B.A. (Hons) Mass Communication- I Year

Subject : Mass Media & Culture Studies

Syllabus

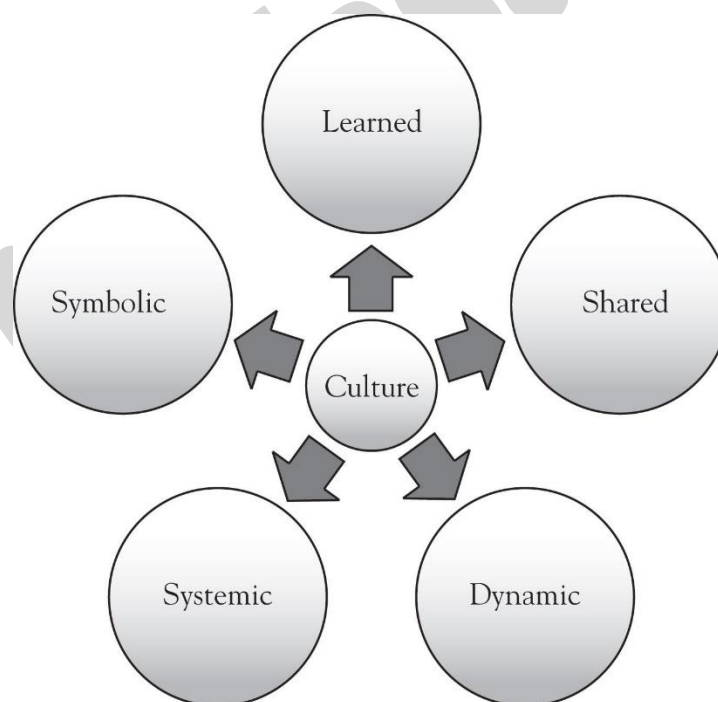| Unit-I	Understanding Culture, Mass Culture, Popular Culture. Different Folk Cultures of India, Relation between Media and Culture
Unit-II	Critical Theories- Frankfurt School, Media as Cultural Industries, Political Economy, Ideology and Hegemony. Theories and its implementation in Indian Culture, Media theories and Indian culture.
Unit-III	Representation, Media as Texts, Signs and Codes in Media, Discourse Analysis, Genres, Representation of nation, class, caste and gender issues in Media
Unit–IV	Audiences Uses and Gratification Approach, Active Audiences, Reception Studies, Women as Audiences, Sub Cultures; Music and the popular Fandom, Indian audience and study on media platform.
Unit –V	Folk Media as a form of Mass Culture, live performance; Audience in live Performance, Media technologies; Medium is the Message; Technological Determinism: New Media & Cultural forms

Mass Media & Cultural studies

Culture consists of the shared beliefs, values, and assumptions of a group of people who learn from one another and teach to others that their behaviors, attitudes, and perspectives are the correct ways to think, act, and feel.

It is helpful if you can think about culture in the following five ways:

- Culture is learned.

- Culture is shared.

- Culture is dynamic.

- Culture is systemic.

- Culture is symbolic.

- *Elements of Culture*

Culture encompasses religion, food, what we wear, how we wear it, our language, marriage, music and is different all over the world.

Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts.

The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition(opens in new tab) goes a step further, defining culture as shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs and understanding that are learned by socialization. Thus, culture can be seen as the growth of a group identity fostered by social patterns unique to the group.

"Culture encompasses religion, food, what we wear, how we wear it, our language, marriage, music,

Mass culture :

Mass culture has been defined in many ways, by many different theorists in sociology, since **Theodor Adorno** and **Max Horkheimer** created the term.

According to Adorno and Horkheimer, who were both members of the **Frankfurt School** of sociology, mass culture was the widespread American 'low' culture that had developed during industrialisation. It is often said to have replaced agricultural, pre-industrial **folk culture**.

Some sociologists claim that mass culture was replaced by popular culture in postmodern society. Others argue that today **'**mass culture' is used as an umbrella term for all folk, popular, avant-garde and postmodern cultures.

Features of mass culture

The Frankfurt School defined the following main characteristics of mass culture.

