

WYNG-Hatton Lecture 2015

THE ETHICS OF REPRODUCTIVE TECHNOLOGIES : SOME TOOLS FOR THINKING

Wednesday, 18 November 2015
6:00 – 7:30 pm

Large Moot Court, Faculty of Law
2/F, Cheng Yu Tung Tower,
Centennial Campus,
The University of Hong Kong

“ It is often said that science makes progress far faster than does ethical thought. The result, we are told, is that efforts to regulate technology always struggle to catch up with developments in laboratories and clinics. New reproductive technologies such as the introduction of therapies to combat disorders of the mitochondrial genome and novel forms of genome editing seem to exemplify this pattern. But what, precisely, are the ethical challenges posed by these technologies, and what tools do we have for thinking about their moral and political implications? Drawing on the UK experience of new mitochondrial therapies, I begin this talk by highlighting the continuing dangers of covert forms of genetic determinism. I move on to address reasonable and unreasonable appeals to ‘slippery slope’ arguments, before concluding with a discussion of how, if at all, we can develop a reasonable understanding of the ‘precautionary principle’, especially when the welfare of future children is at stake. ”



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SPEAKER

Professor Tim Lewens

Philosophy of Science
University of Cambridge

Tim Lewens is Professor of Philosophy of Science at the University of Cambridge, and a former member of the Nuffield Council on Bioethics. His recent books include *The Biological Foundations of Bioethics* (Oxford University Press 2015), *Cultural Evolution: Conceptual Challenges* (Oxford University Press 2015) and *The Meaning of Science* (Penguin 2015). His research has focused on a variety of issues in philosophy and the life sciences, including genetics and justice, the rights and wrongs of efforts to ‘enhance’ the human species, the application of evolutionary theorising to cultural change, and the moral significance of ‘human nature’.