



Strathmore
UNIVERSITY

**SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN COMMUNICATION
END OF SEMESTER EXAMINATION
BAC 1206: WRITING FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

Date: Monday 19th April 2021

Time: 12:00-14:00

Instructions

1. This examination consists of **FOUR** questions.
2. Answer **Question ONE (COMPULSORY)** and any other **TWO** questions.

Question 1

(30 Marks)

The Not-So-Ideal Male

First there was Errol Flynn, then there was John Wayne. Now there are Arnold Schwarzenegger, Bruce Willis, and Jean-Claude Van Damme. These men of action and resolve are the celluloid depictions of the ideal man. They are the model that men strive for but never achieve. They are the men women want but never find. They are the reason men feel inferior. However, the truth is that we are being led to believe in an absurd image of the ideal male, and the source of this image is movies, advertising, and childhood stories.

An obvious perpetrator of the falsehood is the movie industry, which produces unrealistic plots with superhuman male heroes. Arnold slams through brick walls and snatches the beautiful woman from the jaws of death; Bruce outwits six psychopaths to liberate a building from terrorists; Jean-Claude kickboxes his way past a vicious street gang to rescue the helpless hostages. We watch these movies, and we feel that this is what men are supposed to be like. Granted, cartoonish action movies are generally the most extreme, but they appeal to the most vulnerable audience – teenage boys. They see in these heroes on the screen visions of what they should be like when they become men. This is tragic because the goal is unattainable.

Another source of deception is the advertising industry. Advertisers bombard us every with powerful male athletes endorsing products. Michael Jordan, in all his athletic, superhero grandeur, makes us want Nike, but even more, he makes males want to achieve athletic greatness – not likely for the average guy. Emmitt Smith may sell a lot of Pepsi, but he also sells the notion that the ideal man has arms and legs as thick as tree trunks. Advertising sends two messages: you should buy this product because this man should be your idol, and if you want to be a “real man,” you should have the athletic physique and prowess of a sports star, thus physical dominance is put in the spotlight as much as the product.

A third perpetrator of the misconception is folktales and childhood stories, legends that have been passed down through generations. Triumphant men who confront danger and risk their lives for the underdog are everywhere in our myths, and they cause males to feel inadequate. The likes of Robin Hood, Sir Lancelot, and Davy Crockett originated in an entirely different time and society; they are heroes of the past who do not befit the present, yet their legendary (and impossible to emulate) feats shape the psyches of males. The tradition continues into more recent times, as Superman, Batman, and Spiderman fight injustice, rescue the weak, and generally contribute to the notion that real men are action figures.

The ideal men depicted in advertising, movies, and legends are loners. Their strength stems from the fact that they need no one to help them accomplish their goals. The Marlboro man always rides

out alone; the action hero singlehandedly saves the day. This fact causes problems for males who try to live up to the perceived ideal. It leads them to wall themselves off from others, depriving themselves of enjoyable, satisfying relationships. Further, our world is becoming increasingly cooperative on all levels – from interpersonal to international. A successful male knows that the help from others is essential to achieving his dream and that collaboration is increasingly valued in the workplace. The loner may not perform well on the job.

Finally, the unfortunate image of the ideal male perpetrated by advertising, movies, and myth damages relations with women. Many times, the point of the movie, advertisement, or tale is that the male hero “gets” the woman. He is almost invariably her protector, saviour, or unrepellable lover. In a world whose defining characteristic is the advancement of women nearer and nearer to equality, how can the ideal man have such a relationship with women? The answer is simple: he cannot. Indeed, once outside the worlds of advertising, movies and folktales, he is not the ideal man.

- i. Using the idea generation strategy construct a cluster diagram identifying the thesis statement and related ideas in in this essay. **(8 Marks)**
- ii. Develop an outline for the essay. **(4 Marks)**
- iii. Analyze the author’s use of topic sentences in developing and supporting ideas in the essay. **(18 Marks)**

Question 2

(15 Marks)

Writers share their experiences and perceptions of a place, person, feeling or thing through descriptive writing. Writers order their descriptive details using a number of arrangement strategies, such as spatial organization - from back to front, near to far, left to right and so on. Sometimes a chronological order may be more effective to achieve a given aim.

Using the description pattern, write a short piece about any place that raises conflicting emotions in you. This could be either (i) your house (ii) a doctor’s office, or (iii) your school.

Answer

Should address the following:

- a) Use of Expressive Aim strategy to express themselves, to entertain, to inform and to persuade.
- b) Create mental pictures through choice of sensory and image bearing words.
- c) Use of organization or arrangement strategy.

Question 3

(15 Marks)

You are the Editor-in-Chief of your University’s Magazine *The Torch*. A student has submitted a short writeup for publication. Rewrite the following paragraph to improve variety in the structure and length of sentences.

Native English drama began about a thousand years ago. It originated in church ceremonies and played a very minor role. It consisted of very limited representations of biblical stories within church services at first. But these gradually became more elaborate. The common people could not understand the Latin services. And the basic purpose of these representations was to educate rather than to entertain. The dramatic element was popular. Over time, it became more extensive. Priests began to speak parts as opposed to just acting them out while the choir sang. Costumes began to appear in the twelfth century. The basic Christmas and Easter stories were supplemented in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The stories of the Old and New Testaments were introduced. Cycles developed covering biblical history. Space required by the sets and the audience forced the plays out into the churchyards. The need for more characters made it necessary to use laymen as actors. English replaced Latin. Entertainment became more important. Edification became less important. Humour became common. Characters and concerns were adapted to reflect daily medieval life. The plays were sponsored by the trade guilds in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The church had divorced itself from the developing drama. It saw the drama as a symptom of moral decay. But the drama had become too popular for even the church to suppress successfully.

Question 4

(15 Marks)

Read the two poems below and answer the questions that follow.

The Poor Man

When the cock crows,
The lazy man licks his lips and says:
So it is daylight again, is it?
And before he turns over heavily,
Before he even stretches himself,
Before he even yawns –
The farmer has reached the farm,
The water carriers arrived at the river,
The spinners are spinning their cotton, the weaver works on his cloth,
And the fire blazes in the blacksmith's hut.

The lazy one knows where the soup is sweet
He goes from house to house.
If there is no sacrifice today,
His breastbone will stick out!
But when he sees the free yam,
He starts to unbutton his shirt,
He moves to the celebrant.

Yet his troubles are not few.
When his wives reach puberty,
Rich men will help him marry them.

Anonymous – a Yoruba traditional poem

The Poor Man

The poor man knows not how to eat with rich the man.
When they eat fish, he eats the head.

Invite a poor man and he rushes in
Licking his lips and upsetting the plates.

The poor man has no manners, he comes along
With blood of lice in his nails.

The face of the poor man is lined
From the hunger and thirst in his belly.

Poverty is no state for any mortal man.
It makes him a beast to be fed on grass.

Poverty is unjust. It befalls a man,
Though he is nobly born, he has no power with God.

Anonymous – a Swahili traditional poem.

Questions

- i. Compare and contrast the main themes in the two poems. **(6 Marks)**
- ii. Analyze the stylistic devices in the two poems **(9 Marks)**