<u>Honors Thought</u>

Characters:
-Dr. Professor
-STUDENT 1
-STUDENT 2
-STUDENT 3
-STUDENT 4
-STUDENT 5
-STUDENT 6
-STUDENT 7
-STUDENT 8
-STUDENT 9
-STUDENT W
-SHADY LOOKING DUDE
-OLD PERSON
-BABY

Opening Credits –

Film of the university grounds with opening credits overlaid which concludes with the movie title on screen with students walking into the classroom being shown. Movie title fades when the dialogue is about to begin.

Scene 1: Intro (1st day of class) –

Scene: A slightly futuristic alternative reality of the High Point University HNR 3602 class. In the spirit of using technology to enhance the learning experience, this class has access to a cutting edge, state of the art virtual reality device to bring class discussions to another level by putting students in a fully immersive collaborative simulation based on the collective thoughts of the users connected to the device.

                    DR. PROFESSOR
        "Welcome everyone to the first day of class
        for the semester! Before I start taking
        attendance, is everyone in this room
        supposed to be in HNR 3602 (Neuro)Science
        Fiction?"

                    STUDENTS 1-9
Look around while seated and then stare at the professor.

                    DR. PROFESSOR
"Alright, raise your hand and say 'here'
when I call your name. Student 1."

                    STUDENT 1
      (Raises hand).
"Here."
      (Drops hand).

                    DR. PROFESSOR
"Student 2."

                    STUDENT 2
      (Raises hand).
"I'm here."
      (Drops hand).

                    DR. PROFESSOR
"Student 3."

                    STUDENT 3
      (Raises hand).
"Here."
      (Drops hand).

                    DR. PROFESSOR
"Student 4."

                    STUDENT 4
      (Raises hand).
"Present."
      (Drops hand).

                    DR. PROFESSOR
"Student 5."

                    STUDENT 5
      (Raises hand excitedly).
"Here."
      (Drops hand).

                    DR. PROFESSOR
"Student 6."

                    STUDENT 6
      (Raises hand).
"Present."

(Drops hand).

> DR. PROFESSOR
"Student 7."

> STUDENT 7
(Raises hand).
"Here."
> *(Drops hand).*

> DR. PROFESSOR
"Student 8."

> STUDENT 8
(Raises hand).
"Here."
> *(Drops hand).*

> DR. PROFESSOR
"And Student 9."

> STUDENT 9
"Huh? Oh, here."
> *(Raises hand then drops hand).*

> DR. PROFESSOR
"Very good, looks like everyone is present. There is something that I know you're all definitely curious about. I'm sure you noticed the giant banyan like structure of a machine that is hanging from the ceiling."

> STUDENTS 1-9
Nod in consensus to the statement.

> DR. PROFESSOR
"I figured as much, so let me explain before you start to ask questions about it. This machine is what's going to make this class a remarkable experience. It is capable of taking all of our thoughts and providing us a simulation by using these thoughts as parameters. This class is discussion based, so this machine allows us to test out ideas from our discussions.

Now, the next thing that you're all probably wondering about is how this is possible. Well, the processing power for this device comes from the users' mind. It's an extremely effective method which scales up in power in relation to the amount of users that are connected. As you likely guessed, the helmet above each of you is where the connection is made for you to enter the system. If you're worried, don't be, as this machine has been and continues to be rigorously tested before class to ensure no harm comes about from use of the device. You will be completely safe while in the simulation.

The last thing I would like to touch upon regarding this machine is the initial booting of the simulation. When you put on the helmet you're going to feel as if you aren't in your body for a couple seconds, it's going to be uncomfortable initially but I promise you it's safe. I know that was a lot of information to take in so are there any questions?"

                STUDENT 2
     (Raises hand).
"What do you mean by we're going to feel as if we aren't in our body?"
     (Puts down hand).

                DR. PROFESSOR
"So when you put on the helmet your vision blacks out and your senses will feel as if they don't exist. Obviously your senses don't actually vanish, it just feels like it. Now after those couple seconds of darkness a sort of flash of light occurs and senses return with you being in the simulation that we collectively generated. Did I help answer your question?"

                STUDENT 2
     (Nods).
"Yup, thank you."

