MR. SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON (1939)

WEDNESDAY June 4th 7PM



The film deemed simultaneously un-American and ultra-American; the film that had US Senators call for the government to restrict films “not in the best interest of our country”; the film that was banned by Hitler and Mussolini for being too democratic; the film that the US Ambassador to the UK recommended pulling from European release for depicting America as its enemies would; the third-best performing film of its decade: **Mr. Smith Goes To Washington** (1939) managed to be everything at once, to delight the public and anger those in power.

Starring Jimmy Stewart and Jean Arthur, reunited after Frank Capra’s You Can’t Take It With You (1938), **Mr. Smith Goes To Washington** is about democracy and all the people who make it up: corrupt, incorruptible, and those stuck somewhere in between. Managing to avoid the saccharine without sacrificing Mr. Smith’s “peak goodness”—in part by throwing an absolutely unrelenting string of obstacles in his path—Mr. Smith pulls no punches but never gives up the faith. That is, Frank Capra’s faith, tempered as it was over the years, that individuals can maintain or regain their goodness in the face of adversity, that one person can make or inspire real change.

Impeccable and elaborate sets, monument shots “stolen” from the government, a sequence by early Hollywood’s most famous montage artist, and impeccable performances make **Mr. Smith Goes to Washington** a stand-out in everyone involved’s careers. Come see the film that caused international political scandal by daring to ask the question: what if a decent guy got into politics?