

SUTER SCIENCE SEMINARS 2020-21

Can I Really Patent That?

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*The patent laws of the United States contemplate that “anything under the sun that is made by man” can be patented. While laws of nature (such as $E = mc^2$) and physical phenomena (such as newly discovered plants or minerals) are excluded, what about patenting genetically engineered organisms or genes that are discovered to cause cancer? Developments in biotechnology over the past 50 years have forced courts to grapple with how to draw the line on what can be patented. Eric will provide a brief overview of this debate and will focus on a 2013 case involving patents to genes that cause breast cancer (*Association for Molecular Pathology v. Myriad Genetics*).*

Eric Rutt graduated from Eastern Mennonite University in 2001 with a degree in chemistry. After working as a laboratory technician at Merck for several years, he pursued studies in law at Boston College Law School. After earning his doctorate, he remained in Boston, where he has practiced law for the past decade with the law firm Wolf Greenfield. His firm handles all aspects of intellectual property, with a focus on patent prosecution and litigation. In his spare time, Eric enjoys reading and spending time with his two girls, ages four and six.



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