                    STUDENT 7
        (Raises hand).
"Has anyone gotten a seizure from the flash
of light or is it not so intense so it
doesn't happen?"
        (Puts down hand).

                    DR. PROFESSOR
"No one has ever gotten a seizure from using
this machine. The flash of light is pretty
dim so we don't end up causing damage to the
eyes."

                    STUDENT 7
"But if someone was to have one then what's
the safety measure for that?"

                    DR. PROFESSOR
"Well I won't be in the simulation with all
of you, I will be monitoring from outside
the simulation making sure the machine is
functioning as intended and that everyone is
safe in the simulation. The machine will
stop the simulation and everyone will return
back to the classroom if something as
serious as a seizure were to happen. Since I
mentioned I won't be in the simulation, do
keep in mind that I will still have audio of
what is said so please make an attempt to
not swear. You'd be surprised how many
students forget about me having audio and
end up swearing like a sailor. Did I help
answer your question?"

                    STUDENT 7
"Yes, thank you."

                    DR. PROFESSOR
"Are there any more questions that anyone
has?"

                    STUDENT 6
        (Raises hand).
"Will these simulations be recorded in case
anyone is absent and needs to catch up on
what was discussed?"
        (Puts down hand).

DR. PROFESSOR
"Yes, these simulations will be recorded. That is one of the nice things about having this machine. Before we had this machine, if you were absent then you had to get a summary from a classmate which may or may not give everything that happened. Recordings get posted the day after the simulation takes place. Are there any more questions?"

STUDENTS 1-9
Glance around the room and remain silent.

DR. PROFESSOR
"Alright, moving on to the course readings. I had you all select three readings prior to our class and you ended up choosing the following three books: *Version Control* by Dexter Palmer, *The Heart Goes Last* by Margaret Atwood, and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* by Philip K. Dick. Make sure you get these three books since we will be reading them in the order I stated. Prioritize getting *Version Control* read first since that will be the first book we end up reading."
         (Looks at the clock).
"Looks like class is ending early today. I'm looking forward to seeing how these simulation discussions play out."

ALL CHARACTERS
Start packing up their stuff and proceed to leave the classroom.

Scene 1 End

Transition: The scene starts to fade out and transitions to the class around their chairs in the classroom.

Scene 2: The Next Class -

Scene: All students are standing next to their chairs, which have headsets hanging above them just out of reach.

These are connected to the machine. DR. PROFESSOR is standing by the device.

                    DR. PROFESSOR
          (To characters 1-14). "Alright class, are
          you ready?"

                    STUDENTS 1-9
Nod and show acknowledgement.

                    DR. PROFESSOR
          "Good. Now, before we begin, I need you all
          to focus on this question related to our
          reading of "Version Control". What would you
          do if you found yourselves in a situation
          like Rachel where reality was just slightly
          "wrong" but you were the only ones who
          noticed? I don't want your answers now, but
          focus on what you would do as you enter the
          device. Your thoughts about this question
          will be used to create the simulation. Any
          questions about what you have to do before
          we begin?"
                    STUDENT 2
(Slightly confused). "So how do we enter the
device?"

                    DR. PROFESSOR
          "Good question. All you have to do is sit
          down in the chair. The headsets above you
          will lower down within reach. Just put them
          on like you would a helmet. Any other
          questions? No? Ok, let's start our Version
          Control discussion."

*Presses some buttons on the device console and it emits a
low buzz.*

                    STUDENTS 1-9
Sit down in the chairs and put on the helmets.

                    DR. PROFESSOR
          "3… 2… 1…"
Presses a button.

Transition: A pinpoint of white light appears in the middle
of the screen and expands outward before fading as the
scene slowly comes into focus.

Scene 3: Version Control (HPU setting) –

Scene: The students are standing in the middle of an
alternate version of the High Point University
international promenade. Two details are immediately
evident: there are no fountains or bricks in sight. They
are replaced with parking lots and concrete, giving the
overall environment a noticeably greyish tone.

                        STUDENTS 1-9
*Look around at the surroundings and at each other. They
engage in small random conversation pertaining to the
situation they are in.*

                        STUDENT 2
    "This is High Point... but what happened to
    it?"
            (Scratches head in confusion).

