

Content and Representation in the Media

Summary of theoretical positions

Name and date begun:

Time allocation:

3 lessons

Learning objectives:

- Students should understand that there are a variety of theoretical positions which can be applied to an understanding of the media
- The main theories are those of Marxism, neo-Marxism and the Frankfurt School, Pluralism, Feminism and Post-modernism
- Each of the theories offers something towards a full understanding but each one also has strengths and weaknesses. It is the role of the sociologist to understand those strengths and weaknesses when analysing a question.

Key Concepts and vocabulary

See your lesson notes for a list of ideologies and philosophies. These must be learned in addition to the following:

- Marxism
- Neo-Marxism
- Pluralism
- Feminism
- Post modernism

Additional reading and references

Graeme Burton (1998) *Access to Sociology: Media and Popular Culture* p. 14 - 19 see index and make good notes.

Paul Trowler (1996) *Sociology in Action: Investigating the Mass Media (2nd Edition)* see index and make good notes

Paul Taylor et al (1996) *Sociology in Focus* see sections 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, page 540-3

Read and revise your own class notes '*How influential are proprietors: some consideration of theoretical positions*'

Personal Development ideas

- Start making a serious attempt to revise your own notes on classical theory to ensure that you can apply them to theory.
- Use the key terms as search words on the Internet to see what you can find, especially with relationship to the media.
- Make sure that your revision card system is up-to-date and that your file is sorted.
- Read Dominic Strinati's (1995) *Popular Culture*

Overview of the debate

- Each perspective has its own theoretical position.
- There is a debate within each perspective.
- There is little pure theory written in recent times, and you need to refer to actual research projects in your studies
- Ensure that you can contrast and that you can draw similarities between positions.

Revision tips

- Be sure that you fully understand the key concepts of **Marxism, neo-Marxism, pluralism, feminism** and **post modernism**. Refer back to **symbolic interactionism** for consideration of stereotypes.
- Revise and clarify your notes on sociological methodology as applied to the study of the media.
- Make sure that you are fully up-to-date with your reading and that you are able to refer to and re-address your notes in the light of theory.

What you should have in your folder when this work has been completed correctly:

- A clear explanation of each of the glossary terms
- Acceptable lesson notes.
- A series of tables which summarise the main viewpoints associated with each perspective.
- A clear understanding of the position and the criticisms of the Frankfurt School
- Clear notes on feminism and post modernism.