**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**Chapter 4**

* What are agents of socialization? What agents of socialization do sociologists identify as particularly important? Which of these would you say have the most profound effects on the construction of our social selves? Make a case to support your choices.
* The United States is a country where sports are an important part of many people’s lives—many Americans enjoy playing sports, while others follow their favorite sports teams closely in the media. How are sports an agent of socialization? What roles, norms, or values are conveyed through this agent of socialization?
* What role does the way people react to you play in the development of your personality and your self-image? How can the reactions of others influence whether or not you develop skills as an athlete or a student or a musician, for example?
* Recall Goffman’s ideas about social interaction and the presentation of self. How have social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram affected the presentation of self? Have there been changes to what Goffman saw as our front and back stages?
* What are the characteristics of total institutions such as prisons and mental institutions? How does socialization in a total institution differ from “ordinary” socialization?