

Tropes of Politics: Science, Theory, Rhetoric, Action



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Reviews

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(Audie Hettinger)

TROPES OF POLITICS: SCIENCE, THEORY, RHETORIC, ACTION

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University of Wisconsin Press. Hardback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Tropes of Politics: Science, Theory, Rhetoric, Action, John S. Nelson, Talk is of central importance to politics of almost every kind it s no accident that when the ancient Greeks first attempted to examine politics systematically, they developed the study of rhetoric. In "Tropes of Politics," John Nelson applies rhetorical analysis first to political theory, and then to politics in practice. He offers a full and deep critical examination of political science and political theory as fields of study, and then undertakes a series of creative examinations of political rhetoric, including a deconstruction of deliberation and debate by the U.S. Senate prior to the Gulf War. Using the neglected arts of argument refined by the rhetoric of inquiry, Nelson traces how everyday words like consent and debate construct politics in much the same way that poets such as Mamet and Shakespeare construct plays, and he shows how we are remaking our politics even as we speak. "Tropes of Politics" explores how politicians take stands and political scientists probe representation, how experts become informed even as citizens become authorities, how students actually reinvent government while professors merely model politics, how senators wage war yet keep comity among themselves. The action, Nelson shows, is in the tropes: these figures of speech and images of deed can persuade us to turn from ideologies like liberalism toward spectacles about democracy or movements into environmentalism and feminism. His argument is that inventive attention to tropes can mean better participation in politics. And the argument is in the tropes evidence itself as sights or citations, governments as machines or men, politics as hardball or softball, deliberations as freedoms or constraints, borders as fringes or friends."

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