Chapter 1

Discussion Questions.

1. There is great debate whether social sciences, like sociology, can be studied accurately ultimately presenting truly valid and reliable data using the scientific method. Social sciences are often referred to as the “soft sciences” while biology, chemistry, and physics are called the “hard sciences.” Discuss some of the challenges that the social sciences face in using the scientific method.
2. Globalization is increasingly making our world more socially, economically, and politically connected. The economic recession that started in 2007 is a great example of the effects of negative globalization. Discuss whether globalization is overall a positive or negative reality. look at this from several different perspectives, for example, a U.S. perspective versus a third world country perspective.
3. C. Wright Mills’ sociological imagination allows us to link our personal lives with our social world. The example provided in the textbook is unemployment. If Bill is unemployed, is it due to his individual circumstances (e.g., poor employee, lazy), or might it be due to other circumstances such as high unemployment rates due to an economic recession. Discuss the benefits and limitations of applying the sociological imagination to individual troubles.
4. Perhaps one of the most important components to studying social problems is an understanding of the difference between an objective versus a subjective definition of a problem. Discuss some of the challenges to defining problems from an objective perspective.
5. Sociologists conduct research studies as it pertains to social problems in order to understand the underlying issues associated with these problems. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages associated with each type of research method and how Sociologists decide which one(s) to utilize when conducting a research study.
6. There are four theoretical perspectives that are used to analyze social problems. Discuss the limitations associated with each specific theory. Is there one theoretical perspective that would be more beneficial to apply to certain issues? Why or why not?