

Statistics Seminar

DATE AND TIME: Reception/Question and Answer Session: Monday, April 20, 2009, 3:30 p.m.
Lecture: Monday, April 20, 2009, 8:00 p.m.

PLACE: Reception/Question and Answer Session: Pioneer Room, Memorial Union
Lecture: Sun Room, Memorial Union

SPEAKER: Nate Silver
FiveThirtyEight.com

TITLE: How Obama Really Won the Election

ABSTRACT

Nate Silver was already celebrated among baseball fans for developing PECOTA, now recognized as the most accurate system for forecasting how athletes and teams will perform in the future. The University of Chicago economics graduate sold his system to Baseball Prospectus, staying on as a writer and consultant. In 2007, turning to politics, he fed a database with every poll available, along with state demographics and election results from 1952 forward, adjusting for a variety of factors. The model he built simulated elections and outperformed every established pollster in the primary season, and so he launched the political web site FiveThirtyEight.com. By the end of election night, he had predicted the popular vote within one percentage point, predicted 49 of 50 states' results correctly, and predicted all of the resolved Senate races correctly. In addition to running the political-prediction Web site FiveThirtyEight.com and being an analyst and writer for Baseball Prospectus, he writes an *Esquire* column called "The Data."

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