Maggie Haberman  
Sun, Oct 6, 7pm

Maggie Haberman has been covering Donald Trump for much of her decorated career as a political reporter—from his decades in the New York City tabloid headlines to his current contentious presidency. The Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, New York Times White House correspondent, and CNN political analyst shares her observations about the Trump administration’s combative relationship with the press, and the changing perceptions of journalism throughout the country. Haberman also discusses her award-winning investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 US presidential campaign, and offers a bird’s-eye view of our divided political landscape, outlining where opportunities exist for compromise and cooperation across the aisle.

David Sedaris  
Sat, Nov 9, 8pm

A master of satire and a hilarious commentator on topics both mundane and profound, David Sedaris brings his beloved stories and essays to vivid life onstage. Calypso, his latest collection of essays, is a New York Times best-seller, and a Washington Post Best Book of the Year. A refreshingly irreverent voice on radio’s This American Life as well as on television’s CBS Sunday Morning, Sedaris is known as much for his distinctive speaking voice and storytelling style, as for his unforgettable prose. As the Times remarked, “He loves audiences, audiences love him, and his readings attract hundreds and even thousands of people.”

Dan Pfeiffer  
Thu, Dec 5, 8pm

Dan Pfeiffer combines wry wit, spot-on political instincts, and formidable storytelling chops in an optimistic exploration of how politics and digital media interact in modern-day America. The former White House communications director, noted political strategist and commentator, and Pod Save America co-host is credited with breaking new ground in harnessing the power of social media during the Obama presidential campaign and subsequent administration. He is the author of the New York Times #1 best-seller, Yes We (Still) Can: Politics in the Age of Obama, Twitter and Trump—a colorful account of how politics, the media, and the internet changed during the Obama presidency alongside the evolution of social media. Far from a jaded insider, Pfeiffer infuses his talks with optimism for America’s political system, and stresses the value and impact of civic engagement.
Cal Performances 2019–20 Speaker Series
Speaker Biographies

Jemele Hill
Thu, Jan 23, 8pm

Emmy Award-winning sports journalist Jemele Hill opens up about her career at the controversial intersection of sports and race in the United States. A staff writer at the Atlantic, Hill was formerly co-anchor of ESPN SportsCenter, and was chief correspondent to ESPN’s The Undefeated, a platform that fused sports, race, and culture. Before that, there was a time when Hill was the lone African-American female sports columnist in the country during her 2005-06 post as a sports columnist for the Orlando Sentinel. The outspoken commentator has been in the headlines for her vocal opposition to President Trump, and discusses the ways that professional sports have become a crucible for national conversations about first amendment and social justice issues.

David Pogue
Thu, Feb 27, 8pm

David Pogue, the New York Times columnist, CBS Sunday Morning tech correspondent, and prolific “how-to” author, leads a journey through the pleasures and pitfalls of our technological world. Pogue’s talk covers subjects as serious as smartphone-driven medicine and as fun and frivolous as e-mail etiquette, modeled after his popular advice-driven columns in the Times’ “Smarter Living” section. The word “talk” doesn’t fully describe Pogue’s playful and free-ranging appearances, which he often concludes at the piano by performing tech-industry song parodies, such as “Don’t Cry For Me, Cupertino” and “I Got an iPhone” (to the tune of “I Did It My Way”).

Laverne Cox
Thu, Mar 12, 8pm

Emmy Award-winning actress and LGBTQ advocate Laverne Cox is best known for her groundbreaking role as Sophia Burset on the TV series Orange is the New Black. The first transgender woman of color to have a leading role on a mainstream scripted television show, Cox tells her own story—growing up in Mobile, Alabama, moving to New York City, and finding the courage to step into womanhood—to illustrate the unique challenges faced by the transgender community. Cox shares her views on race, class, and gender equality, communicating a powerful message of inner strength and self-acceptance.
Jad Abumrad
Sat, May 9, 8pm

Jad Abumrad, the host and creator of public radio’s wildly popular Radiolab program and podcast, digs deep into some of his favorite topics in a talk that combines his signature wit and infectious sense of curiosity. Since its inception on WNYC in 2002, Radiolab has evolved into one of public radio’s most popular programs, broadcast on 524 stations nationally, with its podcast downloaded more than nine million times each month. The show has earned two Peabody awards, and Abumrad has been awarded a MacArthur Foundation “genius grant” for “inspiring boundless curiosity within a new generation of listeners.” No fascinating topic is off-limits here—Abumrad’s programs explore sound, science, history, and the human mind, orchestrating dialogue, music, interviews and sound effects into riveting documentaries that draw listeners into worlds unknown.

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