

## **Alumnus profile: Lara Joannides, journalist**

Lara studied English Language and Literature

### **What are you doing now?**

I've just finished a year on the BBC's Journalism Trainee Scheme and am now working as a broadcast journalist at the World Service. I'm incredibly lucky to have been accepted on the scheme, which takes 15 people a year and so is very competitive. I still don't quite know how I got it! But I'm not complaining because I wouldn't be doing what I do now without that experience.

### **What do you actually do day-to-day?**

At the moment I work as a producer on a radio programme called the World Today, which is a sort of breakfast programme for the world. I do a mixture of day shifts, which involve finding stories and tracking down people to interview, and night shifts when the programme actually goes out. They are either madly busy – with far too many interviews to produce and edit in time for the programme – or very quiet when all you want to do is go to bed!

### **What's good about your job and what would you like to change?**

The hours can be very difficult – 12 hour shifts from 9pm to 9am takes a while to get used to! But moments such as finally getting hold of the man who uncovered the Srebrenica Massacre, and was later kidnapped by the Taliban, make it all worth it.

### **How did you decide to do this job?**

I've always known I wanted to be a journalist, so after graduating I did an unpaid internship at CNN and few other small production companies, which really helped with my application to the BBC. I was unemployed for nearly a year before getting the job here. It was very disheartening to send off dozens of applications every day and just get rejection after rejection, but doing as much unpaid work experience and voluntary work can make all the difference.

### **How does your English degree help in this job?**

The analysis and quick-reading skills I learnt from my English degree are very important for my work as a journalist, but I'm also hoping my interest in, and knowledge of, literature and film will enable me to specialise in this in a couple of years. The best thing about the BBC is that it provides opportunities to move around the corporation and work on different programmes, platforms and departments. So really whatever course you have chosen to do, and whatever your interests, passion and ambition are really all you need to get your foot in the door.

### **tops tips for English students trying to get into your line of work?**

It might take longer and seem more difficult than you expect, but keep trying – e-mail and telephone any possible employer, nag them to take you on for a temporary placement (even if it is unpaid!) and prove yourself. Someone will eventually notice your hard work and determination, and hopefully reward you for it!