
  - D. Credibility helps a news organization win awards, but sensationalism attracts readers, viewers and advertisers which make for commercial success.
8. In weighing the value of publishing a story, journalists should consider harms and benefits and publish the story if it does what?
- A. Harms more people than it benefits.
  - B. It would attract an audience no matter how many benefit.
  - C. It would attract an audience no matter how many are harmed.
  - D. It benefits more people than it harms.
9. Which ethical orientation calls for use of codes of professional ethics that hold true regardless of situation or consequence?
- A. Situational
  - B. Absolutist
  - C. Relativist
  - D. Philosophical
10. One of the following defines Utilitarian theory. Which is it?
- A. An action is morally right if it results in the greatest amount of good for the greatest amount of people affected by the action.
  - B. An action is morally right if it results in the most amount of good possible in the given situation.
  - C. An action is morally right if you do a whole lot of good.
  - D. An action is morally right if it results in the least amount of negativity possible.
11. John Rawls is acknowledged as the proponent of the veil of ignorance. What does it state?
- A. That ethical behavior is only possible if everyone is treated equally without regard to social stature of class.
  - B. That the most important aspect of ethical behavior is an appreciation that the moral quality of action varies from one situation to another.
  - C. That people should continually look for principles that hold true in all situations, and will therefore apply universally.
  - D. None of those listed here.

12. Who proposed that ethical behavior was based on a golden mean, a midpoint between two extremes?
- A. Plato
  - B. Aristotle
  - C. Alexander the Great
  - D. Immanuel Kant
13. What is the meaning of the idea by Machiavelli that the end justifies the means?
- A. Ethical behavior is that which generates the greatest good for the greatest number of people.
  - B. You must do whatever you are able to, to save others before yourself.
  - C. There is truly no way to serve your own purposes and still be ethical.
  - D. If your cause is ethical, then any methods you use to achieve your goal is also ethical.
14. What is the name of the moral principle of do unto others as you would have them do unto you?
- A. Golden Mean
  - B. Golden Rule
  - C. Gold Medal.
  - D. Golden Fleece.
15. What is the name of the person or group frequently assigned by a newspaper to oversee the ethical behaviour of employees and respond to reader complaints?
- A. News council
  - B. Ombudsman
  - C. Citizens group
  - D. Investigative journalist
16. Which of the following media ethics controversies pertains to the idea that the outside activities of a media professional may influence the reality that is presented to the public?
- A. Stereotyping
  - B. Accountability
  - C. Conflict of interest
  - D. Investigative fraud
17. Janet Cooke was a journalist whose story about a child heroin addict won a Pulitzer Prize. The story was later revealed to be untrue. This is an obvious example of what?
- A. An overly prescriptive code of ethics.
  - B. Misuse of the categorical imperative.
  - C. Misrepresentation or fakery.
  - D. Check book journalism.

18. In journalism, what does a hoax specifically mean?
- A. A story is based on fact but has not been properly researched.
  - B. A story was selected with the goal of selling newspapers.
  - C. A story is a purposeful deception of the reading public.
  - D. A story is full of wit and humor.
19. Plagiarism is defined as
- A. making up quotations or sources for a news story.
  - B. a person taking the words or ideas of someone else or ideas and passing them off as his or her own.
  - C. pretending to be someone other than a reporter to get an interview.
  - D. accepting gifts or bribes from sources.
20. Which of the following would a reporter using a veil of ignorance do?
- A. Avoid treating sources or subjects differently because of their race, class, or other characteristics.
  - B. Strive not to learn too much about opposing points of view when writing an editorial.
  - C. Unburden himself or herself from excess research by all printing press releases verbatim.
  - D. Leave the correction of spelling and grammar errors entirely in the hands of his or her editors.
21. The Potter's Box is one of the tools used to solve ethical problems when reporting news. Which of the following is not a situation considered when using it?
- A. moral principles
  - B. the royalties involved
  - C. the values underlying all choices
  - D. the situation
22. Kofi is considering whether or not to write a story that could be embarrassing to a popular local school principal. Kofi weighs whether to base the decision on what would do the most good for the most people or on the question, What would I want, if I were the principal? Kofi is involved in which step of moral reasoning, according to Potter's Box?
- A. Searching for moral principles
  - B. Identifying loyalties
  - C. Defining the situation
  - D. Analysing the values involved

