

## Summer, 2020 Alternative Reading List

### How Civility Works

The next book in the 2020 alternative reading list is “How Civility Works” by the law school’s Vice Dean, Keith J. Bybee. The book, published by Stanford Briefs, an imprint of Stanford University Press, is in its first edition.

In this book, Dean Bybee tries to answer the question “is civility dead?” The reason for the question is easy to understand if one reads the newspapers, watches television, or engages in social media these days. Incivility appears to be on the rise and everywhere one looks one sees evidence of a hostility to the opinions and feelings of others that might lead one to believe that civility is no longer an acceptable way of behaving. Dean Bybee disagrees, however, and through a short, yet careful and detailed examination of civility and how it operates, he discloses that civility retains tremendous power and value in society and shows why it remains a vital part of our social interactions.

It took a great deal of persuading to get Dean Bybee to pick his own book for this project. But the topic is of tremendous importance to lawyers, who are often seen as some of the least civil professionals in American society: this book demonstrates why that need not, and ideally should not, be the case. It is also important for you to see that Dean Bybee, like many members of the faculty, is an active scholar who not only teaches and, in his case, works as a full-time administrator within the law school, but also has an extensive scholarly agenda.

Dean Bybee’s bio on the College of Law’s website tells us that “Professor Bybee is Vice Dean and Paul E. and Hon. Joanne F. Alper ’72 Judiciary Studies Professor at the College of Law. He holds tenured appointments in the College of Law and in the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. He also directs the Institute for the Study of the Judiciary, Politics, and the Media (IJPM), a collaborative effort between the College of Law, the Maxwell School, and the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications.

[Dean] Bybee’s areas of research interest are the judicial process, legal theory, political philosophy, LGBT politics, the politics of race and ethnicity, American politics, constitutional law, codes of conduct, and the media. His books include ***Mistaken Identity: The Supreme Court and the Politics of Minority Representation*** (Princeton, 1998; second printing, 2002), ***Bench Press: The Collision of Courts, Politics, and the Media*** (Stanford, 2007), and ***All Judges Are Political—Except When They Are Not: Acceptable Hypocrisies and the Rule of Law*** (Stanford, 2010). His most recent book is ***How Civility Works*** (Stanford, 2016). He is currently at work on a grant-funded project examining the positive uses of fake news.”

A list of focus questions designed to help you get the most of “How Civility Works” is available as a separate document.