Aims & Objectives
This course aims to compare the National Health Service (NHS) in the United Kingdom (UK) with approaches to health in the United States of America (USA). Students will explore differences in the way health systems are funded, delivered, and conceptualized. The course will focus on the NHS but we will also seek to draw on commonalities and differences to the USA. Students will also be introduced to recent health policy developments and a variety of theoretical critiques.

Learning outcomes
By the end of the course students will have:
- Gained an insight into the health service in the United Kingdom, and recent policy developments, and be able to compare these to developments in the US system
- Developed a critical understanding of the implications of different health systems at a population level
- An understanding of the common challenges facing health systems
- Explored the ideology and politics underpinning health systems policies

Methods of study
Most teaching and learning will take the form of lecture and seminar sessions, with new material introduced in the lecture and discussed in the seminar. In addition, workshop activities will be used to help embed some of the more challenging theoretical material. In all cases, students will be encouraged and prompted to contribute to class discussions and develop lines of argument and critical thinking. This emphasis will also be reflected in the assessments. In order to prepare for these, there will be workshop sessions before all assessments so that students have the opportunity to explore complex debates in a supportive environment. It is expected that students will engage in private study outside of class, especially in terms of wider reading, to support their development.

In order to widen the learning activities, there will be a number of invited guest lectures from colleagues who have specialist knowledge in certain public health issues. Towards the end of the programme there will also be a visit to the Science Museum for which students will be asked to interact with and reflection upon a range of material relevant to the history of public health.

Core reading
These sources have been selected specifically for each lecture to introduce specific topics and provide background information. It is hoped that this reading will support you in your learning and help you develop informed opinions about comparative healthcare.
Optional reading

Additional reference material is also recommended that will allow you to explore concepts in greater depth. These references are for those students who are interested and wish to read further. This is optional.

COURSE POLICIES

Contact and Office Hours

Claire is available following class for an hour if you wish to make an appointment.

Classroom etiquette

Students should seek to actively take part in discussions, whilst respecting questions and answers from others. Please arrive punctually for all classes and learning activities. Mobile phones must be turned off during class. Computers can be used during class, but this should only be to facilitate note taking.

Attendance Policy

The attendance policy is written in full in your academic handbook.

In short, attendance at ALL sessions and excursions is obligatory, failure of which will result in an automatic grade deduction.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment outline

1. Short paper A worth 25% of the final grade
2. Short paper B worth 25% of the final grade
3. Class participation (including a class debate) is worth 20% of the final grade
4. The exam open-book and worth 30% of the final grade.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction

Content

This session will provide:

- An overview of the NHS in terms of origins, policies and mechanisms
- A basic introduction to differences and similarities between the NHS and the US healthcare systems
- A critical reading and structured examination of an academic paper on universal health care

Core reading

Optional reading

Additional resources

Week 2: Health Policy: Implications of Recent Health Reforms in the US and the UK
Content
This session will provide:
- An overview of healthcare reform in the US
- An overview of healthcare reform in the UK
- A structured discussion on healthcare developments under Trump

Core reading

Optional reading

Additional resources

Week 3: Applying Social and Political Theory to Healthcare Policy Analysis
Content
This session will provide:
- An overview of left and right wing politics
- An introduction to welfare ideology: positive and negative freedoms
- A set of theory workshop activities

Core reading (and watching)

This video by the Institute of Economic Affairs gives a really effective introduction to Hayek [https://iea.org.uk/multimedia/video/free-market-masters-friedrich-hayek](https://iea.org.uk/multimedia/video/free-market-masters-friedrich-hayek) (warning: this video will make you want to drink coffee and go to Covent Garden). It is part of a whole series on economic thinkers that is both concise and accessible.

**Optional reading**


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**Week 4: Health Care Structure: How is Healthcare Delivered?**

**Content**

This session will include a presentation from a Guest Lecturer – Dr Dianna Smith from the University of Southampton. This session will provide:

- An overview of the structure of NHS health systems at a local and national level, including the role of primary care and secondary care
- An overview of the role of different organisations governing the NHS and comparable organisations within the US health care system
- An exploration of differences in structure between the UK and US systems.

