

STUDENT LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

ALIYAR OZERCAN

aliyar.ozercan@uconn.edu

+1 (860) 994-7772

Student Letters of Recommendations

ALIYAR OZERCAN

In this collection, you will find a series of letters of recommendation penned by those who have been at the very heart of my educational journey: my students. These letters provide a unique perspective, offering insights into my teaching methods, character, and the impact I've had on their academic and personal growth. Their words serve as a testament to our shared experiences in the classroom and the mutual respect and understanding we've cultivated over time. As you peruse these letters, I hope you gain a deeper understanding of my commitment to education and the profound connections I strive to build with each student.

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a junior at Lick Wilmerding High School in San Francisco and took a Neuropsychology course at Andover Summer Session taught by Professor Aliyar Özeran. Going into the course, I had little knowledge of the field of neuropsychology but hoped to gain a better understanding of brain anatomy, the inner workings of my own brain, and broader human behavior patterns I noticed in my daily life.

Although Summer Session was only five weeks, Professor Özeran was able to cover a lot of ground, diving into all three of these topics and more, including the effects of drugs like tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and cocaine on the brain, how diseases like Alzheimers, Parkinsons, and Wernicke's Aphasia affect the brain, how humans receive and process input, and brain development through childhood. Professor Özeran was organized and assigned homework that helped me actively learn and understand the material. The syllabus was thorough and clear, and all the readings and supplemental materials provided were easily accessible and well labeled on Canvas. He came prepared to every class and made sure there was never a boring lesson; our class would often springboard from these lessons into discussion and ask questions relating the material to our lives, ethical dilemmas, or stories we had heard. Professor Özeran was consistently thrilled to entertain these questions and always had knowledgeable and fascinating answers. His background in both philosophy and neuropsychology along with clear passion for both subjects allows him to understand and teach a broad range of topics very well. Professor Özeran went above and beyond to make an in-depth and engaging course, providing the perfect level of rigor that allowed me to never feel stressed while learning more than I often do in an entire semester. He helped us learn by relating the material to our lives, explaining not only the neurological processes of the brain, but how these functions affect us in tangible ways. For example, he didn't just tell us to not text and drive, he explained the steps the brain needs to take to switch your attention from the road to your phone and back, using the science of our own brains to show us how dangerous this can be.

I would highly recommend both this course and Professor Özeran as a teacher to any curious student who wants to learn more about the world around them. Regardless of if they have a background in the subject, they will be able to learn a lot from Professor Özeran and will leave the class with a better understanding of their own minds and

Sincerely,
Harper Roberts
Lick Wilmerding High School

To whom it may concern,

I am currently a senior at the Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle in London, and I took a course in Neuropsychology during the Summer Session at Phillips Academy Andover, summer of 2022, with Professor Aliyar Özeran. As an aspiring medical student, I took the class because I wanted to learn more about neuropsychology and the brain in general, knowing close to nothing on the subject. I wasn't sure what to expect as I had never taken a class such as this one before, but I expected an extremely intense and complex course for which I was underqualified.

I soon realized that I had been anxious for no reason, as the course was made for high school students such as myself who had virtually no knowledge about neuropsychology. Over the five weeks of the Summer Session, we first learned about the neuron theory, the nervous system and the basic structures and lobes of the brain. We studied the different areas of the brain in detail, learning about their functions (sensory functions, memory, language) and the effects of damage to these regions through case studies (such as HM) or specific illnesses. We also learned about neuroimaging and neuropharmacology (synaptic activity and drugs). Every lesson and topic had an outline, which made the content organized and easier to follow. Professor Özeran used a mixture of lectures, group discussions and individual or group research projects; this enabled the course to be both rich in content and interactive. Everything we learned about neuropsychology was illustrated by our own personal research and reading, as well as occasionally watching episodes of Dr House that were linked to our course subject. The workload of the class was extremely manageable, with some reading, presentations or research to do before the lessons. The new information we learned in class was confirmed with Kahoot tests, which were meant to be helpful and strengthened our understanding more than tested our knowledge. This course not only taught me about neuropsychology, but also how to research specific subjects and understand scientific papers.

