Answer THREE of the five questions.

1. What is stress? Describe the stress response and how its activation may undermine health. Include in your answer a discussion of allostasis and allostatic load. Stress tends to vary by major demographic characteristics like age, sex, race, and SES. Choose one or more of these demographic characteristics and discuss the relationship to stress.

2. What is the stress buffering hypothesis and how is it commonly tested? How might social relationships protect against the ill effects of stress? What other (non social-support) factors have been discussed as playing a similar buffering role in the stress-health relationship? Why have those non social-support factors been considered in this role? What have studies found that have tested these alternative forms of the stress buffering hypothesis?

3. You've been asked to participate in the creation of a community-based survey. Your sections of the survey will focus on stress, health, and mental health. The survey team wants your input on several key conceptual and measurement issues. Drawing on the research literature, please draft a memo with your advice on the following matters:
   A. Given current trends in the literature, what stressors and outcomes will you measure? Which dimensions or domains of social resources should be included in this study?
   B. What is the theoretical rationale for incorporating each of these? What sorts of relationships do you expect to find based on extant findings in the literature?
   C. Which authors or specific studies might offer strong measures of these various domains? What established indices or questions might you use to measure them (not all need established indices, just mention when most appropriate)?
   C. Which stressors might relate differently to various health outcomes (e.g., mortality, depression), and why?

4. In 1988, House and his colleagues published a seminal article in the literature on social integration and health. In that article, the authors discussed various forms of social integration and how they might affect health. If you were to update that article given more recent research, how would you do so? In other words, how has the study of social integration/social support and health advanced since the writing of House, et al.’s Science article? A number of researchers have specified theoretical or conceptual models of stress, social resources, and health. Which do you think are most important? Discuss their assumptions and logic, and summarize the evidence on them.

5. Although many studies document the salutary health implications of social support, not all support is equally beneficial. According to the research literature, what factors (i.e., characteristics of provider and recipient, personality, situational or cultural factors) appear to moderate relationships between social support and health? Some support attempts simply fail altogether, and
some relationships might exacerbate the effects of stressors. How and why do these occur?