

Media Law and Ethics Study Guide

The exam will follow the format of the midterm with the following specifications:

The short answer section of the exam will cover the material up to the midterm. The study guide for that exam should serve you well to prepare for what will be on the final. There will be 7 questions in this section from which you will be asked to choose and answer 5. Each question will be worth 10 points and the first section will be cumulatively worth 50 points.

The second section will consist of a single, multi-part essay question related specifically to the material covered since the midterm –namely, the Nichols chapters and the Alcott and Sontag articles (“The Problem of Speaking for Others” and “Regarding the Pain of Others”) –as it applies to Renzo Martens’ Episode III: Enjoy Poverty. The prompt for the essay is below.

“Renzo Martens’ Episode III: Enjoy Poverty (2008) is a ruthless, honest and uber-controversial example of political filmmaking: a crude, rude and ugly exposé of the post-colonial conflicts still besetting the Democratic Republic of the Congo at the beginning of the 21st Century.”

While the above statement might appear to encapsulate the essence of Martens’ Enjoy Poverty, it tells us little of the ethical dimensions and questions that the film raises both in 1) the way in which the filmmaker relates to his subject(s), to his audience and to his medium, as well as 2) the point of view the film brings to bear on the ethics of representing suffering and violence which seems to constitute its main polemical target. Your essay should cover both of these questions as they relate to an ethics of representation.

As you develop your answer please make sure that you 1) carefully describe the film’s formal features and that you are capable of discussing it within the context of Nichols’ taxonomy of documentary modes; 2) identify the main ethical questions the film raises (both formally and in terms of its content –as it does both) and reflect on who it answers these. Finally evaluate the film’s ultimate relationship and treatment of its subject matter from a specific ethical perspective (the one you feel would be the most appropriate to discuss a film like this).