**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**Chapter 6**

* Measuring crime, including property crimes and violent crimes, can be challenging. Often, a single source is not enough to provide a comprehensive picture. What kinds of factors could affect the accuracy of statistics on the incidence of crime? How can a researcher overcome such problems to gain an accurate picture?
* Labeling theories in the area of criminology suggest that labeling particular groups as deviant can set in motion a self-fulfilling prophecy. That is, people may become that which is expected of them—including becoming deviant or even criminally deviant. Can you think of other social settings where labeling theory might be applied?
* Think about some theoretical explanations for why people commit crime—differential association, social control, labeling, and so on. You might conclude that they all make sense on an intuitive level. Yet there is contradictory evidence for each of these theories; that is, some data support each theory, and some data contradict it. What is the difference between seeing intuitive sense in a theory and testing it empirically?
* Why, according to the chapter, has the rate of imprisonment risen in the United States since the 1980s? Why are a disproportionate number of prison inmates people of color?
* Why, according to sociologists, are the “crimes of the powerful” (politicians, businesspeople, and other elites) less likely to be severely punished than those of the poor, even when those crimes have mortal consequences?