While many video games have been criticized for being destructive and/or mindless, a relatively new breed of games, the “creation” games, have received praise for their constructive and creative natures. These games, including The Sims and Spore, cast the player in the role of a creator, who doesn’t necessarily “win” or “lose” the game, but instead is challenged to attain a certain level of success and is afforded great freedom to explore and to try new ideas.

Consider the following issues related to this topic:

- One common feature of creation games is the serious investment of time that they require, immersing players into the creative process for several hours at a time. Is this a constructive way of using one’s time, particularly for children and teens, or is this type of game primarily directed at adult players?

- Creation games frequently take a detached approach to player interaction, allowing the user to be actively involved in the actual creation process but compelling players to “sit back and watch what happens” once those creations are complete. What is the appeal of this approach to games compared to the more active role that players assume in action, adventure, and strategy games?

- The variety of creation games includes such diverse themes as species evolution (Spore), sociology (The Sims), gardening (Viva Piñata), filmmaking (The Movies), morality (Black & White), and economics (Railroad Tycoon). What other creation themes might yield viable games of this genre?

All students should come to class on Tuesday, November 13, 2007, prepared to discuss these issues. The two panel members listed above will be expected to lead this discussion. Each panel member should:

- Consider each issue thoroughly, preparing specific examples to support the opinions that will be expressed during the discussion.
- Discuss the issues with other panel members, determining who will be the principal discussion leader on each issue.
- Prepare some brief opening remarks about the issues, as a means to prompt discussion about them.