We are currently witnessing a resurgence of interest in the concept of solidarity, which had long remained a concept neglected by social scientists. This new development has to do with the increasingly salient difficulties of co-existence in modern societies. These difficulties are addressed in divers currents of analysis, which focus on different issues ranging from multiculturalism to redistributive justice, or from problems of recognition of difference to individual freedom, political democracy and income equality. These issues and problems together define the question that forms the starting point of the line of inquiry this course is intended to pursue through a discussion of different theoretical contributions: “How is society possible?” or “How can we live together in a complex society?”.

A “complex society” is one where multiple and possibly changing identities, be they primordial, class-based or chosen, define both the formation of the individual self and the constituent elements of social life. It is in such a society that the notion of solidarity, which refers to feelings of sympathy and responsibility that promotes mutual support and the willingness to share resources with others, acquires its contemporary significance. What, then, are the societal foundations on which solidarity can be sustained and translated into social relations that would not be hostile, oppressive or exclusionary?

**Course Evaluation**: Each student will be responsible for presenting (and later submitting in written form) one (or one group) of the readings in the course outline. Course evaluation will be based on these presentations and a take-home final examination.

**Office Hours**: **Tuesday, 14:30-16.30, Social Policy Forum**
COURSE OUTLINE

I. Introduction

II. On Solidarity


III. Society and Economy


IV. On Citizenship


V. Basic Structure, Justice and Equality


VI. Beyond the market: Meritocracy, responsibility and social justice


VII. On Culture and Community


**VIII. From Redistribution to Recognition?**


**IX. An Egalitarian Critique of Multiculturalism**


**X. Decline of the Public**


**XI. Cultural Diversity, Globalization and the Nation State**


**XII. Freedom in a Complex Society and its Discontents**


**XIII. Review and Discussion**