Science on Stage: Expert Advice as Public Drama

By Stephen Hilgartner

Stanford University Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Science on Stage: Expert Advice as Public Drama, Stephen Hilgartner, Behind the headlines of our time stands an unobtrusive army of science advisors. Panels of scientific, medical, and engineering experts evaluate the safety of the food we eat, the drugs we take, and the cars we drive. But despite the enormous influence of science advice, its authority is often problematic, and struggles over expert advice are thus a crucial aspect of contemporary politics. Science on Stage is a theoretically informed and empirically grounded study of the social process through which the credibility of expert advice is produced, challenged, and sustained. Building on the sociology of Erving Goffman, the author analyzes science advice as a form of performance, examining how advisory bodies work to bring authoritative advice to the public stage. From this perspective, advisory bodies emerge as performers who engage in impression management: they selectively reveal and conceal themselves, actively presenting some things to their audiences while hiding others "backstage." The book demonstrates that techniques for information control - including stagecraft, strategic self-presentation, and unauthorized disclosures or "leaks" - play a fundamental role in efforts to create and contest expert authority....

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