



# News

University News & Information

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California

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## **‘Managing’ Racial Diversity to be Explored in Nov. 3 Talk at Cal Poly**

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Sam Sommers, associate professor of psychology at Tufts University, will discuss the practical, ethical and legal aspects of racial diversity in a free public talk Thursday, Nov. 3, at Cal Poly.

Sommers will present “Examining Racial Diversity: How Situations and Strategic Concerns Shape Intergroup Interactions” from 11 a.m. to noon in Room 328 in Fischer Science Hall (Building 33) on campus.

There are few issues in today's society as important -- and as potentially controversial -- as those surrounding our increasingly diverse social landscape, according to Sommers. But contemporary discourse on these issues often become polarized and even confrontational as the practical, ethical and legal aspects surrounding diversity are considered. In his talk, Sommers will make the case for the importance of studying diversity empirically. He will explore such topics as:

- How a group's racial diversity affects its actual performance
- The circumstances under which interracial interactions tend to go well versus not so well
- How accurate intuition is when navigating diverse settings

The data he presents make the case that context is very important in considering the effects of racial diversity and demonstrates that many assumptions regarding how best to "manage diversity" are misplaced.

Sommers, author of the book “Situations Matter: Understanding How Context Changes Your World, ” won the Saleem Shah Award for Early Career Excellence from the American Psychology-Law Society and received the Lerman-Neubauer Prize for Outstanding Teaching and Advising at Tufts University.

His talk is sponsored by Cal Poly's Psychology and Child Development Department and the College of Liberal Arts' Lottery Speakers Fund.

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