                        STUDENT 5
    "I'm not sure. Everything just feels
    different."

                        STUDENT 7
    (Excitedly). "Yoooo! We got parking lots
    now!"

                        STUDENT 2
    (To STUDENT 7). "Oh dang, you're right!"

                        STUDENTS 1-9
*Chatter becomes more animated and some students point to
different aspects of the scenery.*

                        STUDENT 8
        (Looks side to side).
    "Uhh guys, where's Dr. Professor?"

                    STUDENT 4
"She isn't in the simulation, remember, she
is monitoring the scene from the device."

                    STUDENT 8
"Ahh, it's weird, I totally forgot about that."

                    STUDENT 2
        (Hands in pockets).
"Soooo… What should we do now?"

                    STUDENT 8
"Well, we are in some kind of group
simulation thing based on a combination of
our thoughts about the *Version Control*
question, right?"

                    STUDENT 4
        (Nods).
"Yup."

                    STUDENT 2
(In agreement). "Uh huh."

                    STUDENT 7
(Interrupting, frantic). "What the heck!
There's no bricks! Where are the bricks?
It's all concrete! Where are the fountains?"

                    STUDENT 5
"It's supposed to be like *Version Control*,
remember, so the world is the same… but
different."

                    STUDENT 7
"Yeah…"

                    STUDENT W
Walks by the group through the promenade.

                    STUDENT 8
        (Points towards STUDENT W).

(To the other students). "Hey look, I don't
recognize her, she's not one of us, so she
must be part of the simulation. I think we
should see if she knows what's going on
here."

                    STUDENT 2
"Good idea. But why didn't she acknowledge
us?"

                    STUDENT 8
     (Shrugs).
"I don't know. She didn't seem to notice us,
so either she isn't surprised by us being
here or she didn't see us. It's odd, we
haven't seen anyone else yet. I think the
device wants us to interact with her. I
think it's how we continue the simulation."

                    STUDENT 4
"Well, I don't have any other ideas. It's
worth a shot. So… Who's gonna say hello?"

                    STUDENT 7
"I'll do it."

                   STUDENTS 2,4,8
Nod or shrug in approval.

                    STUDENT 7
     (Walks up to STUDENT W).
"Hey, what's up with this place? When the
heck did we get parking lots? Where on Earth
are the bricks? Nido would never allow this!
Oh, I'm Student 7, by the way."

                    STUDENT W
*(Looks amused as if STUDENT 7 has told a
joke).*"Student 7, you must be joking."

                    STUDENT 7
(Confused). "Umm no actually. What's going
on?"

                    STUDENT W
     *(Her smile shifts to confusion then
     worry).*
"What do you mean you don't know?"

                    STUDENT 7
"I know things are supposed to be different
here, but fountains and bricks are the heart
and soul of High Point University."

                    STUDENT W
(Nervously). "You really shouldn't keep
mentioning those."

                    STUDENT 7
"Uh, why not?"

                    STUDENT W
     (Looks over her shoulder).
"We don't talk about it… not since the
incident."

                    STUDENT 7
"Ok, now I'm very confused."

                    STUDENT W
(Whispering). "We don't talk about it
because of the infamous brick and fountain
incident."

                    STUDENT 7
"Huh. The brick and fountain incident? What
the heck are you talking about?"

              ALTERNATE REALITY STUDENT
"You know, the brick and fountain incident.
Dont play stupid."

                    STUDENT 7
"I'm not, I have literally no idea what you
are talking about."

                ALTERNATE REALITY STUDENT
        (Sighs).
"High Point University hasn't had any bricks
or fountains since the incident."

                    STUDENT 7
    "What?"

                ALTERNATE REALITY STUDENT
        (Looks over her shoulders again).
"Look, I've already said too much. If you
seek answers, look where it all began."
        (Runs off).

                    STUDENT 7
"Ok…"
Walks back to the group.

                    STUDENT 8
"Well?"

                    STUDENT 7
"I know that this HPU is supposed to be
different because, you know, *Version
Control* and all that, but this is just
strange."

                    STUDENT 2
"How so?"

