Why do we Occupy? Occupy Wall Street is simply a leaderless group of people who get together to discuss pressing issues and make decisions by consensus. There is no hierarchy. The people have enacted and crafted principles of solidarity which are the following:

- Engaging in direct and transparent participatory democracy
- Exercising personal and collective responsibility
- Recognizing individuals’ inherent privilege and the influence it has on all interactions
- Empowering one another against all forms of oppression
- Redefining how labor is valued
- The sanctity of individual privacy
- The belief that education is a human right
- Endeavoring to practice and support wide application of open source

These people want a world that is socio-politically and economically equal. In “This Changes Every Thing—Occupy Wall Street and the 99% Movement, it states that, “GDP has grown steadily, but since the official end of the recession, virtually all of the new income has gone to corporate profits.” The occupiers do not like that tax payers’ money went to bail out corporations, and the money went to giving bonuses to executives, and that students are chained to student loans even though education should be a universal right. More importantly, the occupiers demand a structural change. About 99% of people are chained to corporate America. This structural change, “focused on stopping the corporate domination of policy on everything from energy to transportation to finance. We must begin in our cities and towns, then drive upwards against state and federal frameworks of law that protect decision-making authority of the 1%.

This past spring break I had the opportunity of going to Italy with my family. We were in Venice walking around trying to find our hotel when I literally walked into the Train Workers of Venice that were protesting. I was so excited that I ran up to them and talked to them about their purpose for protesting. They said that the “working man is dead” (picture bottom left) and pointed to a light post across from where their camp was.
Seeing them really solidified with me that the Occupy movement is really a global movement and that people around the world are really receptive and responsive to the crisis at hand.

*Information gathered from Changes Every Thing—Occupy Wall Street and the 99% Movement, in class discussions and personal interactions with the Occupiers of Venice.

*Pictures taken by Samantha DeVito