

Title of BIP: The Decline of International Solidarity: Challenges for Inclusive Societies

General information

Objectives and Description:

This interdisciplinary Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) will explore the decline of international solidarity in an era of profound global challenges. As multiple crises increasingly intersect, creating what historian Adam Tooze has termed a *polycrisis*, the ability of nations to cooperate effectively has come under strain. Climate change, economic instability, rising global inequalities, international mobility, and escalating military conflicts have tested international cooperation, often revealing deep fractures rather than collective resilience.

This one-week intensive course will critically examine the key challenges to international solidarity from a multidisciplinary perspective. It will focus on three major manifestations of the decline of international solidarity which leave the international community ill-equipped to deal with the polycrisis:

- **The restriction of international humanitarian aid**, which weakens support for vulnerable populations.
- **The failure to respect climate agreements**, undermining global efforts to mitigate environmental catastrophe.
- **The failure to uphold international law** with respect to conflict, migration and asylum.

Methods and outcomes:

The course will be led by researchers from across the **UNITA alliance**, representing diverse disciplines in the humanities and specialising in different geographical zones, from the Americas to Europe and Africa. Their academic perspectives will be complemented by interventions from practitioners working on the ground for NGOs and international organisations, offering firsthand insights into the real-world consequences of declining international solidarity and cooperation.

A highlight of the programme will be a **field trip** to Geneva to discover the history of the city's humanitarian action.

The course will be launched on-line with an introductory, ice-breaking session and a synchronous introductory conference. On-site activities will combine lectures with discussion, debates and interactive activities, culminating in a group project. Students will not just gain academic knowledge but also practical skills in advocacy and intercultural communication.

Field of Education: The programme is open to students in **political science, international relations, sociology, languages, and law**.

Target audience / Participants profile:

The programme is primarily aimed at year master's (years 1 and 2) and PhD students in political science, sociology, international relations, languages, and law. Whilst priority will be given to post-graduate students, third-year undergraduate students may also apply.

Priority will also be given to students from **UNITA alliance** universities, though applications from other institutions are welcome.



No of ECTS issued: 4

Language of instruction and requirements: English (minimum level B2 required)

Dates for physical activity: 18-22 May 2026

Location of physical activity: Université de Savoie, campus de Jacob-Bellecombette, Chambéry

Dates for virtual component:

6th May 18h-19h30

13th May 18h-19h30

Virtual Component Description:

The introductory session will allow course organisers from across the UNITA alliance to present themselves and explain the objectives, expectations and learning outcomes of the BIP. Students will also have the opportunity to briefly present themselves and to ask any questions they may have about the programme.

This will be followed up a few days later by a preliminary live on-line lecture by Fernando Arlettaz (UNIZAR) on the topic of international law and refugees. This will not require any advance preparation. It will allow students to understand the principal effects of the decline of international solidarity on asylum policy from a legal and political science perspective. At least 30 minutes will be set aside for interactive debate and discussion.

Organising Board

Receiving/Host university: Université Savoie Mont Blanc, Chambéry, France (Coordinator: Emma Bell)

Sending/Partner universities:

UBI, Portugal: João Terrenas joao.terrenas@ubi.pt

UNITO, Italy: Alessandro Gusman alessandro.gusman@unito.it

UNIZAR, Spain: Fernando Arlettaz arlettaz@unizar.es

UVT, Romania: Sorina Doroga sorina.doroga@e-uvt.ro

Detailed programme

1. Planned activities during virtual component:

Introductory session and preliminary live on-line conference (see above).

2. Planned activities during physical component:

1st day:

The first day will kick off with an interactive ice-breaking session on the topic of interculturality. It will then be followed up by two academic lectures. Late afternoon, students will be taken on a guided tour of Chambéry and will meet local actors in the humanitarian sector.

2nd day:

There will be four lectures from academics and a former project manager with the human rights organisation SOS Méditerranée on the failure of States to uphold international law regarding conflict, migration and asylum

3rd day:

Field trip to Geneva

4th day:

Half the day will be dedicated to two lectures by representatives from the humanitarian organisations Triangle Génération Humanitaire and Médecins du Monde. The other half will be left free for students to prepare the group work and evaluation for the final day.

5th day: Assessment

Group presentations/advocacy work showing how the different topics covered demonstrate the necessity of international solidarity to build genuinely inclusive societies and the possible paths forward in a context of polycrisis.

Application procedure

How: nomination can be sent to mobilite-unita@univ-smb.fr with CV and motivation letter

Deadline to apply: 28th February

What is covered by host university:

All pedagogical and cultural activities, lunches and one evening meal.