I would definitely recommend this course to anyone interested in neuropsychology, and I would definitely recommend Professor Özeran as a professor. He made extremely complicated subjects understandable, and created a positive learning environment. He made sure everyone participated in the discussions and understood the material. What made this class especially enjoyable was that Professor Özeran tailored the content of the course to the students' interests, including diseases and topics we wanted to learn about into the lesson plan. I had never been in such an intimate (we were only around 15 students) and interactive class before, and I have never had a teacher that took into consideration his students and seemed so passionate about the class topic as Professor Özeran. I am very lucky to have had him as a teacher, and I hope my future classes in university will be as fascinating and enjoyable.

Sincerely,

Leila Saddi

Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle London

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a freshman at the University of Connecticut in the honors program who took the course “PHIL 1104: Philosophy and Social Ethics” with Professor Aliyar Özercan during the online First Summer session that was offered to new incoming students. As an Allied Health major, my strengths academically are in biology and mathematics. For me, introductory philosophy was an option that would fulfill a general education requirement for my particular major. I honestly did not know what to expect when I first enrolled in the course because I never took a similar class in high school and I was not typically the outspoken one. At first, I was intimidated by the coursework, and thought I would never grow to like philosophy. I was wrong, because by the end of the class I gained a new interest in the subject of ethics and I found myself actively participating more and more, genuinely liking the dialogues that were initiated and maintained, thanks to the exceptional way Özercan taught the course.

Over the five weeks of the summer session, I learned about the major foundational stances in philosophy, including those of Aristotle, John Stuart Mill, Jeremy Bentham, and Immanuel Kant, while applying their principles to different moral dilemma scenarios that we as a society face. For every lecture day, there was a new set of articles that had to be read beforehand in order to properly facilitate a discussion about them for the duration of the three hour period. The syllabus provided was organized, and the majority of the articles that were chosen for us to read were well associated with one another, making the transitions from one topic to the next smoother. Throughout a discussion, he would present a starting question, and when I or another student answered, other questions followed. This helped me to think more critically about the moral stance I was taking, in both the hypothetical and real situations presented, and dig deeper into why my opinion or belief on a subject is shaped the way it is. Learning how to explain your reasoning in a complete and logical manner to ensure that your argument is sound is an essential skill, and this class gave me a solid background on how to think and respond in order to achieve that.

I would definitely propose to other students to take this course and I would also highly recommend Özercan as a professor. Whether the student likes philosophy or not, or is daunted by the material as I was initially, I assure them that they will end up loving the topic. The pieces that we had to read were challenging, but not overwhelming or obscure. Highlighting and annotating my comments, notes, and opinions helped me to prepare for the upcoming discussion properly. Participation is key and Özercan ensured that multiple people had their voices heard, consistently building off of their contributions to keep the conversation engaging and interesting. That is especially notable considering the class was fully online via synchronous distance learning. If there was any confusion on a question or scenario he gave, he would always rephrase and clarify. He was straightforward with his expectations and assignments, was accessible if we had questions, and reached out to us with reminders. He is obviously passionate and knowledgeable about what he teaches, wanting to share that interest with everyone and help us succeed in his class. Overall, Özercan instructed the course very effectively and I was incredibly lucky to have him as one of my first university professors.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Abirached
Allied Health Sciences
University of Connecticut - Class of 2025

To whom this may concern,

I am a sophomore at Kuemper Catholic High School in Carroll, Iowa. This summer, I was privileged enough to take a five-week Neuropsychology course during the 2023 Summer Session at Phillips Academy Andover with Professor Aliyar Özercan. I took this course without knowledge of the subject beforehand due to my curiosity about how the human brain works and its effect on our behavior. Considering that I only had a basic understanding of the brain and its functions, I had expected this to be an exceedingly vigorous class, with me having to do research outside of the classroom to follow along in this course and keep up with my peers.