                    STUDENT 7
"That girl said that there haven't been any
bricks or fountains on campus since the
brick and fountain incident."

                    STUDENT 8
"The brick and fountain incident? Did she
say what that was?"

                    STUDENT 7
"That's the weirdest part, she seemed
shocked that I was unfamiliar with it and
when I asked her about it, She just gave a
nonanswer and told me to 'look where it all
began.' Then she ran off. She seemed so
nervous. She kept looking over her shoulder
like… like someone was watching."

                    STUDENT 2
"Yeah... I got nothing. Student 5?"

                    STUDENT 5
      (Shakes head).
"Nada."

                    STUDENT 4
(Confused). "Where it all began. What is
that supposed to mean?"

                    STUDENT 8
"Well, Roberts is the oldest building on
campus, so technically I guess that's where
High Point began. Or maybe she meant that we
should look where the *incident* began?"

                    STUDENT 7
"Maybe the incident started at Roberts."

                    STUDENT 2
"Well, we don't have any other leads, so
let's check out Roberts."

                    STUDENT 8
"Works for me. Any objections?"

                 STUDENTS 2,4, and 7
Shake their heads.

                    STUDENT 2
"Let's tell the others the plan."
Motions for the rest of the students to come closer.

                              STUDENTS 1,3-9
Gather around STUDENT 2.

                              STUDENT 9
     "So, what are we doing?"

                              STUDENT 2
     "We talked with a student from the
     simulation reality. Apparently there was
     some incident a while ago and because of
     that there are no bricks or fountains on
     campus. That's why there is so much concrete
     and so many parking lots."

                              STUDENT 9
     "That's strange."

                              STUDENT 2
     "We asked for more detail about the incident
     but she seemed very nervous to talk about
     it. She started looking over her shoulders
     and said we should look where it all began.
     We figure that probably means we should look
     at Roberts Hall."

                              Character 9
     "That sounds reasonable."

                              STUDENTS 1,3-9
Show agreement.

                              STUDENTS 1-9
*Begin walking towards Roberts until they reach
the door.*

Scene 3 End

Now for a brief excerpt from later in the film.

Scene ?: The Heart Goes Last (Moral Conflicts)-

                    DR. PROFESSOR
     "Y'all ready for the Heart Goes Last
     Discussion? You all look excited."
*Presses some buttons on the device console and it emits a
low buzz.*

                    STUDENTS 1-9
Sit down in the chairs and put on the helmets.

                    DR. PROFESSOR
     "3… 2… 1…"
Presses a button.

Transition: A pinpoint of white light appears in the middle
of the screen and expands outward before fading as the
scene slowly comes into focus.

Our characters are put into a similar dilemma like The
Heart Goes Last. Their discussion is on good or bad, morals
changing due to a situation, and what they would do in
difficult situations. The class is given a task that they
must complete while avoiding detection. If they are
detected while in the process of completing their task,
then they are threatened with getting points taken away.
The task is to get past a finish line which designates a
safe area. They encounter a simulated occupant that
threatens to report them unless they mug an old person
holding a baby or press a button that steals $5,000 from
that said old person's bank account. The characters are
left with four choices and discuss from there.

                    STUDENTS 1-9
*Look around at the surroundings and at each other. They
engage in small random conversation pertaining to the
situation they are in.*

                    STUDENT 8
     "Alright, so we just need to get to the
     finish line without being detected. How hard
     can that be?"

                    STUDENT 5
     "Don't underestimate Dr. Professor, remember
     she can hear us."

                    STUDENT 3
        (Stares up to the sky).
"We have a lot of respect for you,
Professor. Please don't make this
difficult."

                    STUDENT 4
(To Character 9). "You know pleading for an
easier challenge isn't going to make a
difference right? Either way we're going to
need to just get to the finish line
undetected."

                    STUDENT 3
"It's worth a shot, you never know."

                    STUDENT 1
"Hey, isn't that the finish line right over
there?"

In the distance is a highlighted area that states 'finish'.

                    STUDENT 2
"Definitely has to be it, but there isn't
anywhere to hide so what does it mean to be
undetected?"

