# Course Onboarding and Student Orientation

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### **Course Syllabus TGE 1257.pdf**

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I received an email from a student preparing to start this class next week; he voiced concerns that he didn't quite understand how to get started or what was expected for Part 1. I'd like to discuss how we might approach assuaging that concern and better orienting students to the course "process," time expectations, and maybe even a recommended weekly schedule outline?  
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Looking at this course design, the student's confusion is understandable - this isn't a traditional ethics course structure, and Part 1 requires immediate engagement with AI tools and personal reflection that many students haven't encountered before.  
Here are some concrete approaches to better orient students:

## **Addressing the "Getting Started" Barrier**

Create a "Week 1 Roadmap" that breaks down Part 1 into daily chunks:

* Day 1-2: Read the course foundations, understand the archaeological metaphor
* Day 3-4: Set up AI tools, practice checkpoint creation with a simple prompt
* Day 5-7: Begin the dilemma identification process using the provided AI prompt
* Week 2: Refine and finalize dilemma description

Provide a concrete "first session" script that students can literally copy-paste to start their AI conversation, removing the intimidation factor of the blank prompt.

## **Time Expectations Reality Check**

The syllabus mentions "semester-long analysis" and "sustained engagement" but doesn't quantify this. Consider adding:

* Weekly time commitment: "Plan for 3-4 hours per week of active work"
* Session structure: "Most students find 45-60 minute focused sessions work better than marathon sessions"
* Part-by-part timing: "Part 1: 2 weeks, Part 2: 1 week, Part 3: 1 week, Part 4: 8-10 weeks..."

## **Process Orientation Issues**

The course asks students to simultaneously:

1. Learn a new pedagogical approach (archaeological metaphor)
2. Master unfamiliar technology (AI partnership)
3. Navigate self-assessment methodology
4. Engage with personal ethical complexity

That's a lot of cognitive load. Consider:

* Separating the technology learning from content learning in Week 1
* Providing a "practice run" with a low-stakes ethical scenario before they commit to their semester-long dilemma
* Creating comparison examples - "This is what a good dilemma looks like vs. what won't sustain analysis"

## **Weekly Schedule Framework**

Students need structure even in a self-directed course. A template like:

* Monday/Tuesday: Reading/framework exploration
* Wednesday/Thursday: AI conversation sessions with checkpoint creation
* Friday: ClickUp updates, podcast listening, reflection
* Weekend: Integration work, documentation

The current design puts enormous trust in students to self-regulate a complex process they've never experienced before. While the philosophical goals are sound, the practical onboarding could use more scaffolding in those crucial first weeks when students are forming their habits and understanding their role in this unusual learning environment.  
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OK. Let's jump into creating the Roadmap.  
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Week 1-2 Roadmap: Getting Started with Ethical Archaeology  
Document  
# Week 1-2 Roadmap: Getting Started with Ethical Archaeology

## Before You Begin: Understanding What You're Signing Up For

This course requires \*\*3-4 hours of focused work per week\*\*. You'll be using AI tools extensively and documenting everything  
This roadmap addresses several critical issues I see in the original course design:  
The "blank page" problem: Students faced with a massive AI prompt and told to "identify an ethical dilemma" often freeze. The roadmap gives them concrete daily actions and a practice session first.  
Technology anxiety: By separating the AI tool mastery from the content work, students can get comfortable with checkpoints and conversation management before diving into personal ethical territory.  
Time management confusion: The course mentions "semester-long analysis" but doesn't help students understand the weekly rhythm or session structure that actually works.  
The false start issue: Many students will pick dilemmas that won't sustain analysis, then realize this weeks later. The red flags/green lights section helps them self-assess earlier.  
However, I notice some potential problems with this roadmap:

1. Still quite front-loaded: Even with daily breakdown, Week 1 is 5-8 hours of work for students who've never done anything like this before.
2. The practice session might feel artificial: Some students may resist the "friendship ethics" exercise as busywork when they want to jump into their real dilemma.
3. Assumes consistent access: The daily structure assumes students can work consistently rather than in larger blocks when their schedule permits.

Would you like me to adjust the roadmap to address any of these concerns, or should we move on to creating additional orientation materials?  
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