

Key Ideas

Nature and Form of Mass Media

Definitions: Media; Mass Media; Communication; Globalisation; Ownership / Control

- Basic types: Print, Electronic. Internet, E-Mail, Chatrooms, social networks
- Ownership / Control: Basic historical trends / developments
- Ownership patterns: Conglomeration and Concentration
- Historical development of different media (print and electronic)
- Social Change: Technological determinism / Cultural determinism; digital liberation / digital corporatism
- Role of State: Ownership of media; control and regulation patterns. Examples from different societies (UK, USA, China, Iran)
- Globalisation: Economic and political changes; the global village; time and space compression; cultural homogeneity (MacDonaldisation); Access to and control of information.
- Socialisation/social control: Manipulation; Hegemony; Cultural Pluralism
- Role of media in society: Functionalist, Marxist, Pluralist, Post-modern theories: Relate these to questions of ownership and control
- Mass society / mass culture theories

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Media Content

- The Selection and Presentation of "News":** Instrumental and Hegemonic Marxist, Pluralist and Post-modernist theories (evidence for and against)
- Political / ideological bias
 - News values (e.g. Immediacy, Cultural importance, Expectedness, Personalisation)
 - Social construction of news (e.g. Chiball)
 - Agenda setting and agenda building
 - The role of professionals (examine ownership and control debate)
 - Representations of social groups: examine theories and evidence based around class, gender, ethnicity and age.
 - Representation of ideas (Marxist, Pluralist, Post-modern theories).
 - Stereotypes / scapegoating
 - Moral panics (and deviancy amplification)
 - Content analysis / semiology: uses and limitations (basic understanding related to studying media: representations)

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Media Audiences

Patterns of listening, viewing, reading: Identify basic trends considered in terms of class, gender, ethnicity and age.

- Audience: Homogeneity / heterogeneity (differentiation)

Theories of media uses / effects: Good understanding of:

- Behaviourist (e.g. Hypodermic syringe)
- Uses and gratifications
- Two-step flow
- Reception analysis
- Cultivation analysis
- Reinforcement theory
- Cultural effects
- Postmodern perspectives
- Make reference, where possible, to New Media in relation to audiences, media consumption / production (e.g. Tweets, Blogs, social networks, mobile networks, etc.).

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Popular Culture and Identity

Definitions:

- Culture / subculture;
- High and low (popular) culture
- Identity
- Youth culture and subculture
- Consumer culture
- Production and consumption

Theories of youth subcultures:

- Functionalist (e.g. Merton, A.Cohen, Miller)
- Marxist (e.g. P.Cohen, Hall and Jefferson)
- Interactionist (e.g. Matza, S.Cohen)
- Feminist. (e.g. McRobbie)
- Modernism and Post-modernism (define essential economic, political and cultural features of each)
- Media saturation (Lyotard)
- Hyper-reality (Baudrillard)
- Fragmentation and diversity

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