**HPAM-GP 2852**

**Comparative Analysis of Health Systems**

**January, 2025**

Class sessions meet on zoom January 2,3,6,8, and 9. On January 2 and 6 from 10:00am-3:00pm; on Jan 3 and 9, from 9-3pm; on January 8, from 11:00am-3:00pm.

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## 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.

This intensive 5 day J-Term class is preceded by a required introductory zoom session on Friday, Dec.11th (5-7 pm). We will attempt to cover most of the material in the full semester-long class but the approach will be different, of course. The instructor will cover much of the material covered in readings by organizing discussions on the organization, financing and performance of health systems in wealthy nations belonging to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). We focus on health systems for which the Commonwealth Fund has provided data based on their international surveys: Australia, Canada, France, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. We will discuss how so much of the literature draws on selective evidence to evaluate healthcare 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.

In addition to the articles listed below, to which you will find links on Brightspace, I urge all of you to read as much as you can of the books by Paul Dutton and Thomas Rice and Ezekiel Emanuel, over the winter break preceding the class. Inexpensive copies are available on Amazon. You will also find a bibliography on Brightspace for your reference.

## Recommended Books

1. Dutton, P. (2021) *Beyond Medicine: Why European Social Democracies Enjoy Better Health Outcomes than the United States.* Ithaca,Cornell U. Press.
2. Emanuel, E. (2020) *Which Country Has the World’s Best Health Care?* New York, Public Affairs.
3. Rice, T. (2021) *Health Insurance Systems: An International Comparison*, Cambridge. MA. Elsevier. [Link through NYU Library](https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/nyulibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6607135) (https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/nyulibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6607135)
4. T.R. Reid (2010) *The Healing of America: A Global Quest for Better, Cheaper and Fairer Health Care*. Penguin, (optional light reading).

## 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

## Class Calendar

**December 11th, 5-7 PM. Pre-Class Meeting and Introduction**

| Date | Class | Topic |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Jan. 2  Thursday  Morning  10:00-12:00 | 1 | **Overview of the Field: The Case For and Against Comparative Analysis**  **of Health Systems**  **Overview of the Class: Required Readings and Assignments**  Readings:  L. Brown. Comparing health systems in four countries: Lessons for the United States. (2003). American J. of Public Health 93(1), 52-56.  Okma, KG. & Marmor, TR. (2013). Comparative studies and health care policy: Learning and mislearning across borders. Clinical Medicine 13(5), 487-491  Film:  - Fix It: Healthcare at the Tipping Point: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=44ZDpYjKVAU5> |
| Jan. 2  Thursday Afternoon  1:00-3:00 | 2 | **The U.S. Health System in International Perspective**  Readings:  Papanicolas, I. Woskie, L. Jha, A. Health care spending in the United States and other high-income countries. JAMA 319 (10), 2018.  Wolf and Aron (2013). US Health disadvantage. JAMA.309(8).  Dutton, P. (2021) *Beyond Medicine: Why European Social Democracies Enjoy Better Health Outcomes than the United States.*  Introduction: Relative decline is decline all the same. |
| Jan. 3  Friday  Morning  9:00-12:00 | 3 | **Health System Performance Metrics (I):** **The Contributions of the Commonwealth Fund: Discrete Components of Performance vs. Composite Scores/Rankings**  Readings:  Schneider et al. (2021). *Mirror, Mirror: Reflecting Poorly*. New York, the Commonwealth Fund. <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/fund-reports/2021/aug/mirror-mirror-2021-reflecting-poorly>  Updated version (2024):  <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/fund-reports/2024/sep/mirror-mirror-2024?check_logged_in=1>  Required: Mirror, Mirror, A Portrait of the Failing U.S. Health System: Comparing Performance in 10 Nations (https://www.commonwealthfund.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/Blumenthal\_mirror\_mirror\_2024\_final\_v4.pdf)  Schneider, E. (2017). From last to first – Could the U.S. health care system become the best in the world? NEJM 377, 901-904. |
| Jan. 3  Friday  Afternoon  1:00-3:00 | 4 | **Health System Performance Metrics** **(II):** **The World Health Organization and its Critics:**  Frenk, J and Murray, C. (2000). A Framework for assessing the performance of health systems. Bulletin of the World Health Organization, 78(6), 717-31.  P. Musgrove. (2003). Judging health systems: Reflections on WHO’s methods. Lancet 361(9371), 1817-1820.  Coyne, J. and Hilsenrath, P. (2002). “The World Health Report 2000: Can health care systems be compared using a single measure of performance?” American Journal of Public Health 92(1), 30.  Navarro, Vicente. (2002). “The World Health Report 2000: Can health care systems be compared using a single measure of performance?” American Journal of Public Health 92(1), 31. |
| Jan. 6  Monday  Morning  10:00-1:00 | 5 | **The Quest for Better, Cheaper, Fairer, even Perfect Health Systems**  Readings:  McGlynn, E. (2004). There is no perfect health system. Health Affairs. 23 (3).  Appleby, J. (2011). Which is the best health system in the world? BMJ 343, 722-723.  Oliver, A. (2012). The folly of cross-country ranking exercises. JHEPL. 7(1), 15-17.  Emanuel, E. (2020) *Which Country Has the World’s Best Health Care?* Read the Introduction and selections on systems that interest you  Dutton, P. Chapter 1 (France) **or** 2 (Germany) **or** 3 (Sweden)  Rice, T. (2021) *Health Insurance Systems: An International Comparison* (Read chapter on UK, Canada, Sweden, Australia, France, Japan, Germany, Switzerland **or** Netherlands) [Link through NYU Library](https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/nyulibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6607135). |
| Jan. 6  Monday  Afternoon  1:30-3:00 | 6 | **Student Presentations on their Mid-course Exercise and Proposal for Final Assignment** |
| Jan. 8  Wednesday  11:00PM-12:30 PM | 7 | **What’s the Best Health Care System and How Would You Know?** Discussion of readings below; and students’ 1 slide ppt presentations  Readings:  Emanuel, E. (2020). Which country has the world's best health care?  Ch. 12: Who's the best?  -Hsiao, W. (2020). How to fix American health care: What other countries can - and can’t - teach the United States. *Foreign Affairs*.  Part III, Rice, T. (2021) *Health Insurance Systems: An International Comparison*, Cambridge. MA. Elsevier. [Link here through NYU Library.](https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/nyulibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6607135)   * Chapter 13   -Dutton, P. *Beyond Medicine*, Conclusion |
| Jan. 8  Wednesday  1:00AM-3:00 PM | 8 | **Evaluating Health Systems based on Efficiency, Equity and other Performance Criteria**  Part III, Rice, T. (2021) *Health Insurance Systems: An International Comparison*, Cambridge. MA. Elsevier. [Link here through NYU Library.](https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/nyulibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6607135)   * Chapter 14 * Chapter 15 |
| Jan. 9  Thursday  9:00-12:00 | 9 | **Case Studies of Selected Health Systems and Student Presentations**  Part III, Rice, T. (2021) *Health Insurance Systems: An International*  *Comparison*, Cambridge. MA. Elsevier. [Link here through NYU Library.](https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/nyulibrary-ebooks/detail.action?docID=6607135)   * Chapter 16 |
| Jan. 9  Thursday  1pm-3:00pm | 10 | **Case Studies of Selected Health Systems and Student Presentations** |

