Course Description
We tend to be ethnocentric in our views of health care organization and policy. A look abroad, however, can provide insights about problems at home. In spite of differences in the organization and financing of their health care systems, most countries share a number of common problems with the United States. First, is the question of deciding - or not explicitly deciding - what proportion of GNP should be devoted to health and welfare. Second, is the problem of agreeing on appropriate criteria to allocate health and social service expenditures. Third, is the problem of how to implement established policies: through regulation, promotion of competition, budgeting, or reimbursement incentives directed at health care providers.

The readings, lectures and class discussions will focus on the organization, financing and performance of health systems in wealthy nations. We begin with a discussion of conventional health system models around the world and alternative perspectives for studying them and evaluating their performance. We will discuss how so much of the literature draws on selective evidence to evaluate health care systems in the U.S. and abroad. Finally, we will study a range of different approaches to the empirical analysis of health system performance in selected nations, and examine the extent to which the available evidence supports or refutes widely shared views of different health care systems.

Required Books

Additional Readings in syllabus are all posted on NYU Classes

Optional Book
Course Learning Objectives

- Analyze conceptual and methodological issues in the study of health systems
- Identify common problems and differences among diverse health systems
- Highlight key features of health systems in OECD nations and other countries.
- Assess the impact of globalization on health system development
- Analyze the U.S. health system from a comparative perspective
- Examine the uses of comparative analysis in learning from abroad
- Present an argument, based on relevant concepts and evidence

Learning Assessment Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Competency</th>
<th>Corresponding Course Learning Objective</th>
<th>Corresponding Assignments</th>
<th>Level of Competency Expected to Be Achieved via the Assignment (Basic = 1, Intermediate = 2, Advanced = 3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use evidence-based practices to improve health system performance, including efficiency, quality of care, patient engagement, and equitable access to services</td>
<td>Examine the uses of comparative analysis in learning from abroad Analyze U.S. health system from a comparative perspective</td>
<td>Position papers Research dossier</td>
<td>3 - Advanced</td>
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<tr>
<td>The ability to present convincingly to individuals and groups the evidence to support a point of view, position or recommendation</td>
<td>Present an argument, based on relevant concepts and evidence</td>
<td>Final Individual Presentation</td>
<td>2 – Intermediate</td>
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### Class Calendar

#### Introduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept 4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Overview of the Field: Comparative Health Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>T.R. Reid’s Global Quest for Better, Cheaper and Fairer Health Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Britnell’s Search for the Perfect Health System</td>
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#### Comparative Analysis of Health Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept 25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>OECD: Spending, Resources and Outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Health System Metrics: A Review of Comparative Performance Literature (I)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 9</td>
<td></td>
<td>No Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Health System Metrics: A Review of Comparative Performance Literature (II)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>What’s the Best Health Care System and How Would You Know?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>OECD: Spending, Resources and Outcomes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### National Exceptionalism and the Temptations of Learning from Abroad: Case Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct 30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Methodological Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Social Insurance: France, Germany and Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>The English National Health Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 27</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>China and India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Cuba and Brazil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Final Presentations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Course Assignments

There is neither a mid-term nor a final examination. I will ask students to complete very short assignments before coming to most classes because the quality of our discussions depends, in part, on the extent to which students come to class prepared! The final assignment involves conducting research on one of the health systems covered in the class. There is no time for a final paper. Rather, this assignment calls for digging deeper into the recent evolution and performance of a health care system and how it compares to that of another nation. The output for this assignment should be delivered in two parts. The first part is due for session #8 and involves a two-page paper defining a research project and assembling a research dossier with all necessary materials to answer the questions posed. Both parts of this assignment must be posted on the appropriate forums of the NYU Classes site for this course.
Grading
Each part of the main assignment (the research dossier) will count for 25% of the grade. The very short weekly assignments, based on your reactions to the readings, should be posted on the appropriate class forums and will count for 40% of the grade. Class participation will count for another 10% of the grade.

Plagiarism Policy: Academic integrity is crucial to the mission of NYU Wagner. Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated since you have all signed an Academic Oath at NYU/Wagner and are bound by the academic code of the school. Please review the NYU policy on plagiarism (posted on Wagner Website) prior to submitting written work:

Outline of Course Topics and Readings

I. Introduction

1. **Overview of the Field: Comparative Health Systems**, Sept. 4
   Required Movie: Front Line: Sick Around America
   Please come to class prepared to discuss: What are common challenges faced by health care systems discussed by T.R. Reid? What questions does T.R. Reid raise, which you would like to explore further?

2. **TR Reid's Global Quest for Better, Cheaper and Fairer Health Care**, Sept. 11
   Required Reading:

3. **Britnell's Search for the Perfect Health Systems**, Sept 18
   Required Reading:
   Britnell, M. In Search for the Perfect Health System, 2015.

II. Comparative Analysis of Health Systems

4. **OECD: Spending and Resources**, Sept. 25
   Required Reading:
   Papanicolas, I. Woskie, L. Jha, A. Health care spending in the United States and other high-income countries. JAMA 319 (10), 2018.

   Optional Readings:


5. **Health System Metrics: A Review of Comparative Performance Literature (I),** Oct. 2
Part I. The World Health Organization and its Critics: Discrete components of performance vs. composite scores/rankings
Required Reading:
World Health Organization, The World Health Report 2000. Health System Performance (Glance at report. It is downloadable from WHO [here](#)) and read the following article summary of conceptual framework in report).


6. **Health System Metrics: A Review of Comparative Performance Literature (II),** Oct. 16
Part II. The continuing contributions of the Commonwealth Fund
Required Reading:


Optional Reading:
7. **What’s the Best Health Care System and How Would You Know?** Oct. 23
   Required Reading:

III. **National Exceptionalism and the Temptations of Learning from Abroad: Case Studies**

8. **Methodological Issues**, Oct. 30
   Required Reading:

9. **Social Insurance: France, Germany and Japan**, Nov. 6
   Required Reading:
   - Ikegami, N. Ch. 1 in his *Universal Health Coverage for Inclusive and Sustainable Development: Lessons from Japan*, 2014.

10. **The English National Health Service (NHS)**, Nov. 13
    Required Reading:
11. **Canada (Quebec),** Nov. 20
   Required Reading:
   S. Lewis. *A System in Name Only – Access, Variation and Reform in Canada’s Provinces.* NEJM. 372(6), 497-500.


12. **China and India,** Nov. 27
   Required Reading:


13. **Cuba,** Dec. 4
   Required Readings:
   **Cuba’s International Health Brigades**


14. **Final Presentations,** Dec. 11