

Table 11.2 Summary of sociological perspectives: The media

	Functional	Conflict/Feminist	Interactionist
Explanation of the media and social problems	<p>Functionalists examine the structural relationship between the media and other social institutions.</p> <p>Sociologists using this perspective also examine the functions and dysfunctions of the media.</p>	<p>Conflict theorists focus on the media and how their messages are controlled by an elite group.</p> <p>Feminist theorists address how the media use stereotypes disparaging women and minorities or completely exclude them from media images.</p>	<p>From this perspective, sociologists investigate how the media define our social reality.</p>
Questions asked about the media	<p>How do other institutions affect the media and their content?</p> <p>What functions do the media serve in society?</p> <p>What are their dysfunctions?</p>	<p>Who owns the media?</p> <p>How are the media's messages manipulated?</p> <p>What images of women and minorities are presented by the media?</p>	<p>How do the media define what is newsworthy?</p> <p>How do the media define the public agenda?</p> <p>How do the media define what we believe is a social problem?</p>