CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TWO QUESTIONS TO ANSWER.

1. A common explanation for the rise in divorce and delays in marriage in the United States (as well as much of Europe and parts of Asia) is that increasing employment opportunities for women gave them economic independence from the family. Critically evaluate this explanation, discussing evidence both for and against it. Conclude by stating whether, on balance, you think this is a good explanation for family change.

2. Public investment in childrearing (through public policy) is increasing. Discuss the current debate about how much government programs versus families should contribute to childrearing and socialization activities. Make sure that you consider both the costs and benefits of these investments and the targeted population(s). What evidence do you find most persuasive in adjudicating the different positions on the debate?

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TWO QUESTIONS TO ANSWER.

1. The family process model contends that the effects of social structural events or statuses on individual well-being are often channeled through family processes. What does this mean and how does it apply to the link between family poverty and child development? Be sure to summarize basic themes from this line of research in giving your answer. Relative to other, less interpersonally oriented perspectives on the developmental significance of poverty that are more common in sociology, what does this model add to our understanding of economic inequality in the U.S. and what are its shortcomings?

2. Over the past two decades or so, socioeconomic inequalities in the United States have increased. The family is a social institution that is central to the intergenerational transmission of opportunity. Explain how changes in family structure over time—and differentials in these changes by maternal work and education status—may contribute to or ameliorate levels of inequality in the transition to adulthood.

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TWO QUESTIONS TO ANSWER.

1. Family Demographers began to intensively track family change in the 1970s, a line of research that continues to be strong today. Pick a trend in family behavior (e.g., age at marriage, probability of divorce, non-marital fertility) and describe changes in this trend since the 1980s. To the extent possible, include information on how these patterns vary by race/ethnicity and/or educational status. Finally, propose an explanation for the differential patterns by socioeconomic status.

2. The strong multi-generational, extended family network is held in high esteem in American culture. Drawing on historical trends, tracing demographic patterns (e.g., fertility, mortality), and laying out differences by race/ethnicity and social class, answer this question: has this family archetype been as prevalent or as important as our traditional value system holds it to be?