23. Fifi believes that all crime reports should name the victim, no matter what the crime or the age of the victim. In that case, what would Fifi be applying?
- A. Potter's box
  - B. A categorical imperative
  - C. A Golden Rule
  - D. All of these
24. When hired by a new magazine, Akosua is required to sign an agreement to follow a set of guidelines prescribing proper journalistic behavior. What are these guidelines called?
- A. An employee imperative.
  - B. A veil of ignorance.
  - C. A divine command.
  - D. A code of ethics.
25. Bright reports the views of both coaches of an upcoming playoff game, without adding any comments about which game plan seems more likely to win. Bright is applying which principle?
- A. The golden mean
  - B. Conflict of interest
  - C. Do unto others
  - D. All of these
26. Casey reports on a factory that is dumping toxic waste into a river. Although the reports lead to closing of the factory and the loss of 50 jobs, drinking water is made safer for thousands of people who live downstream. What has Casey applied?
- A. The golden mean
  - B. Plagiarism
  - C. Libertarian ethics
  - D. The principle of utility
27. Which of the following is NOT among the problems with interviewing victims of crimes or disasters immediately after the incident?
- A. They may be in shock and inadvertently twist the facts.
  - B. They may want to please reporters and answer questions even if they are not certain about the answers.
  - C. They are likely to have clear recollections and be eager to talk to reporters.
  - D. They may recant their story later and accuse the reporter of having made it up.

28. Which of the following is an example of slander?
- A. A national magazine reports on the upcoming US election with an intent to sway voters to the Democratic side.
  - B. A local radio DJ tries to sell his own car during air time.
  - C. Several students are interviewed by a local news station and state that their science teacher is a raging alcoholic and fails to do his job.
  - D. The high school principal takes the day off without calling in sick.
29. What is the opportunity permitting a person criticized in a story to respond to that criticism in the same story is known as?
- A. Privileged statements
  - B. Right of reply
  - C. Objectivity
  - D. Libel
30. The practice of using information from anonymous sources is vulnerable to misuse by journalists who do what?
- A. Carefully attribute direct quotations to sources.
  - B. Weigh loyalty to sources against duty to audiences.
  - C. Fake stories by crediting sources that do not exist.
  - D. Do all of these.
31. What is wrong with the practice of electronically recording an interview with a source without the knowledge of the source?
- A. It is devious and unfair.
  - B. It is sneaky but expected of reporters.
  - C. It is easier than asking permission.
  - D. It is essential for accurate reporting.
32. Why would following a guideline for telling the truth be complicated for journalists?
- A. Advertisers sometimes play fast and loose with the truth.
  - B. Many journalists have no interest in adhering to the truth.
  - C. It is sometimes hard to agree on what the truth is.
  - D. They are trying to tell an artistic truth, rather than a historical truth.
33. Why would freedom of speech guaranteed in a number of constitutions increase the controversial nature of media ethics?
- A. Some countries do not encourage freedom of speech.
  - B. Media ethics deals with voluntary conduct.
  - C. Many people feel free to speak out against ethics.
  - D. None of the reasons listed here.

34. Which of the following defines the term check book journalism?
- A. Paying a reporter to create a fictional story.
  - B. Bribing a reporter to suppress an unflattering story.
  - C. Paying the salaries of the staff of a tabloid.
  - D. Paying for an actual news story.
35. Journalists often experience conflicts between different moral responsibilities related to what?
- A. Commitment to timeliness.
  - B. Respect for privacy.
  - C. Being fair.
  - D. All of these.
36. A new tourist resort organizes free flights and rooms for reporters during a press preview weekend. What are these free trips called?
- A. Junkets
  - B. Golden means
  - C. Retractions
  - D. Re-enactments
37. When using the golden mean as a basis for moral decision making, what do journalists aim at?
- A. Avoiding extremes and seeking moderation.
  - B. Avoiding outside influences when seeking the truth.
  - C. Seeking the truth at all costs.
  - D. Applying unvarying universal principles.
38. Which of the following is NOT a set of moral principles?
- A. Categorical imperatives
  - B. Utilitarian ethics
  - C. Do unto others
  - D. Political mandates
39. A television health reporter receives a news release promoting a new medication for depression. What should the reporter do in order to achieve ethical standards of fairness?
- A. Ignore the release.
  - B. Seek independent opinions on the new drug before doing a segment on depression medicines.
  - C. Do a segment that also promotes the new drug.
  - D. Do all of these



