

# ZIMBABWE EZEKIEL GUTI UNIVERSITY



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## FACULTY OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

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### Department of Information Systems

**MODULE CODE** : BIS114  
**MODULE TITLE** : ETHICS AND PROFESSIONALISM  
**SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS** : None  
**DURATION** : 3hrs  
**LEVEL** : 1.1  
**DATE** : 2024

13 JUN 2024

#### Instructions

- (i) Mark allocation for each question is shown in square brackets.
- (ii) Number your answers accordingly.
- (iii) The total marks for the examination is 100.
- (iv) Answer Section Any Four Questions

## QUESTION 1

### CASE STUDY:

**In academic publishing, a retraction is the action by which a published paper in an academic journal is removed from the journal.**

- a) A research team from a prominent laboratory published an article in a prestigious academic journal. It was considered a breakthrough paper that answered a major question in a scientific field. Papers produced in a laboratory normally list many people in the laboratory as authors, but the first named author is the primary person responsible for the paper. The first author of this paper was a postdoctoral researcher, working under her supervisor at the time. After the researcher left for another job, other researchers in the laboratory were unable to repeat the results following exactly the same methods. The supervisor, suspecting possible scientific misconduct, requested that the researcher return to the laboratory to redo her experiments and confirm the authenticity of her results, but she declined. An institutional investigation into the experiment concluded that there was no conclusive evidence that the results were actually achieved, but also that there was no conclusive evidence of misconduct or fabrication. The article was retracted without the researcher's agreement. The retraction damaged the researcher's career and reputation in the scientific community. The decision to retract the article was based on two factors: the absence of records corroborating the researcher's results and the laboratory's inability to repeat the results.
- b) Did the researcher have an obligation to return to the laboratory to repeat the results? Why or why not? [5]
- c) Use the five different ethics theories (KANTIAN ANALYSIS, ACT UTILITARIAN ANALYSIS, RULE UTILITARIAN ANALYSIS, SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY ANALYSIS, and VIRTUE ETHICS ANALYSIS) to analyse the case and come up with your own conclusion. [20]

## QUESTION TWO

- a) Define in your own words the following terms
- i. Ethics
  - ii. Moral
  - iii. Descriptive morality
  - iv. Normative morality
  - v. Moral luck

[10]

- b) According to the Golden Rule, you should do unto others as you would want them to do unto you. Which of the five workable ethical theories is closest to the Golden Rule? Explain your answer. [5]
- c) Suppose a spaceship lands in your neighborhood. Friendly aliens emerge and invite humans to enter the galactic community. You learn that this race of aliens has colonized virtually the entire galaxy; Earth is one of the few inhabitable planets to host a different intelligent species. The aliens seem to be remarkably open-minded. They ask you to outline the ethical theory that should guide the interactions between our two species. Which ethical theory would you describe? Explain why? [10]

### QUESTION THREE

- a) What is the problem of moral luck? [1]
- b) Why do businesses and governments often use utilitarian thinking to determine the proper course of action? [2]
- c) Describe similarities and differences between
- i. Act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism. [4]
  - ii. Kantianism and social contract theory. [4]
  - iii. Cultural relativism and virtue ethics. [4]
- d) If you had to choose only one of the ethical theories and use it for all of your personal ethical decision making, which theory would you choose? Explain your choice and response to the arguments that may be raised against the theory you have chosen? [10]

### QUESTION FOUR

- a) How should privacy be distinguished from
- i. confidentiality
  - ii. secrecy
  - iii. Anonymity. [15]
- b) A school district forbids students from using their cell phones on school buses, but many students ignore this rule. A frustrated bus driver installs a cell phone jammer on his bus. When the jammer is turned on, cell phones within 40 feet stop working. (The use of jammers is against the law.) The bus driver says, "The kids think they are sneaky by hiding low in their seats and using their phones. Now the kids can't figure out why their phones don't work, but can't ask because they will get in trouble! It's fun to watch them try to get a signal"

Discuss the morality of the bus driver's use of the jammer.

[10]

#### QUESTION FIVE

a) What is the purpose of professional societies such as the Computer Society of Zimbabwe? [15]

b) A plane makes an emergency crash landing on a deserted tropical island. Two dozen survivors must fend for themselves until help arrives. All of them are from large cities, and none of them has camping experience. The survivors find it impossible to gather enough food, and everyone begins losing weight. One person spends a lot of time by himself and figures out how to catch fish. He brings fish back to camp. Others ask him to teach them how to catch fish. He refuses, but offers to share the fish he has caught with the other passengers as long as they take care of the other camp chores, such as hauling fresh water, gathering firewood, and cooking. Debate the morality of the bargain proposed by the fisherman. [10]

#### QUESTION SIX

a. What is plagiarism? Describe four different ways that a person can commit plagiarism. What are the reasons and how to avoid plagiarism? [15]

b. Over a period of seven years, about 500 residents of Tamuka, were overbilled for their water usage. Each resident paid on average about \$170 too much, making the total amount of the overbillings about \$100,000. The city council decided not to issue refunds, saying that about 300,000 bills would have had to be examined, some residents had left town, and the individual refunds were not that large. Use the workable theories and discuss whether the city council made the right decision or not. Justify your answer. [10]

0/5 (pm)