Social justice is the view that everyone deserves equal rights and opportunities economically, politically, and socially.

OPTION ONE:

Martin Luther King Jr. wrote, on the topic of action and social justice, “We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the vitriolic words and actions of the bad people, but for the appalling silence of the good people” (210). Though Dr. King wrote those words in the 1960s, they still ring true today. For this paper, (1) identify a social issue you are concerned with, (2) specify what role/action you as an individual could or should take to impact this issue, (3) project what will happen if you take said action, and (4) project what will happen if you do not take this action. Keep this in mind: your essay should not be an essay on the social issue, but rather your action or inaction in regard to that social issue.

OPTION TWO:

Barack Obama said, in his 2008 address A More Perfect Union, “So many of the disparities that exist in the African American community today can be directly traced to inequalities passed on from an earlier generation that suffered under the brutal legacy of slavery and Jim Crow... We still haven’t fixed [these inequalities]... The anger is real; it is powerful; and to simply wish it away, to condemn it without understanding its roots, only serves to widen the chasm of misunderstanding that exists between the races” (243-244).

In a well-formed essay, defend Barack Obama’s statement by identifying and analyzing 2-3 specific effects of ignoring or denying the reality of anger. Look at this prompt in terms of cause and effect. The cause is past inequalities; the effect is the current inequalities and anger.

The social issue you encounter can be either one our authors discuss, or a separate contemporary social issue.

OPTION THREE:

Propose your own paper topic rooted in the ideas of social justice and one or more of the texts for this unit. You must have approval from me no later than October 23rd to write on this topic. Draft a thesis and speak to me either during my office hours or via email for approval.

Sink stones, don’t skip rocks.
Paper Prompt #4

English 1310, Fall 2012

Based on both the film Waste Land and the essay by Mohammud Yunus, write a paper discussing one of the following:

a. Is it possible to break the cycle of poverty in America? Your paper could consider the following questions: What resources are available to Americans that are not available to the poor people in the film or reading? What resources and abilities do the poor people of Brazil and Bangladesh have that American poor do not? What should the American government do to help Americans break the cycle poverty? How should individual Americans help those in need?

b. Should Americans change the way they define happiness and wealth? Your paper could consider the following questions: How do you define happiness and wealth? Are rich people inherently happy and poor people inherently sad? What motivates you and your peers? How can American culture redefine happiness and wealth? What would a new cultural ideal of happiness or wealth be based on? How could the fact that our garbage all ends up in the same place open up a discussion of happiness and wealth?

c. How should The United States government address the discrepancy between the rich and the poor in America? Your paper could consider the following questions: Should the United States continue to offer social services to help poor people? Should rich people pay more taxes than poor people? If you were elected President, which social services would you save, eliminate or create?

d. What should middle class individuals do to help the poor in America or abroad? Your paper could consider the following questions: Do people have a moral imperative to help those with less? How could a person change their spending habits in order to help the impoverished? Is it wrong to buy an expensive car or house when you could buy a smaller car and use the rest of the money to help others? Is expecting poor folks to help poorer folks an unfair burden?

e. What are the typical American assumptions about the correlation between economic status and morals? And how should they be changed? Your paper could consider the following questions: Why do Americans have certain notions about the morality of individuals based on their social class? What can be done to change these assumptions and stereotypes? How can you change your behavior or language in order to alter the notion that poverty is somehow related to immorality.

Your paper must be in proper MLA format. I will take off points for incorrect formatting.
Your paper must be about 850 words (3-4 pages).
Your paper must contain an argumentative thesis and topic sentences.
Your paper must contain personal experience.
Your paper must demonstrate knowledge of both the reading and the film.