- Developed in **capitalist** societies, in industrialised cities

- Developed to fill the void left by the disappearing folk culture

- Encouraged **passive** consumer behaviour

- **Mass-produced**

- Accessible and understandable

- Created for the people, but not by the people. Mass culture was created and spread by **production companies** and wealthy businessmen

- The goal is to maximise **profit**

- **The lowest common denominator**: safe, predictable, and intellectually undemanding

There are many examples of mass culture, such as:

- Mass media, including films, radio, television shows, popular books and music, and tabloid magazines

- Fast food

- Advertising

- Fast fashion

popular culture :

Popular culture is the set of practices, beliefs, and objects that embody the most broadly shared meanings of a social system. It includes media objects, entertainment and leisure,

fashion and trends, and linguistic conventions, among other things. Popular culture is usually associated with either mass culture or folk culture, and differentiated from high culture and various institutional cultures (political culture, educational culture, legal culture, etc.). The association of popular culture with mass culture leads to a focus on the position of popular culture within a capitalist mode of economic production. Through this economic lens, popular culture is seen as a set of commodities produced through capitalistic processes driven by a profit motive and sold to consumers. In contrast, the association of popular culture with folk culture leads to a focus on subcultures such as youth cultures or ethnic cultures. Through this subculture lens, popular culture is seen as a set of practices by artists or other kinds of culture makers that result in performances and objects that are received and interpreted by audiences, both within and beyond the subcultural group. Holistic approaches examine the ways that popular culture begins as the collective creation of a subculture and is then appropriated by the market system. Key issues in the sociological analysis of popular culture include the representation of specific groups and themes in the content of cultural objects or practices, the role of cultural production as a form of social reproduction, and the extent to which audiences exercise agency in determining the meanings of the culture that they consume.

Media Ideologies are a set of ideas or beliefs that people have regarding different kinds of technologies. People use their media ideologies to form opinions on media and technology and how it is used. Media ideologies also reflect how one perceives messages via text or messaging.To According to Gershon, people's media ideology influence their understanding of what different forms of media, including phone, text, instant messaging, email, mean. They

associate these mediums with what the message actually means. Misunderstandings can occur when people have different media ideologies. How one views and interprets media ideologies depend on their past experiences with media and technology. They study of media ideologies is not new, but it is becoming more prevalent with the advancement in technology. Since people have the option of what kind of medium they want to use, they are more likely to form media ideologies which may or may not contradict with other people's media ideologies.

Media hegemony is a perceived process by which certain values and ways of thought promulgated through the mass media become dominant in society. It is seen in particular as reinforcing the capitalist system. Media hegemony has been presented as influencing the way in which reporters in the media – themselves subject to prevailing values and norms – select news stories and put them across. The concept of hegemony, first put forward by Antonio Gramsci , refers to the moral, philosophical, and political leadership of a social group, which is not gained by force but by an active consent of other social groups obtained by taking control of culture and ideology. During this process, the leading social group exerts its impact and gains its legitimacy mainly through social mechanisms such as education, religion, family and the mass media. Based on the definition of hegemony, media hegemony means the dominance of certain aspects of life and thought by the penetration of a dominant culture and its values into social life. In other words, media hegemony serves as a crucial shaper of culture, values and ideology of society (Altheide, 1984).

For example, television news departments are considered as extensions of a capitalistic economic order (Hall, 1979). The products of the media contain messages that convey the nature of society, the nature of relation of production within the media and the domain of

institutions and social process (Golding, 1979). Thus it is crucial to decode media to figure out the latent capitalist ideology within the products of the media, and more importantly to realize the role of the media as tools to produce merchandise in a late capitalist economic order.

Altheide (1984) has cautioned against the "uncritical" application of the media hegemony paradigm to television news coverage.

media as text

Media Texts

Print Broadcasting Electronic Media Newspapers & Magazines Flyer / print based advertising Billboard advertising Advertising within other texts Weekend supplements / magazines Film TV Advertising Radio Social networking sites Newspaper / current affairs sites E-mail / communication Web Series Online advertisements

What is the importance of media text?

