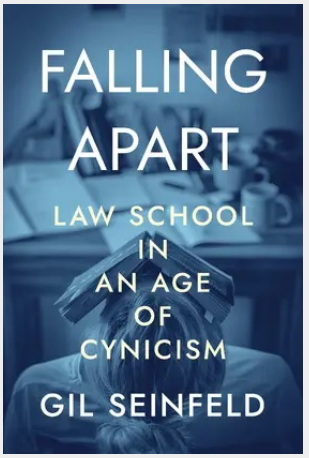
Seinfeld

Falling Apart

Law School in an Age of Cynicism



An unflinching portrait of how mental health and personal identity are reshaping American legal education. Across the country, institutions of higher education are under strain—and nowhere more visibly than in the halls of our law schools. In Falling Apart, Gil Seinfeld offers a gripping portrait of one law school community grappling with two urgent, intertwined crises: the escalating mental health struggles among students and the profound challenges associated with racial inequality and identity-based exclusion on campus. When the pandemic struck, and when George Floyd was murdered just months later, pressures on higher education institutions intensified, exposing the fault lines running beneath academic life and sending these already fragile systems into an even deeper spiral of dysfunction and discord. Falling Apart captures the emotional and institutional toll of a critical moment in history when anxiety, depression, and disillusionment surged—and when questions of race, identity, and belonging came to the forefront of campus life. Yet the story here extends far beyond one school's walls. For the forces at play—deteriorating student mental health, deepening frustrations over identity-based inequality on campus, and urgent calls from students for increased institutional responsibility on both fronts—are bringing change to higher education everywhere. At the same time, Seinfeld endeavors to recalibrate the prevailing narrative in American higher education and the generation of young adults now consuming it. Modern commentary on university life imagines today's students to be both sorely lacking in resilience and overflowing with entitlement. Falling Apart invites readers to adopt a more charitable, sympathetic, and realistic conception of modern university students—one that accounts for the pressures today's students face by virtue of their membership in a society that is beset by historic levels of political polarization, ideological division, and social media toxicity. Falling Apart challenges readers to reconsider what professional education demands today—and what it can and cannot provide.

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