

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.