Oxford Public International Law examines the history of slavery and its abolition, as well as modern practices of slavery and the current efforts designed to end it.

**Contemporary forms of slavery**
- Debt bondage – remains prevalent in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, & Sri Lanka
- Serfdom – took place in Latin America throughout the 20th century, some countries, such as Haiti, continue the practice of serfdom
- Forced labor – continues to occur in both developing & developed countries
- Forced marriage & trafficking of women – one of the most widely practiced forms of slavery, occurs in countries such as China, France, Ghana, the UK, & the US
- Exploitation, trafficking, & forced labor of children – remains a problem in nations around the world, including China, France, the UK, the US, & Ghana
- Forced prostitution, exploitation of prostitution, & sexual exploitation – the Suppression of Traffic Convention and other international instruments clearly consider the exploitation of prostitution as a form of slavery
- Human trafficking – in 2005 the ILO (International Labour Organization) estimated that 2.4 million people have been trafficked at any one time

**Examples of non-governmental efforts to end the practice of slavery**

**Current legal situations**

**Implementation & Enforcement**
- Mechanisms – national authorities are primarily responsible for the protection of their residents from slavery and slavery-like practices
  - The United Nations
    - Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery – the Working Group became the only UN institution that monitors compliance with the treaties against slavery, operating with a large degree of flexibility
    - Special Rapporteur on Trafficking – place particular emphasis on trafficking of women and children
    - Human Rights Treaty Bodies – implement the anti-slavery provisions of their respective treaties
- Slavery conventions – communication mechanism for high contracting parties and the Secretary General concerning updates on laws and regulations
  - The International Labour Organization – monitors treaties relating to forced labor and worst forms of child labor as well as wages, labor standards, and other worker rights
  - SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution – obliges parties to criminalize trafficking
  - Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings – adopts the Human Trafficking Protocol’s definition of human trafficking, but has a broader scope

**Timeline**

- **69th C. BC** Earliest forms of slavery traced back to Mesopotamia
- **26th C. BC** Egyptians began first mass transit & use of slaves
- **5th C. BC** Serfdom became new form of slavery in England
- **1787** First international human rights non-governmental organization (later known as the Anti-Slavery Society) began campaigning to abolish slavery in Britain; later prohibited slave trade in British Empire in 1807
- **1808** US Congress forbade the importation of slaves
- **1818** France abolished the slave trade
- **1861-1865** End of the American Civil War marked the abolition of chattel slavery
- **1948** UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights prohibits slavery and the slave trade ‘in all their forms’ and the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights prohibits servitude
- **1962** Saudi Arabia made chattel slavery illegal