ABSTRACT

THESIS: A Big, Gay, HIV-Friendly TV Show: A Queer Critical Rhetorical Analysis of the Television Series Looking

STUDENT: Spencer William Coile

DEGREE: Master of Arts

COLLEGE: Communication, Information, and Media

DATE: MAY 2017

PAGES: 88

This thesis analyzes discourse surrounding HIV as depicted on the HBO original series, Looking. In particular, it seeks to unpack the ways in which HIV is communicated through its predominantly LGBTQ+ characters. Through a queer, critical rhetoric approach, I examined the first and second season of Looking as well as the made-for-television film of the same name. In doing so, I seek to uncover if this portrayal of HIV provides liberation to those living with HIV and to those who identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. Ultimately, I argue that, while the series offers a fascinating space for HIV to be discussed, mediated texts still have room to grow, insofar as representation is concerned when depicting HIV in the 21st century.