



Gesellschaft für Comicforschung

## **“Reproducing Inequality and Representing Diversity: The Politics of Gender in Superhero Comics”**

*Carolyn Cocca (State University of New York)*

Superheroes have delighted and inspired decades of comics readers, but they have also embodied inequalities of gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and ability. As with positions of power across various political, economic, and social institutions, certain demographic groups have been overrepresented while those from more marginalized groups have been underrepresented and stereotyped.

Female superheroes exemplify this underrepresentation and stereotyping, but also have the potential to destabilize norms and binaries to serve as empowering figures. This talk will explore representations of female superheroes, and the multiple reasons as to how and why they have changed—and not changed that much—over time. It will demonstrate the importance of diverse representations that are both numerous and authentic, and also suggest directions for future interdisciplinary and intersectional research about such representations in the field of comics studies.

### **Kurzbiographie**

Carolyn Cocca is Professor of Politics, Economics, and Law at the State University of New York, College at Old Westbury. Her latest book *Superwomen: Gender, Power, and Representation* won the 2017 Will Eisner Comic Industry Award in the Best Academic/Scholarly Work category, and was Honorable Mention of the 2017 American Publishers Award for Professional and Scholarly Excellence in the Media & Cultural Studies category. She is also the author of *Jailbait: The Politics of Statutory Rape Laws in the United States* and the editor of *Adolescent Sexuality*. She teaches courses in U.S. politics, constitutional law, and gender studies and is a recipient of the State University of New York Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching. As Director of her college’s Women’s Center, she obtained and administered a \$200,000 grant from the Department of Justice’s Office of Violence Against Women to train all campus units to have a coordinated and effective response to sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and stalking, as well as establishing educational programs geared toward preventing such violence.