

**COVENANT UNIVERSITY  
NIGERIA**

*TUTORIAL KIT  
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**PROGRAMME: MASS  
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**COURSE: MAC 341**

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# MAC341: NEWS AGENCY JOURNALISM

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1. What is news agency?
  2. Highlight and discuss the coverage issues surrounding three largest news agencies in the world.
  3. Discuss the variety of relationships that the world agencies have established with other agencies and with individual news media.
  4. What is news agency journalism?
  5. What is foreign correspondence?
  6. Who is a foreign correspondent?
  7. What are the qualities of a good foreign correspondent?
  8. What is politics of foreign correspondence?
  9. What are the challenges facing foreign correspondents?
  10. How can the challenges facing foreign correspondents how can they be addressed?
  11. Discuss the controversies surrounding syndication in the international news business; global gatekeeping/international news coverage
  12. Describe the role of news agencies in foreign correspondence
  13. Identify an international correspondent and highlight the qualities of a good correspondent in such individual
  14. Explain the operations of the satellite technology and its impact on news agency journalism
  15. Do a comparative analysis of the global media and the covering of the global village
  16. Justify with reasons why some nations get better international coverage than others
  17. How does news from abroad sells at home?
  18. Highlight and discuss key issues, timelines/stages, challenges, and prospects of the world
- Summit on information society (WSIS)
19. Define an elite press/elite press corps state the characteristics of the elite press and identify a journalist who qualifies as an elite press corps.
  20. Discuss the effects of the news media on foreign policy

## ANSWERS

### 1. QUESTION ONE:

## **NEWS AGENCY**

News agency, also called press agency, press association, wire service, or news service, organization that gathers, writes, and distributes news from around a nation or the world to newspapers, periodicals, radio and television broadcasters, government agencies, and other users. It does not generally publish news itself but supplies news to its subscribers, who, by sharing costs, obtain services they could not otherwise afford. All the mass media depend upon the agencies for the bulk of the news, even including those few that have extensive news-gathering resources of their own.

The news agency has a variety of forms. In some large cities, newspapers and radio and television stations have joined forces to obtain routine coverage of news about the police, courts, government offices, and the like. National agencies have extended the area of such coverage by gathering and distributing stock-market quotations, sports results, and election reports. A few agencies have extended their service to include worldwide news. The service has grown to include news interpretation, special columns, news photographs, audiotape recordings for radio broadcast, and often videotape or motion-picture film for television news reports. Many agencies are cooperatives, and the trend has been in that direction since World War II. Under this form of organization, individual members provide news from their own circulation areas to an agency pool for general use. In major news centres the national and worldwide agencies have their own reporters to cover important events, and they maintain offices to facilitate distribution of their service.

**2. QUESTION THREE:** Most of them purchase the news services of national or local agencies to supplement news gathered by their own staff representatives at key points. Reuters, like the Agence France-Presse, supplies a worldwide news file to be distributed by some national agencies along with their domestic news reports. The American services more often contract to deliver their service directly to individual users abroad.

News agencies in communist countries had close ties to their national governments. Each major communist country had its own national news service, and each news service was officially controlled, usually by the minister of information. TASS, the Soviet news agency, was the principal source of world news for the Soviet Union and its allies; it also made Soviet Communist Party policy known. Communist states outside the Soviet sphere, e.g., China and Yugoslavia, had their own state news services, which were controlled in similar fashion. China's Hsinhua, or New China News Agency, was the largest remaining news agency in a communist country by the late 20th century.

### **3. QUESTION TWO:**

#### **THE BIG THREE**

The Associated Press in the United States,  
Reuters in Great Britain,

Agence France-Presse in France. Only these and a few others have the financial resources to station experienced reporters in all areas of the world where news develops regularly (in order to ensure access to well-organized transmission facilities) or to send them wherever news develops unexpectedly. These agencies are also equipped to distribute the service almost instantaneously

### **4. QUESTION FIVE**

#### **WHAT IS FOREIGN OR INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE?**

Foreign or international correspondence entails the processes involved in the coverage, gathering and dissemination of international news and information around the globe. In international correspondence, newsgathering and dissemination goes beyond the particular correspondents house style handed down to him/her. The issue of international relations and diplomacy must be given due consideration for successful operations. In international correspondence, language, culture and other indigenous factors play significant roles in what eventually comes out as world news through such processes.

Correspondence literally means the exchange of information; news etc. international correspondence therefore, involves the exchange of news, information etc. amongst nations and nationals of different countries and facilitated by international correspondents who represent their various media organizations in those nations.

