Fenice Thompson  
Class of '18

What made you decide to apply as an Undergrad Teaching Fellow (UTF)?
I applied to UTF after Lisa Jackson-Schebetta brought the Black lives matter class to my attention. She sent Brenden and myself an email inquiring about our interest in getting involved in the class.

How did you choose which class you wanted to UTF?
I chose the class I wanted again, through Lisa JS because I already knew what I was intending to teach even before completing the application.

How important is your mentor to this whole process?
Lisa has been incredibly helpful through this process. I had only been at the University of Pittsburgh for a semester at that point (I was a transfer from Point Park) so I didn't know much about the department. I was completely unaware that we could be compensated for our work until Lisa sent the teaching fellowship applications our way (Brenden and I). Without her I would not have been teaching the class nor would I have the honor of being compensated for it.

What have you learned about being an instructor during this process?
I've learned that I am much more capable than I thought in terms of my ability to teach a lot of content efficiently and effectively. I've always enjoyed discussing social issues. I feel honored to be able to teach my peers about the black lives matter movement & very honored to learn from them as well.

What are the job responsibilities associated with your UTF?  
Are you able to have input in the direction of the class?
What do you think of the other undergrad students’ reactions to you during the course of the semester?
Based on the nature of our class - being a black lives matter class - Brenden and I have a lot more say in the content and the trajectory of the classes than most TAs would because we bring experience to the table that even Lisa doesn't have, as we face the reality of what it is to be black in America every day. I think the reactions from my peers have been lovely. They treat me as a teacher and not just as an equal (because there's a level of respect that has to be there) and I very feel that they listen to what I have to say & trust what I have to say.

Would you apply to UTF again?
I would definitely apply to UTF again. If I had the opportunity to teach another class that addresses important sociopolitical issues, why not get compensated for it. Haha. College is expensive and I think that if you're giving to the academic community through teaching you should be compensated for your work in some way - though I would absolutely do it for free.