## Course Assignments

There is neither a mid-term nor a final examination. You will “get out” what you “put in” to this class, as far as what you learn. I ask that you read Paul Dutton’s book, selected chapters from the other books and articles on this syllabus **before** our first class. I also ask that you come to class prepared to discuss questions I will raise about these readings. This assignment, often referred to as “class participation,” is important because it will enhance the quality of our discussions.

There is also a mid-course exercise due the evening before we meet for Session #5. This involves choosing 2 countries among the 10 surveyed by the Commonwealth Fund (CF) in Mirror, Mirror (Session #3) and comparing them along 5 of the CF’s roughly 70 **discrete** indicators (not the **domains)**. Present your results in a Table followed by a one-page discussion in which you explain your rationale for choosing the 5 discrete indicators and what inferences you draw from your comparison. Post on Discussion Board #1 of Brightspace). We will discuss in class during Session #6.

The final assignment involves conducting comparative documentary research on two health systems of your choice. This assignment is not a term paper. It involves the compilation of what I call a Research Dossier on how two health care systems compare to one another with respect to the question(s) you have posed. The output for this assignment should be delivered in three parts:

1. The first part is a one-slide oral presentation for session #7 in which you define a few research questions you would like to explore in your comparison of two health systems. You should state why these questions are important to you and explain your approach to answer them based on finding relevant documents. After our class discussion of your project, please post a 1-page written final version of your oral presentation on Discussion Board #2 of Brightspace by 10PM before session #9.
2. The second part of this Research Dossier involves assembling relevant materials (articles, preferably peer-reviewed, and other materials, possibly tables charts) that provide some answers/insights in response to the questions you have posed. Key sections of these materials should be highlighted in yellow. This compilation of materials you have found should be posted as a Pdf document no longer than 25 pages, on Discussion Board #3 of Brightspace by 10PM before session #9.
3. Finally, the third part of this Research Dossier involves the preparation of a 5-7 minute presentation for our last sessions (#9 and #10) on what you found in response to your question (s) and what you learned from the process. Post a one to two-page summary (<500 words) on Discussion Board #4 of Brightspace by midnight January 13th. This essay should be titled: “What I Found and What I Learned.”

## Additional Sources Beyond Google for Documentary Research Project

-International Health System Profiles, Commonwealth Fund:

<https://www.commonwealthfund.org/international-health-policy-center/system-profiles>

-World Health Organization, European Office, Health in Transition (Hit)Series on health systems worldwide:

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331031353_A_Framework_for_Health_System_Comparisons_The_Health_Systems_in_Transition_HiT_Series_of_the_European_Observatory_on_Health_Systems_and_Policies#fullTextFileContent>

-Countries profiled by WHO HiT Series: <https://eurohealthobservatory.who.int/overview>

-OECD Health Statistics: <https://eurohealthobservatory.who.int/overview>

-OECD Country Health Profiles: <https://www.oecd.org/en/about/projects/country-health-profiles.html>

-OECD Health at a Glance 2023: <https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/health-at-a-glance-2023_7a7afb35-en.html>

## Grading

The mid-course exercise (posted on Discussion #1) counts for 20% of your grade. The first part of the research dossier (posted on Discussion #2) will count for 20% of the grade. The second part of your research dossier (posted on Discussion #3) will count for another 20% of your grade. Your final summary (posted on Discussion #4) will count for another 20% of your grade and is due on January 13th, at the latest. Class participation will count for 20% 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](http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies) (posted on Wagner Website) prior to submitting written work.