Text media and information provide a baseline to make dissemination more accurate and more efficient and much faster to keep up with the trend. Text media and information is also important in data gathering and preserving / documenting written oral works, and language translation.

Discourse analysis (**DA**), or **discourse studies**, is an approach to the analysis of written, vocal, or sign language use, or any significant semiotic event.

The objects of discourse analysis (discourse, writing, conversation, communicative event) are variously defined in terms of coherent sequences of sentences, propositions, speech, or turns-at-talk. Contrary to much of traditional linguistics, discourse analysts not only study

language use 'beyond the sentence boundary' but also prefer to analyze 'naturally occurring' language use, not invented examples.[1] Text linguistics is a closely related field. The essential difference between discourse analysis and text linguistics is that discourse analysis aims at revealing socio-psychological characteristics of a person/persons rather than text structure.[2]

Discourse analysis has been taken up in a variety of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, including linguistics, education, sociology, anthropology, social work, cognitive psychology, social psychology, area studies, cultural studies, international relations, human geography, environmental science, communication studies, biblical studies, public relations, argumentation studies, and translation studies, each of which is subject to its own assumptions, dimensions of analysis, and methodologies.

Topics of discourse analysis include:

- The various levels or dimensions of discourse, such as sounds (intonation, etc.), gestures, syntax, the lexicon, style, rhetoric, meanings, speech acts, moves, strategies, turns, and other aspects of interaction

- Genres of discourse (various types of discourse in politics, the media, education, science, business, etc.)

- The relations between discourse and the emergence of syntactic structure

- The relations between text (discourse) and context

- The relations between discourse and power[19]

- The relations between discourse and interaction

- The relations between discourse and cognition and memory

- Lexical density

The Uses and Gratification theory:

The Uses and Gratification theory discusses the effects of the media on people. It explains how people use the media for their own need and get satisfied when their needs are fulfilled. In other words, it can be said that the theory argues what people do with media rather than what media does to people. Also, this theory is in contradiction to the Magic Bullet theory, which states that the audience is passive. This theory has a user/audience-centered approach. Even for communication, say – interpersonal, people refer to the media for the topic to discuss among themselves. By referring the media, they gain more knowledge and exposure to the world beyond their limited eyesight.

There are several needs and gratification for people. They are categorized into five needs.

- Cognitive needs

- Affective needs

- Personal Integrative needs

- Social Integrative needs

- Tension free needs

  Active Audience Theory argues that media audiences do not just receive information passively but are actively involved, often unconsciously, in making sense of the message within their personal and social contexts.[1] Decoding of a media message may therefore be influenced by such things as family background, beliefs, values, culture, interests, education and experiences. Decoding of a message means how well a person is able to effectively receive and understand a message.[2] Active Audience

Theory is particularly associated with mass-media usage and is a branch of Stuart Hall's Encoding and Decoding Model.

▪ Stuart Hall said that audiences were active and not passive when looking at people who were trying to make sense of media messages. Active is when an audience is engaging, interpreting, and responding to media messages and are able to question the message. Passive is when an audience accepts a message without question and by doing so would be directly affected by it. Stuart Hall in his work, Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse (1973), greatly emphasized the relationship of the sender and receiver while looking at various factors of how the message is interpreted. Hall claims that the audience is what dictates whether a message is successful or not and found that an audience is able to alter the meaning of a message to support the social context they are in. As a result, Hall came up with the conclusion that the message encoded by the sender is not always going to be the message that will be decoded by the audience, see Encoding/decoding model. Encoding is what allows a person to be able to understand a given message, while decoding is how well a person is able to understand the given message when received. Hall emphasizes the fact that even though the sender of a message may feel it will be interpreted clearly, the interpreted message is dependent on how the audience understands the given message.

▪ Active audience theory is seen as a direct contrast to the Effects traditions, however, Jenny Kitzinger, professor of Communications at Cardiff University, argues against discounting the effect or influence media can have on an audience, acknowledging that an active audience does not mean that media effect or influence is not

possible. Supporting this view, other theories combine the concepts of active audience theory and the effects model, such as the two-step flow theory where Katz and Lazarsfeld argue that persuasive media texts are filtered through opinion leaders who are in a position to 'influence' the targeted audience through social networks and peer groups.

