Instructions: Please answer three out of the following six questions, choosing one question out of each set of two. You have four hours to complete the exam. Best of luck!

Set A (2 hours suggested to answer one of these two questions):
1. One of the most important and durable topics in the sociology of racial and ethnic relations has been that of segregation. Indeed, Lawrence Bobo described residential segregation as the "lynchpin of contemporary racial inequality." Please explain why segregation is so pivotal — i.e., why it matters, and how it may influence patterns and mechanisms of racial and ethnic inequality. Then review the key measures of segregation, and elaborate the social processes that initially produced segregation in urban settings in the early 20th century, as well as those that have sustained it during more recent decades. Finally, is there evidence of meaningful change in the levels of segregation? If so, to what might this be attributed?

2. William Julius Wilson's classic book, The Declining Significance of Race, set off a firestorm of controversy within sociology, and beyond. One of the key points of contention involved the emergence, size, and durability of the African American middle (and upper-middle) class. How did Wilson define "middle class" in his study, and what factors did he believe were responsible for its expansion? What were the major lines of criticism leveled against his treatment of the African American middle class, and in particular, why did some scholars believe Wilson was being too optimistic over the prospects of this stratum? What kinds of evidence were advanced in these critiques? Now that nearly three decades have passed since the initial publication of Wilson's controversial volume, what is your own view of this debate — i.e., does the weight of the evidence tend to support Wilson, or his critics (or both, or neither)?

Set B (1 hour suggested to answer one of these questions):
3. One longstanding perspective in intergroup relations invokes the role of contact in reducing distrust and animosity, and promoting positive attitudes. Please trace the emergence and evolution of this "contact hypothesis," and discuss the conditions under which contact is thought to be especially helpful in this regard. Then review the various types of evidence (e.g., experimental, institutional, survey; US and non-US; etc.) that may bear upon this perspective. What are the strengths and limits of the "contact hypothesis," and in your view, is this perspective likely to have a significant role in future work on racial/ethnic relations?

4. How have the questions regarding race and ethnicity on the decennial U.S. Census changed in the last 3 or 4 decades? Why have such changes been implemented? Specifically thinking about the 2000 Census results, how have the new questions either helped the research community, or hurt the research community, in understanding how racial and ethnic changes are unfolding in the U.S.? Finally, what advice would you give