



Universidad de Buenos Aires
Facultad de Derecho

Exercise N°		Professor´s Name	Mark
Part I	1. Reading Comp.	.....	..../20
	2. Paraphrasing	.....	..../30
	Total Part I (Min. 26)		..../50
Part II	3. Essay	.....	..../50
	Recorrection	.....	..../50
	Essay Final Mark (do NOT fill in)	.....	..../50
	Total Part II (Min.26)		..../50

CARRERA DE TRADUCTOR PÚBLICO - ENTRANCE EXAMINATION - MAYO 2019

NOMBRE y APELLIDO:

N° de ORDEN: (NO es el DNI)..... **PAPER 1**

Free money wouldn't make people lazy – but it could revolutionise work

The danger of so-called “free money” not only underpins critiques of universal basic income (UBI), but also the incredibly strong narratives that underlie the attitudes to work in the UK (and elsewhere) – and our unemployment benefit system. Paid employment is held up as one of the ultimate markers of being a valuable member of society, with those not in paid work (always described in these narratives as a voluntary position, rather than as the result of issues outside their control) seen as a drain on society. Those out of work are positioned in direct contrast to those in paid employment: the shirkers versus the strivers, the “welfare dependent” versus the hardworking families.

For those in paid work, working hard and being constantly busy are worn as a badge of pride, and there are whole industries promising to make us more productive and efficient. For some, hard work is enforced through workplace monitoring, impossibly short breaks or expectations of staff being “always on”, for example responding to emails outside work hours. Work is idealised as providing meaning in our lives, while at the same time removing us from other sources of meaning, such as family, friends and our communities, through long hours and unpaid overtime. The negative psychological, social and physical effects of these narratives and assumptions are now being investigated, and the centrality of work in our lives and society questioned.

The notion that paid employment is the cure to all ills has been seriously undermined, if it were ever true. Work as the best route out of poverty may still hold true for some, but the majority of households in poverty in the UK are now consistently those with at least one person in work. The likelihood of people becoming stuck in low-wage, low-skilled work is significant, and hard work among the lower paid is doing nothing to reduce economic inequalities. Coupled with the potential threat to many jobs and industries from automation and AI (although we need to be careful not to overstate this), the relentless prioritisation of paid work seems less defensible.

Whether we derive meaning from employment, or find ourselves engaged in meaningless “bullshit jobs” as David Graeber suggests, we cannot deny that the world of work is changing. Climate change, mass migration and continued technological change will all have impacts on what “work” means and looks like in ways that we cannot accurately predict.

For its proponents, a UBI can provide a lifejacket and a route through some of these challenges. A UBI could provide a stable income floor, a guaranteed minimum below which no one would fall.

Depending on the amount paid, it could enable low-paid workers to turn down the worst jobs on offer, or enable time away from paid work to retrain, or start a business. It would financially compensate those (usually women) caring for family for their work, support more people to be creative, to volunteer, or simply to do nothing.

A UBI is not designed to promote “laziness” or any other type of behaviour, simply to allow individuals to make their own decisions about how they wish to spend their time. The pure idea of a UBI does not hold any inherent position when it comes to paid work, but promises freedom and choice. As far back as the 1880s, in the work of Paul Lafargue, the right of workers (as opposed to the rich) to be lazy was framed as an explicit rejection of the dominant work ethic, and the route to true independence, free from the pressure to work. The refusal to participate in paid employment is still considered by some as an active strategy of resistance to neoliberalism. A UBI as a way to live securely without paid employment features regularly in mainly leftwing discussions about post-work, interrogating the centrality of paid employment in our lives and societies, and our ability to liberate ourselves, or be liberated from, our roles as paid workers.

In reality, the likelihood of any western country introducing a UBI at a rate to enable the average worker to entirely opt out of paid employment is extremely low (in Finland, participants received €560 (£475) a month, in Ontario, participants were guaranteed a minimum income of \$16,989 (£13,185) a year). Most of the current trials around the world actively frame UBI as a pro-employment policy, smoothing the sharp edges of benefit systems and the insecurities of the modern labour market, to make paid employment more feasible, attractive and sustainable. The utopian vision of a life of leisure in which a UBI offers us a comfortable standard of living is not about to become reality, but the ideas of working less, and receiving a stable, humane basic income are gaining traction and starting to influence debate in ways unthinkable even 10 years ago.

PART I (Minimum Passing Mark: 26 points)

PAPER 1

1. READING COMPREHENSION

For each question below circle the one right option:

1. The UK unemployment benefit system is highly criticized by those who support “free money” schemes.
 - A. True
 - B. False
 - C. Not stated
2. According to the author, there are people who decide not to earn a salary.
 - A. True
 - B. False
 - C. Not stated

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3. For some, work proves to be a source of satisfaction, despite its ever-increasing demands.
 - A. True
 - B. False
 - C. Not stated
4. In the UK, the inequality gap has widened as a result of poor working conditions.
 - A. True
 - B. False
 - C. Not stated
5. The arguments in favour of paid work are outnumbering the arguments against it.
 - A. True
 - B. False
 - C. Not stated
6. Phenomena such as global warming and mass migration are to blame for the rising unemployment levels.
 - A. True
 - B. False
 - C. Not stated
7. UBI supporters claim that the additional income would result in the increase of jobs available and training opportunities for all.
 - A. True
 - B. False
 - C. Not stated
8. Paul Lafargue argued that despite its oppressing nature, work is the only route to freedom and independence.
 - A. True
 - B. False
 - C. Not stated
9. If successfully implemented, introducing a UBI will enable workers not to choose paid work.
 - A. True
 - B. False
 - C. Not stated
10. According to the author, a significant advance has been made in terms of UBI discussions.
 - A. True
 - B. False
 - C. Not stated

2 points each TOTAL ...../20

2. USE OF ENGLISH: PARAPHRASING

**Use the words in brackets somewhere in the sentence and/or the given beginnings.
DO NOT change the meaning.**

- a. Consumption levels would have plummeted but for the government's implementation of an assistance plan. **(implemented)**

Had

.....

- b. Modern societies can build social safety programs provided the latter strike a balance between individual choice and social-policy guidance.

Only by.....

.....

- c. Sociologists consider that Finland's UBI projects contributed to improving living conditions.

Finland's UBI projects.....

.....

- d. American citizens have a minimum wage of \$7.25. If they earn less, they are considered to be under the poverty line. **(whose)**

Unless....., American citizens.....

.....

- e. While politicians try to package UBI as a fresh new idea, it is not surprising that the concept has been tried before. **(surprise)**

Despite.....

.....

- f. I think the Italian UBI project completely differs from the Finish one. **(bears)**

I think

- g. The candidate's refusal to give an explanation led to a scandal (Use a relative clause).

The candidate.....

.....

- h. Robots will almost certainly push down wages in all the remaining human-touch jobs. **(bound)**

Wages

.....

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i. Chances are if an additional salary is paid, the government budget will be depleted.

(result)

It is likely.....
.....

j. Indeed, a UBI does not really help poor people live out of poverty.

Little.....
.....

3 points each TOTAL ...../30

PART II (Minimum Passing Mark 26)

4. ESSAY WRITING (320-350 words)

Write an **opinion** essay on ONE of the topics below:

(a) States should enforce stronger welfare systems to reduce the impact of rising unemployment levels. Do you agree?

(b) The sole factor of success for a country's development is people's determination to work. Do you agree?

Make sure you include:

- Advanced structures (inversion of order, conditional sentences, passive voice, linkers, etc.)
- Relevant vocabulary
- Meaningful and rich ideas
- Well-ordered and cohesive paragraphs