Reception theory provides a means of understanding media texts by understanding how these texts are read by audiences. Theorists who analyze media through reception studies are concerned with the experience of cinema and television viewing for spectators, and how meaning is created through that experience. An important concept of reception theory is that the media text—the individual movie or television program—has no inherent meaning in and of itself. Instead, meaning is created in the interaction between spectator and text; in other words, meaning is created as the viewer watches and processes the film. Reception theory argues that contextual factors, more than textual ones, influence the way the spectator views the film or television program. Contextual factors include elements of the viewer's identity as well as circumstances of exhibition, the spectator's preconceived notions concerning the film or television program's genre and production, and even broad social, historical, and political issues. In short, reception theory places the viewer in context, taking into account all of the various factors that might influence how she or he will read and create meaning from the text.

The word 'FOLK' has been derived from a German word 'YOLKS' which means the people. Folk Media is media of the people. Though closely linked, both folk media and folklore are very different from each other. Folklore include formats like legends, folk tales, jokes,

proverbs, riddles, chants, costumes, dances, drama, songs, folk medicines and writing on the walls.

On the other hand, folk media is the different means of communications available to rural and tribal people. Folk media is also known by various names like traditional media, indigenous communication system, alternative media, group media and low cost media etc.

Various characteristics of folk media.

- The entire cultural group participates in the activities.

- Folk media operates with materials that are available locally and in quantity that is needed by them.

- Skills required for operations of folk media does not require formal training.

- Since there is participation of all in hence the criteria of quality and quantity participation becomes immaterial.

- The people in the group are responsible for spreading of information.

- The finance is not the criteria in operations of folk media and there is no system of copyrights in the operations.

- Folk media is mostly anonymous.

- The work of the folk media is restricted to specific occasions and audience.

Folk media leaves great impact on the society and instrumental in bringing about social change. Despite the fact that the modem media has reached almost every nook and corner of the society, the folk media has retained its space and operates as a powerful medium to influence the thoughts and attitudes of the masses and also bring about change in the society.

Traditional media proves very useful in curbing superstition and spread of scientific and progressive ideas among people. Since, folk media is popular among masses it has too power to persuade people.

Unlike modern media, folk media operates on interpersonal level and belong to the masses. Mass media on the other hand is owned by few people or corporate houses.

Live performance means any play, show, skit, dance, or other exhibition performed or presented to or before an audience of one or more, with or without consideration.

Live performance may refer to:

- A play (theatre) or musical

- A concert, a live performance (typically of music) before an audience

- A concert performance of opera or musical theatre without theatrical staging

- A concert dance, performed live for an audience.

- Live radio, radio broadcast without delay

- Live television, refers to a television production broadcast in real-time, as events happen, in the present

- Live Performance,

What does *the medium is the message* mean?

The *medium is the message* is an expression coined by Canadian educator and theorist Marshall McLuhan that is often interpreted to mean that the forms and methods (the "media") used to communicate information have a significant impact on the messages they deliver (including the meanings and other perceptions about those messages).

In very simple terms, the expression implies that the form of communication being used—book, podcast, social media post, etc.—will affect the perception of the message that it delivers in some way (even, perhaps, if the same message is communicated with different media).

The saying is often used in the context of media thought to be very influential on society, including forms of media that are thought to have changed—or to have the potential to change—how people experience the world.

For example, the expression may be used in the context of discussion of the social media platform Twitter and how its limitations on the character count of posts influences the way people communicate and perceive messages contained in those posts.

Introduction

Technological determinism is a reductionist theory that aims to provide a causative link between technology and a society's nature. It tries to explain as to whom or what could have a controlling power in human affairs. The theory questions the degree to which human thought or action is influenced by technological factors.

The term 'technological determinism' was coined by Thorstein Veblen and this theory revolves around the proposition that technology in any given society defines its nature. Technology is viewed as the driving force of culture in a society and it determines its course of history.

1. The technology of a given society is a fundamental influencer of the various ways in which a society exists

2. Changes in technology are the primary and most important source that leads to change in the society