

**Gentlemen Prefer Blondes** (Howard Hawks, 1953; 91 min.)

Producer: Sol C. Siegel

Cinematographer: Harry J. Wild

Screenplay: Anita Loos & Joseph Fields

Music: Harold Adamson

Art Direction: Lyle Wheeler

Costumes: Travilla

Editor: Hug S. Fowler

**Abstract** (adapted from Netflix.com):

Two American showgirls in the mood for love board a luxury liner to Paris. Engaged to be married, fair-haired Lorelei (Marilyn Monroe) is unknowingly tracked by a private investigator who was hired by her future father-in-law. But the detective only has eyes for her brunette friend, Dorothy (Jane Russell). Based on the story by Anita Loos and the Broadway musical starring Carol Channing, the film features the memorable tune "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend."

**Cast:**

Dorothy Shaw (Jane Russell)

Henry Spofford III (George Winslow)

Lorelei Lee (Marilyn Monroe)

Magistrate (Marcel Dalio)

Sir Francis 'Piggy' Beekman (Charles Coburn)

Mr. Esmond Sr. (Taylor Holmes)

Ernie Malone (Elliott Reid)

Lady Beekman (Norma Varden)

Gus Esmond (Tommy Noonan)

Watson (Howard Wendell)

**Questions for Discussion:**

1. How are femininity and masculinity constructed in *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*? There are several different types of each. Give some examples from the film, and explain how your examples illustrate constructed femininity and masculinity.
2. How would Claire Johnston's approach to *Gentlemen* differ from Sharon Smith's? Find examples from the film to support your points for each approach.
3. Smith argues for more female directors in Hollywood to combat negative images of women in film. Are the main female characters stereotypes? How might *Gentlemen* have differed if it had been directed by a woman? Why or why not? Find examples from the film to support your points.
4. Johnston would consider the film at a deeper level: how the very structure of the film creates meanings and teach us our ideologies and values. What would she say about *Gentlemen*? Find examples from the film to support your points.