40. Kofi writes a favorable review of the local music symphony, and the symphony offers him two season tickets. If Kofi were to accept the tickets, what would this be a case of?
- A. Conflict of interest
  - B. Violation of privacy
  - C. Categorical imperative
  - D. Golden mean
41. Which of the following concepts does not contribute to the credibility of the press?
- A. Believability
  - B. Sensationalism
  - C. Impartiality
  - D. Accuracy
42. A television reporter is asked to stop work on a story involving corruption in another corporation owned by the same conglomerate that owns the TV station. This reporter is facing an ethical dilemma caused by a conflict between duty to which of the following?
- A. Source and self
  - B. Privacy and audience
  - C. Employer and audience
  - D. Employer and privacy
43. Which of the following is not an example of conflict of interest?
- A. Reporter blasts a sexual harassment case when he is up on the similar charges.
  - B. Not running a column against gambling when the newspaper supports gambling.
  - C. Not using a photograph in a news report because its contents are in bad taste.
  - D. Editorial against a company that directly competes with the owner of the newspaper.
44. A television news crew uses actors to portray a fatal accident involving a popular toy for children because there is no film available of an actual accident with the toy. What is their action a practice of?
- A. A conflict of interest
  - B. Re-enactment
  - C. Selective editing
  - D. All of these

45. Government is implicated in a news report. In order to force reporters to reveal sources of their information, what must Government prove?
- A. Probable cause that information is clearly relevant to a specific probable violation of law.
  - B. Information cannot be obtained by other means.
  - C. Compelling and overriding need for the information.
  - D. All the reasons listed here.
46. Privacy is valued for the following reasons except one. Which is it?
- A. It protects us from scorn and ridicule
  - B. It controls our reputations
  - C. No one should poke their nose in the private life of another under any circumstance
  - D. It shields against power of government
47. In which of the following scenarios is bias most likely to appear in a news story?
- A. The reporter relies on multiple sources and gives abundant time or space to all sides of a controversy.
  - B. The story of a reporter is reviewed by a large number of editors and supervisors.
  - C. The reporter is writing about a topic that she or he already knows a lot about.
  - D. The reporter relies on one source or gives disproportionate time or space to one side of a controversy.
48. Which of the following is NOT one of the factors that lead to inaccuracies in news reports?
- A. Carelessness and laziness.
  - B. Lack of understanding of the topic.
  - C. Use of generalities instead of specifics.
  - D. Having editors check and question the work of a reporter.
49. What is a popular method that journalists use to perform investigative journalism?
- A. Reporters use illegal methods such as blackmail to get information.
  - B. Reporters use second-hand interviews from anonymous sources.
  - C. Reporters go undercover to find out information.
  - D. Reporters use other news outlets to compile a more in-depth story.
50. Journalists sometimes create misleading impressions about victims of crime or accidents. What is likely to be the reason?
- A. They want to portray the victims in the best possible light.
  - B. They want to portray the victims in the worst possible light.
  - C. They rely too heavily on the version of events given by the victim.
  - D. They speculate in the absence of knowledge of the facts.

51. In deciding whether to broadcast or publish graphic images of violence or disasters, producers and editors must weigh what?
- A. Unnecessarily offending viewers and readers against the need to increase viewership or readership.
  - B. Unnecessarily offending viewers and readers against the need to inform them of harsh realities.
  - C. The need to inform viewers and readers of harsh realities against the possibility of offending high government officials.
  - D. The need to inform viewers and readers of harsh realities against the popular desire to read and watch pleasing news stories.
52. In covering rape cases, the almost universal practice of news organizations is to do what?
- A. Withhold the name of the victim and the suspect.
  - B. Publish the name of the victim and the suspect.
  - C. Publish the name of the victim, but withhold the name of the suspect.
  - D. Withhold the name of the victim, but publish the name of the suspect.
53. What should a news reporter do if he or she hears a rumor that a public official has engaged in an illicit sexual relationship?
- A. Publish the story immediately before any other news organization can.
  - B. Publish the story only after the rumor has been confirmed and if it has some news value.
  - C. Publish the story if the source of the rumor seems reputable.
  - D. Never publish the story about the rumor even if it is newsworthy and can be readily verified.
54. Generally, news organizations do not publish the names of juveniles who have been arrested for crimes unless
- A. the juvenile is being tried as an adult.
  - B. the victim of the crime is socially prominent.
  - C. the juvenile suspect is socially prominent.
  - D. the crime involved the theft or destruction of property valued at Gh cedis 1,000 or more.
55. Photojournalists see the use of computer software to alter images as comparable to
- A. cropping photos or increasing the contrast in the image.
  - B. the artistic license novelists take with facts.
  - C. the making up facts for a news story by a reporter.
  - D. a mild form of exaggeration.

