“Culture and Human Behavior” was a three-week pre-college course that introduced students to several major debates within cultural anthropology. The central goal was for students to question common assumptions about human behavior and the human psyche by examining cultures with radically different ideas of the self, personality, and cognition. Issues considered included the roles of biology and society in human development; different cultural approaches to thinking about gender; and the social construction of emotions. In addition to reading about other cultures, students engaged in active anthropological research in a variety of local settings near Providence, including a daycare center, a shopping mall, and a minor league baseball game. Through this research, they furthered their understanding of how behavioral differences are constructed. They also developed a number of anthropological research skills, including participant observation and ethnographic interviewing.

John Doe’s performance in this course did not reflect his best work. While he occasionally contributed insightful comments to the class discussion, he did not seem to be engaged in class. John is very bright and talented; he can probably get by with little studying and preparation. However, he will find it challenging to produce distinctive work if he chooses to take the easy path. With regard to written work, John’s responses to the discussion questions could have been strengthened by doing a closer reading of anthropological texts, provide more examples and analyses. John’s research report on [insert topic] was a good draft, but it too could have been strengthened by expanding on his ideas and using primary sources. John is an intellectually curious student, but he needs to apply himself more. I am confident that John will make very valuable contributions both in and outside of the classroom when he attends college if he can apply what he has learned from his experience in the Summer@Brown Program and embrace opportunities to take responsibility for his learning.

John has not met the requirements of the course and will not receive a certificate of completion.