

Med 250B Med Ethics II: The Ethics of Stem Cell Research

David Magnus, PhD

Spring, 2007

Wed 2:15-4:05pm

701 Welch Road, A1113

This course will provide an in depth exploration of the ethical issues involved in stem cell research, particularly human embryonic stem cell research. The course will not cover the research ethics topics covered in the special section of the Responsible Conduct of Research that focuses on stem cells. At the end of the course, students and trainees should have a detailed understanding of the ethical issues and be well equipped to publicly discuss and engage in debates about the ethics of hESC research. Students are expected to attend class and have done the readings prior to class. In addition, students will develop a short essay due at the end of the quarter that defends a perspective on one of the controversies covered in the course.

April 4 Intro to Class—begin intro to ethical theory

April 11 Ethical Theory: Utilitarianism

Readings: Mill, From Utilitarianism; Carritt, “Criticisms of Utilitarianism”

April 18 Ethical Theory: Kant

Readings: Kant, From the Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals; O’Neil, “Kantian Approaches to Some Famine Problems”

April 25 Moral Status of the Embryo: What’s in the Dish?

Readings: Tauer, “Embryo Research and Public Policy: A philosopher’s appraisal”; Strong, “The moral status of preembryos, embryos, fetuses, and infants”

May 2 Moral Status of the Embryo: What’s in the Dish?

Readings: Doerflinger, “The Ethics of Funding Embryonic Stem Cell Research: A Catholic Viewpoint”; Meilander, “The Point of a Ban”

May 9 Moral Status of the Embryo: What’s in the Dish?

Readings: Nelson and Meyer, “Confronting Deep Moral Disagreement: The President’s Council on Bioethics, Moral Status, and Human Embryos;” plus commentaries by Shannon, Green, Robertson, Koppelman-White, Murphy, Sagoff, Marquis, etc.

May 16 Altered Nuclear Transfer and other alternatives to hESC

Readings: Liao, “Rescuing Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research: The Blastocyst Transfer Method”; commentaries by Baylis, Robertson, Holm, Strong, Wasserman, McLeod, Master, Alhoff, and Berry.

May 23 Paying Egg Donors

Readings: McGee, “Subject to Payment?”; Spar, “The Egg Trade—Making Sense of the Market for Human Oocytes”; Gruen, “Oocytes for Sale?”; Magnus and Cho, Issues in Oocyte Donation for Stem Cell Research”

May 30 States and stem cell research

Readings: Magnus, “Stem Cell Research: The California Experience”; Magnus, “Stem Cell Research Should be More than a Promise”; Greenfield, “Impatient Proponents: What’s Wrong with the California Stem Cell and Cures Act?”;

June 6 SCROs vs national board

Readings: Baylis and Robert, “Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research: an argument for national Research Review”; Zettler, Wolf, and Lo, “Establishing Procedures for Institutional Oversight of Stem Cell Research”.

Essays due today