I was pleasantly surprised that this was an unnecessary concern on my part. Everyone had different levels of knowledge on the subject, yet Professor Özercan structured the classes to start at the primary level and build upon that. Beginning at an introductory level helped everyone there, from those starting to learn these ideas to those who already knew and used it as a refresher. The class started with us navigating the brain, which was incredibly helpful as I had limited knowledge of the components of the brain. This task was made easier by learning specific terms such as Right Superior Temporal Sulcus, which helped us navigate to certain portions of the brain. Despite initially seeming complicated to me and my classmates, we quickly understood and grasped the subject, mainly thanks to Professor Aliyar's thoroughness. After mastering the navigation of the human brain, we moved on to the DSM-V and studied research papers concerning neuroscience. After understanding how to find our sought knowledge, we finally dived into the Central Nervous System. Instead of just doing a surface exploration of the purpose of brain functions, we gained a deeper understanding by studying and diagnosing different neurological disorders. Among these topics were Dyslexia, Wernicke's Aphasia, Neglect, Korsakoff Syndrome, Amnesias, and even more. We ended the class with an

exploration of the effects of drugs. We were graded on the research presentations, short exams, and the participation we had in class.

I can say with certainty that Professor Özercan was one of the best teachers I have ever had. His passion for this subject carried over to everyone in the classroom. He would acknowledge and accept all questions, even the ones he didn't know the answer to, which did not occur very often. He would welcome group discussions and use student input. He would take extremely complicated subjects and turn them into something understandable. If there was a lesson students were having trouble with, he would take time out of his night and set up extra hours for people to see him. He would go over any content a student might be struggling with, which I did take advantage of. He made sure everyone participated, and by the end of the course, everyone was comfortable with casual conversations and discussions with each other. Professor Özercan would inquire what content of the course we enjoyed most and would find ways to incorporate more of that topic in our learning. I was lucky to have had such a caring, dedicated, and enthusiastic teacher like Professor Özercan. Due to these reasons and many more, I would recommend Aliyar Özercan and Neuropsychology at Andover Summer.

Sincerely,

Rhyem M. Wendl

Kuemper Catholic High School, Carroll, Iowa

To whom it may concern,

My name is Elisa Gaudette, and I am proud to offer my recommendation of Professor Aliyar Özeran. I am a junior at Sir James Dunn Academy in New Brunswick, Canada. Over the summer of 2023, I enrolled in Neuropsychology with Professor Özeran during the summer session at Phillips Academy. I took the class in order to better understand the brain. I enrolled in the class without prior knowledge of neuropsychology and very little of biology. For those reasons, and the fact that Phillips Academy is renowned for complex and challenging classes, I was very anxious, feeling inadequate and unprepared. My fears were quickly proven unwarranted, with Professor Özeran making everyone comfortable from the first day. Due to his teaching skills and compassionate disposition, allowing students a comforting space to learn and grow, I rapidly developed a newfound interest in neuropsychology.

The course began with an overview of the basics, allowing everyone to gain a firm grasp on simple concepts and allowing people to progress into understanding more complex topics. This included learning about neuron theory, the nervous system, and basic structures and lobes in the brain. With this covered, we then learned how to name different areas of the brain, allowing us to understand scientific papers better when doing research. We then moved on to more complicated topics, studying different areas of the brain in detail. We learned about their different functions and the effects of damage and illnesses. We even researched different case studies, such as HM and Phineas Gage. Then, we covered neuroimaging and neuropharmacology, learning about different imaging techniques and how they work, as well as synaptic activity and drugs. What made this my favourite course was not the material but how it was taught. Professor Özeran taught using a mixture of lectures, examples, and stories. Games such as Kahoot and Jeopardy were used to aid in learning the material. Individual and group projects allowed us to demonstrate our learning and put our gained knowledge into practice. These teaching techniques artfully weaved substantial subject matter with engaging activities, promoting understanding and participation.

I would highly recommend Professor Özeran as a professor. He was deeply passionate about the subject, a passion which he handed down to me and many of his students. He created a positive learning environment, showing up every day with a smile. Though we learned challenging and complex material, Professor Özeran always ensured everyone understood the topics before moving on. He taught and explained complex information in an informative and entertaining way. On multiple occasions, he went out of his way to organize additional classes to help clear any confusion and answer questions. He encouraged thoughtful discussions and made every class enjoyable. I am fortunate to have had him as a teacher. His dedication, passion, and ability to create a positive and organized classroom atmosphere are exemplary. I am confident that Professor Özeran will make a lasting and positive impact on any community he becomes a part of.

Sincerely,

Elisa Gaudette
Sir James Dunn Academy
St Andrews-NB