                    STUDENT 7
"Well, if this was all about hiding, then
this wouldn't really help with our
discussion of The Heart Goes Last. Their
situation was more about blending in to
avoid detection. I think we should just
start walking towards the finish line and be
ready for anything."

                    STUDENT 6
"Hold up, there's an old person holding a
baby up ahead and there's some shady looking
dude. Don't we need to avoid them?"

                    STUDENT 5
"I don't see any other way to get to the
finish besides having to pass them. Granted
it's really the shady-looking dude that I
think is gonna give us a problem. The old

person with the baby seems to be off to the
side doing her own thing."

Excerpt End

Excerpt from *Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep?* segment.

Scene ?: Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep? (Empathy & Androids)-

                    DR. PROFESSOR
    "Last discussion of the class, let's make
    this DADOES a great one to finish off the
    discussions."
*Presses some buttons on the device console and it emits a
low buzz.*

                    STUDENTS 1-9
Sit down in the chairs and put on the helmets.

                    DR. PROFESSOR
    "3… 2… 1…"
Presses a button.

Transition: A pinpoint of white light appears in the middle
of the screen and expands outward before fading as the
scene slowly comes into focus.

The characters are discussing empathy and rather empathy is
exclusive to humans along with do we accept Androids into
society. Prior to being loaded in, the characters agree to
being randomly assigned to be androids and bounty hunters.
During their simulation, their discussion of empathy is
played out while side objectives of not being discovered
and discovering androids are present.

                    STUDENTS 1-9
*Look around at the surroundings and at each other. They
engage in small random conversation pertaining to the
situation they are in.*

                    STUDENT 3
    "This feels like a game of Among Us but
    without all the venting, killing and tasks."

                    STUDENT 1
"You still play that game? It's so old
compared to what's out now."

                    STUDENT 5
"Can you two focus, we have to discuss
empathy while figuring out who's an android
and who isn't."

                    STUDENT 7
"Hey relax, this is not going to be
something that is easy to figure out. Anyone
here could be an Android and honestly I'm
still confused as to how we detect who the
Androids are."

                    STUDENT 6
"Yeah, for all we know you could be an
Android Student 5."

                    STUDENT 2
"Well since everyone is clearly sidetracked
on finding Androids, I'll start our
discussion. Empathy, what does it mean to
have Empathy and are humans the only ones
who possess it?"

                    STUDENT 3
"To have Empathy I think it means that
you're able to feel for another living thing
and sympathize or understand their
situation. Personally I don't think this is
something that is exclusive to humans."

                    STUDENT 1
"I agree, there are animals that tend to
take care of one another's own children so
what makes humans so special regarding
empathy?"

                    STUDENT 8
"Well when humans decide to sympathize or
understand how something feels, do they get
a survival advantage? The animal example
happens because they want the offspring to
survive whether it be their own children or
another's children. When humans do this it
tends to not even benefit the one
sympathizing or understanding."

                    STUDENT 5
"So we're saying that what makes humans
unique is that we choose to have empathy
even though in some or most situations it
tends to not benefit us. So back to detect
which of us are Androids, if we start asking
questions that should invoke an empathic
response then we should find who among us
are the Androids."

                    STUDENT 7
"But how does that even work here? In the
book there are tests meant to detect them,
do we even have access to these tests?"

                    STUDENT 4
"Um guys, I found the testing materials in
the bag that's near the wall. Will this even
work? Does anyone understand how to
interpret the results?"

                  STUDENTS1-3,5-9
Shake their heads no and start glancing at one another.

                    STUDENT 2
"Guess this is a good time to discuss the
other aspect of this discussion. Do we
accept Androids into society? We clearly
can't tell who among us is an android so
does it even matter who is one and who
isn't?"

                    STUDENT 5
"Of course it matters who is one, in the
book these Androids killed their owners just
to escape and attempted to live among
humans. What's to stop them from killing
more humans?"

                    STUDENT 8
"To be fair, if they were integrated into
society and allowed to live their lifespans
among humans then they most likely wouldn't
kill in the first place. I'm more confused
as to how being an organic being is more
justified than being a created one? The
Androids are also made with organic
material; it's just that they skip the
growing up phase and are fully grown."

Excerpt End