56. Which journalistic standards and ethics emphasize independent checking of facts?
- Presentation
  - Style
  - Accuracy
  - None of these apply
57. What should a journalist do during a tragedy?
- Be sensitive when seeking interviews of those affected.
  - Be sensitive when seeking photographs of those affected.
  - Use special sensitivity when dealing with children.
  - All of the things listed here.
58. Advertising can be a source of conflict of interest by which of the following?
- Accurately depicting use of a product.
  - Exerting external pressure to influence editorial content.
  - Advertising multiple products from the same company.
  - None of these listed here.
59. When can a journalist use hidden recording equipment?
- When the interviewee has said they do not want to be recorded.
  - When gathering facts for a particularly newsworthy story.
  - When there is no other way to get a public interest story.
  - The equipment must never be used by a journalist who is ethical.
60. The digital era has raised media ethics issues related to what?
- The superiority of Internet journalists over print journalists.
  - The fact that not everyone has access to the Internet.
  - The Internet supplying a constant stream of unlimited information.
  - All of the ones listed here.

**SECTION B: Fill in the blanks with the correct word or phrase. (2 marks each)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are two principles stand at the very heart of journalism the lack of which would result to ethical infractions.
- The use of questionable language is almost exclusively limited to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- Governments can only withhold information that could affect \_\_\_\_\_  
or \_\_\_\_\_.

4. By disseminating information the government wants the citizens to know and the one they would rather the citizens did not know about, the media becomes a \_\_\_\_\_ thereby guarding the free flow of information of public interest.
5. When there are impediments to free flow of information, some journalists use \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
6. In electronic media, \_\_\_\_\_ are essential to storytelling.
7. In using hidden cameras, journalists face the struggle between honoring the principle of honesty and fulfilling journalistic obligation of \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Undercover reporting and use of hidden cameras expose the journalist to possibility of \_\_\_\_\_.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ concerns intruding into other people's lives or property and publicizing the product or content of that intrusion.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ happens when a journalist faces and succumbs to competing loyalties - to a source, to his own self-interest, or to his organization's economic needs as opposed to the public's information needs.
11. \_\_\_\_\_ blur the line between editorial and commercial content and may compromise the integrity of the media.
12. A newspaper's 'brand' is \_\_\_\_\_ in its judgment, its independence and its values.
13. Standards and values that guide journalists' conduct are known as \_\_\_\_\_.
14. Some media houses engage in \_\_\_\_\_, a communication that intentionally attempts to persuade its audience for ideological, political, or commercial purposes.

15. The objective style of journalism demands reporters maintain a \_\_\_\_\_ voice in their writing.
16. A reporter who must get the story first regardless of its completeness or accuracy is demonstrating a misplaced loyalty to the professional ideal of the \_\_\_\_\_.
17. An advertising copywriter who scripts distorted TV spots about an opponent to get his/her candidate elected is demonstrating a troubling allegiance/loyalty to a \_\_\_\_\_ over the democratic process.
18. Loyalty has been defined as "The willing and practical and thoroughgoing devotion of a person to a \_\_\_\_\_."
19. In capitalist economies, the media faces pressure from various sources which if not checked could lead to ethical infractions. These include competition from other media houses, the public at large and \_\_\_\_\_.
20. Private media is a commercial enterprise hence making money is not unethical. However, it becomes unethical when commercial interests are allowed to dominate the media's \_\_\_\_\_.

THE END