**Core reading**

The Kings Fund (2016) The new NHS: how providers are regulated and commissioned

**Optional reading**

Information on NHS Structure can be found on the Department of Health website [http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/thenhs/about/Pages/nhsstructure.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/thenhs/about/Pages/nhsstructure.aspx)


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**Week 5: Health Financing and Efficiency**

**Content**

This session will provide:

- A comparison of the different funding mechanisms for UK and US healthcare systems.
- An examination of the challenges of measuring efficiency in healthcare
- A furthering of the discussion of the market as a social mechanism

**Core reading**

Please read these two articles together – they take opposing stances on markets and healthcare:

2) Free market ideology doesn't work for health care. By Wendell Potter for The Center for Public Integrity (8/6/15). Can be found at https://www.publicintegrity.org/2015/06/08/17460/free-market-ideology-doesnt-work-health-care

Optional reading

Week 6: High Quality Care: Initiatives to Ensure a Quality Health Service
Content
This session will provide:
- An overview of how both the UK and US systems deliver ‘high quality’ healthcare.
- A critical examination of the concept of ‘quality’ and how it is operationalised in this context.
- A group discussion and a set of workshop activities on Short Paper A assignment

Core reading

Optional reading

Week 7: Behaviour Change and Health: Who Is Responsible?
Content
This session will include a presentation from a Guest Lecturer – Dr Natalie Savona from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. This session will provide:
- An examination of the role of the individual, corporations and the state in improving health
- An overview of Nudge Theory, health promotion and area based interventions

Core reading
Behaviour change, public health and the role of the state – BMA Position Statement December 2012

Optional reading
Week 8: Half term

Week 9: The Role of Primary Care
Content
This session will provide:

- A description and discussion of the role of GPs (general practitioners) in the UK
- A GP's perspective on the changing roles of GPs and their new commissioning responsibilities
- An exploration of the current issues facing primary care (and especially GPs)

Core reading

Optional reading
Forrest C. (2003). Primary care gatekeeping and referrals: effective filter or failed experiment? BMJ; 326:692.1

Week 10: Health Inequalities
Content
This session will provide:

- An introduction to the social determinants of health
- A discussion around the difference between inequalities and inequities
- A description of health inequalities in the UK and the US
- A group discussion and a set of workshop activities on Short Paper B assignment

Core reading
http://www.who.int/social_determinants/strategy/Marmot-Social%20determinants%20of%20health%20inequalities.pdf?ua=1

Optional reading

11: Health Outcomes: Making Comparisons in Health Care
Content
This session will provide:

- An overview of the different types of health outcomes that can be measured and compared
- A summary of population level data available in the UK and the US
- A practical demonstration on how to compare health outcomes and reports

Core reading
Dean, C. What do international comparisons say about the NHS? For the Socialist Health Association (18.1.15)
http://www.sochealth.co.uk/2015/01/18/international-comparisons-say-nhs/

Optional reading

Week 12: Integrated Care
This session will include a presentation from a Guest Lecturer – Matthew Green

Content
This session will provide

- Examples of integrated care policy in the UK and the US
- A class discussion on why integrated care is so important
- A practical exercise on the challenges of designing integrated care initiatives

Core reading

Optional reading

Week 13: Field Trip: The Science Museum

Week 14: Consolidation Session

Content
This session will provide:
• A structured feedback discussion about the field trip
• Preparation and initial work for the Big Debate assessment the following week
• Feedback on assignment 2 and academic writing activities

Core reading and optional reading
Targeted reading in order to prepare for the two upcoming assessments. Suitable sources and authors will depend on the arguments and strategies students are planning to take and will be discussed in the workshops and seminars.

Week 15: The Big Debate (assessed)
Content
This session will consist of:
• A group-work activity aimed at developing well-structured arguments (both for and against) and presentation strategies for a given topic, which will culminate in a class vote.
• A revision lecture summarising the key themes from the course in preparation for the examination.
• Programme evaluation

Week 16: Exam week

Instructor biography
Dr Claire Thompson is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social and Environmental Health Research at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Her primary research interest is exploring dietary practices in low income settings within the UK, which is both the topic of her PhD and the subject of her current research project. Claire has also studied perceptions and experiences of urban regeneration as part of the ORIEL project and is currently working on a Wellcome Trust Society and Ethics Fellowship. Her methodological expertise in qualitative and she is particularly interested in discourse analysis (especially Bakhtinian theory) and exploring different ways of approaching go-along interviews.