

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

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Sunday, May 4, 2014, 3pm  
Zellerbach Hall

## Nate Silver



### *The Signal and the Noise*

*Cal Performances' 2013–2014 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.*

NATE SILVER has become today's leading statistician through his innovative analyses of political polling. He first gained national attention during the 2008 presidential election, when he correctly predicted the results of the primaries and the presidential winner in 49 states. In 2012, he called 50 of 50 states.

Mr. Silver has partnered with ESPN to launch a new version of his award-winning website FiveThirtyEight, which applies his trademark analysis to politics, sports, big data, and more. This new FiveThirtyEight allows Mr. Silver and his team—which includes such luminaries as Malcolm Gladwell—to go deeper into a wider range of areas than he covered at *The New York Times*. Mr. Silver's approach to thinking probabilistically is one of the great ideas of our time, and many are eager to watch this idea transform more and more fields. In addition to his work on FiveThirtyEight, Mr. Silver appears on ESPN as an on-air commentator.

In a sense, Mr. Silver is returning to his roots: before he came to politics, he established his credentials as an analyst of baseball statistics. He developed a widely acclaimed system called PECOTA (Player Empirical Comparison and Optimization Test Algorithm), which predicts player performance, career development, and seasonal winners and losers. He is the author of a series of books on baseball statistics, which

include *Mind Game*, *Baseball Between the Numbers*, and *It Ain't Over 'til It's Over*.

His newest book, *The Signal and the Noise: Why Most Predictions Fail—But Some Don't*, is a *New York Times* bestseller. Data-based predictions underpin a growing sector of critical fields, from political polling and hurricane watches to the stock market and even the war on terror. That means it's important to ask: What kind of predictions can we trust? What methods do the most reliable forecasters use? What sorts of things can be predicted—and what can't? Mr. Silver takes us on a tour of modern prediction science, uncovering a surprising connection among humility, uncertainty and good results. It's an essential read for anyone interested in how data can be used to understand the future.

Mr. Silver has written for ESPN, *Sports Illustrated*, *Slate*, *The New York Sun*, and *The New York Times*. His work has been covered by such publications as *The New York Times*, *Newsweek*, *The Huffington Post*, and *Vanity Fair*.

He has been honored by a series of accolades. Most recently, *Fast Company* named Mr. Silver No. 1 of the 100 Most Creative People in Business 2013, and *Creativity* listed him in its Creativity 50 2013. He has also appeared in *Time's* 100 Most Influential People of 2009 and *Rolling Stone's* 100 Agents of Change. FiveThirtyEight.com won Best Political Coverage in the 2008 Weblog Awards.