

The Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies is pleased to invite you to attend:

Synthetic Biology: Is Ethics a Showstopper?

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WASHINGTON – Synthetic biology promises to enable cheap, lifesaving new drugs to treat the 350-500 million people who suffer from malaria, and to create innovative biofuels that can help solve the world's energy problems. But the science and its applications are raising questions: Are synthetic biologists playing God? Are these scientists purposely changing the definition of what is life? Are synthetic biology researchers unintentionally equipping terrorists with frightening new biological weapons? And will synthetic biology's expected products and profits be stymied by policymakers and the public who object to researchers' soon-to-be-realized attempts to build life from scratch in a lab?

Arthur Caplan, director of the Center for Bioethics at the University of Pennsylvania, will explore unresolved synthetic biology ethical questions at a January 8 program with Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies Chief Science Advisor **Andrew Maynard**. Dr. Caplan is at the forefront of ethicists, theologians, scientists, engineers, government leaders and civil society groups working to weigh synthetic biology's potential risks and benefits.

Caplan is the author or editor of 25 books and over 500 articles in professional medical, science and bioethics journals. He has served on a number of national and international committees including as chair of the National Cancer Institute Biobanking Ethics Group, and chair of the Advisory Committee to the United Nations on Human Cloning. His most recent book is *Smart Mice, Not So Smart People* (Rowman Littlefield, 2006).

The Rathenau Instituut, a unit of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), describes synthetic biology as the convergence of molecular biology, information technology and nanotechnology, leading to the systematic design of biological systems. The U.S. is considered the world leader in this emerging field of science. Some estimate that by 2015, a fifth of the chemical industry (worth \$1.8 trillion) could be dependent on synthetic biology.

**You must register to attend the event.
Visit www.nanotechproject.org/rsvp to RSVP.**

*** Visit www.nanotechproject.org/caplan/ for more information and webcast *** No RSVP required to view the webcast.

What: Synthetic Biology: Is Ethics a Showstopper?

When: Thursday, January 8, 2009, 12:30 – 1:30 PM
(Light lunch available outside the 5th Floor Conference Room at 12 noon.)

Who: **Arthur Caplan, Ph.D.**, Chair, Department of Medical Ethics and Director, Center for Bioethics, University of Pennsylvania
Andrew Maynard, Ph.D., Chief Science Advisor, Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies, Moderator

Where: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 5th Floor
Conference Room in the Ronald Reagan Building at 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC. For directions see:
<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/directions>

Media planning to cover the event should contact Colin Finan at (202) 691-4321 or at colin.finan@wilsoncenter.org.

To opt out of future announcements email: nano@wilsoncenter.org
Learn more about the Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies, visit www.nanotechproject.org