### **5. QUESTION SIX**

#### **WHO IS A CORRESPONDENT?**

**A correspondent is a seasoned, professional reporter who covers a particular beat for his organization. A correspondent is a beat reporter and is very knowledgeable in his/her area of coverage. He could also be referred to as a specialist reporter or an expert in his area of coverage or beat. He/she is contrasted with the generalist or roving reporter. A correspondent is usually in charge of his/her organization's news bureau or office in major cities or towns where his organization operates.** He also is called a bureau chief; Head, London bureau etc. A correspondent may be stationed in a bureau because he knows so much about the place and he can also be sent out to different stations based on the subject of interest, because he is very knowledgeable in such area. For example, CNN's Berlin correspondent is in Berlin because he/she understands Berlin (culture,

language etc.) very well, while the CNN's war correspondent can be sent to Berlin in an outbreak of war in that area.

## **6. QUESTION SEVEN**

### **WHO IS A FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT?**

Foreign or international correspondent from our description of a correspondent above is therefore, a seasoned, professional, specialist reporter who covers the foreign or international scene as his/her beat. E.g. Jeff Coinage who was the CNN's correspondent in West Africa and Christine Amanpour, CNN's Chief War Correspondent

## **7. QUESTION EIGHT**

### **QUALITIES OF A GOOD FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT**

- First and foremost, s/he must be a good seasoned reporter.
- He must be a linguist who understands and speaks many international and foreign languages especially the language of the country he is covering.
- S/He must be knowledgeable in international affairs and relations as well as diplomacy.
- S/He must be a good analyst.
- S/He must always be prepared.
- S/He is always at alert.
- S/He is very persistent.
- S/He is always there whenever the news breaks.
- S/He easily mixes up.
- S/He easily cultivates sources and maintains them.
- S/He dresses fine, very courteous and amiable.
- S/He must be knowledgeable about the culture of the people he is covering and should respect such way of life.
- S/He has a nose for foreign news.
- S/He must be an expert/specialist in his beat.
- S/He must be information and communication technologies (ICTs) compliant.
- S/He must be a career-oriented personality and journalist.
- S/He must be courageous and fearless.
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## **8. QUESTION NINE AND TEN**

### **EXAMPLE OF CHALLENGES FACING FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS**

Foreign correspondents reporting on Burma face a unique set of challenges due to the various restrictions and limitations imposed on them by the country's military government. Developing credible sources and verifying information are complicated by a number of factors, including journalists' limited access to the country and its people; infrequent communication from reclusive government officials; deliberate misinformation between government and anti-government

entities; restrictions on mobility inside the country; and other generally inhospitable working conditions. Over the past 20 years, a number of extraordinary events have helped shape the country's international image, beginning with the massive street demonstrations in 1988, in which more than 3,000 protesting civilians were killed by the military. The 1990s and 2000s were characterized by a nullified democratic election, the rise of a democracy icon (Aung San Suu Kyi), ethnic insurgencies, drug problems and a withering economy. When the nation's leadership raised fuel prices in 2007, a dissatisfied public led by Buddhist monks (who have long held deep influence inside the country) took to the streets in protest. And although the protests again were shut down by the military (including through forceful dispersions), the Saffron Revolution, as it came to be known, represented a landmark moment in Burma's global exposure. In particular, news organizations comprised of Burmese exiles emerged as instrumental in delivering news from Burma. Advancements in technology allowed the events to reach the global public faster and more vividly than ever before. Because the exile media had established such substantial infrastructure inside the country, both technologically and in terms of manpower, they became a vital link between the mainstream global press and the world public.

### **9. QUESTION 13**

Christine Amanpour

### **10. QUESTION 14**

#### **SATELLITES AND GLOBAL MASS MEDIA**

The impact of satellites on international communication is so glaring and no less profound. With the advent of satellites, signals could be distributed not only internally (between two countries) as has been the case, but all over the globe). The satellite revolution began in 1957 with the successful launch of Soviet Union's 'Sputnik'.

According to Baran (2002:473):

***Sputnik had no real function other than to prove (especially to the United States) that the Soviets could indeed produce the World's first artificial satellite. But it fulfilled this function admirably – shaking the confidence of the Western nations and leading the United States to redouble its efforts to conquer space.***

With the launch of sputnik, US launched AT & T's Telstar 1 in orbit in 1962. That same year, the US Congress established the Communication Satellite Corporation (COMSAT) to coordinate ownership and operation of US's communications satellite system. It was very clear from the beginning that satellites greatest potential was in their ability to globalise telecommunications and mass communications. In fact, satellite technology made foreign correspondence an interesting field in international communication