**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**Chapter 15**

* How is unemployment in the United States measured? What aspects of this phenomenon does the unemployment rate measure and what aspects does it fail to capture?
* How have U.S. manufacturing jobs changed since the 1970s? What were key characteristics of those jobs in the middle of the 20th century and what are key characteristics today? How is the change socially significant?
* What are the main differences between the formal economy and the informal economy? What are the similarities? What sociological factors explain the existence of the informal economy in the United States?
* What are the main characteristics of a socialist economic system? Where have such systems been found in recent history? What are their strengths and weaknesses?
* What sociological factors explain the dramatic rise of consumer debt in the United States over the past three to four decades? Why should this be of concern to society and to policy makers?