Course description
Forced labor, human trafficking, and modern slavery are widely considered to be growing problems within the global political economy. This course will investigate the political, economic, and social dynamics that give rise to forced labor, and its role in producing goods for both domestic and global markets.

Economists have long believed that capitalism would eradicate forced labor. Yet, the globalization of production in recent decades appears to have reinforced forced labor rather than diminished it. Furthermore, forced labor is increasing in importance as it feeds into the supply chains of major corporations, generating profits of over $150 billion annually.¹ This course will investigate why forced labor is thriving in the era of globalization, and the role of states and corporations in creating production systems that give rise to it. We will trace the changes in the organization and governance of global production that have facilitated forced labor’s emergence and resilience, and examine the politics and effectiveness of government, activist, and corporate initiatives to combat it. We will consider the business demand for forced labor, why forced labor is more prominent in some industries and supply chains than others, and the individual and systemic factors that shape vulnerability to forced labor, trafficking, and slavery in developed and developing countries and in the global economy.

The course has three key goals: 1) to examine the role of forced labor in the global political economy, and in the supply chains of various industries, including the factors that trigger a business ‘demand’ for forced labor, and a ‘supply’ of people vulnerable to it; 2) to analyze recent public and private governance initiatives to combat forced labor and consider the gaps that allow it to persist; 3) to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of different theoretical approaches to understanding forced labor, and quantitative and qualitative research methods used to study it.

This is a reading and writing intensive course, emphasizing the close and critical reading of texts and persuasive writing. It will run as a student-led seminar. Over the semester students will develop and write an original research paper on a topic of their choice (within the broad theme of the drivers and governance of forced labor in the contemporary global economy, to be discussed with and approved by the instructor). The course will involve a peer-review writing workshop held two weeks before the deadline to submit research papers.

Readings and Course Schedule
Readings will be available on electronic and regular reserves. The books denoted with an asterisk (*) will be available for purchase at the Yale Bookstore. Required texts:
- Electronic journal articles, reports, and primary sources will be available online.

Optional for purchase:

Week 1 (January 19): Introductions, and Historical Roots of Contemporary Forced Labor

NB: We will read this short piece together in class. No advance reading is required for Week 1.

Week 2 (January 26): Definitions: Forced Labor, Unfree Labor, Human Trafficking, and Slavery

Week 3 (February 2): The Global Political Economy of Forced Labor: Understanding Root Causes

Week 4 (February 9): Profit and Risk: The Business Demand for Forced Labor

**Week 5 (February 16): Supplying Vulnerable Workers: Poverty, Migration, and Social Inequality**

**Week 6 (February 23): Forced Labor in Global Supply Chains**

*Primary sources:*

**Week 7 (March 1): Industry Level Variation: Case Studies of Electronics and Shrimp**

*Primary sources:*

**Week 8 (March 8): The Role of States: Combatting or Sanctioning Forced Labor?**
- Mike Davis, ‘Fear and Money in Dubai,’ *New Left Review* 41, pp. 47-68.

**Week 9 (March 29): Slavery as Development Strategy?**

*Primary Sources*

**Week 10 (April 5): The Governance of Forced Labor: Global and National Initiatives**

*Primary Sources*
- United Kingdom, ‘Modern Slavery Act 2015.’

**Week 11 (April 12): The Prospects and Perils of Corporate Social Responsibility**

**Week 12 (April 19): Writing workshop**

**Week 13 (April 26): The Slavery Industry? The Politics of Modern Day Abolitionism**