Abstract
This dissertation focuses on the shifting discourses related to sex and HIV occurring in the wake of the emergence of a recent biomedical HIV prevention technology: a pre-exposure prophylactic (PrEP) pill. The advent of PrEP created public discussions and debates about sexual practices among those at risk for HIV. Concentrating on the meanings of PrEP in the United States, specifically among young people and gay men in San Francisco and Oakland, California, I follow a series of actors to illustrate how PrEP has introduced new discursive positions that produce hope for the future. The language emerging from within communities of PrEP users has the potential to significantly change how people vulnerable to HIV experience social, sexual and romantic relationships. I reflect on the use of narratives and storytelling as methods to instigate changes in the stories that we tell ourselves about HIV. Included in this dissertation are a collection of articles focused on social research on PrEP that represent an evolution in my writings as I work to explicitly integrate social construction philosophy into my research practice.