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Re: Letter of Recommendation (Teaching)  
Ms. Sahar Joakim

To whom it may concern:

For a number of years now I have invited graduate students to teach a class for me on a theme or philosopher of their choosing as a way of providing them with some practical experience in the classroom. Recently, I offered Ms. Sahar Joachim the opportunity to teach Descartes in my Introductory courses. As I was interested in her covering the First and Second Meditations, we both agreed that it would be best to spread the lesson over two class periods in both sections. This allowed her the chance to teach four sessions and gave me a chance to observe her during each session.

Sahar's style was engaging, confident, and animated. She came prepared with a brief handout for the students to complete as she worked through the material and, by doing so, kept the student's engaged. Sahar was in command of herself; poised and confident without being arrogant or unapproachable. On the contrary, she was able to address the students in a cheerful and pleasant manner without diluting the intellectual content of the material. Her understanding of Descartes' lines of argumentation was in keeping with her current standing as a graduate student, if not somewhat better than what might be expected. What was to my mind interesting, however, was that she had no particular fear of developing skepticism as a thematic worthy of serious discussion; something I would not normally expect from someone who has never before stood in front of a class full of *de facto* skeptics. Rather than downplay or even fight against skepticism, as many graduate students are apt to do, she took it by the horns and allowed the students some free-play with the idea before reasserting herself and responding to the lines of thought that arose.

All in all, I would have to say that Sahar just is the very best graduate student teacher I have observed in the roughly fifteen or so years I have been doing this. I am quite confident she will perform very well when given her first actual course and will continue to grow in competence and skill as she learns from her experiences.

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