

Rafael Gomez Sanchez, Brazil

Currently studying:

- [Contemporary Russian and East European Studies \(The Caucasus and Central Asia\) MSc \(/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/contemporary-russian-east-european-studies-caucasus-central-asia.aspx\)](#)

Previous degrees: BA Journalism - University of São Paulo (Brazil), 1997

I am a BBC producer on a career break. I work in the BBC office in São Paulo, Brazil, dealing with the BBC output in Portuguese for the website www.bbcbrasil.com. Some of my duties include copy desking, planning and news writing.

I chose to study with CREES as I was looking for somewhere in which I could study Central Asian countries with a broad, comprehensive perspective. After browsing the Internet I concluded that Birmingham offered the best overall course for my particular interests.

The thing that I enjoy most about studying with CREES is that it is a relaxed atmosphere and the teachers are excellent. The idea here is to study the former Communist countries of Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia using a multidisciplinary approach. There is a bit of almost everything - political economy, sociology, anthropology, political science... I like that, since I am overall curious about different aspects of the development of those countries.

Before coming here one of my biggest fears was that I was afraid that my lack of theoretical knowledge would be a big problem, but so far it hasn't been the case. Nor the fact that my English is not as good as my Portuguese. Besides being able to study what I wanted, I had the opportunity to learn two new languages almost from scratch (Russian and Kazakh).

I envisage that having studied with CREES, it will improve my career in a number of ways. At first, I hope that the wealth of knowledge I have acquired at CREES will help me on my daily duties at the BBC, once I come back to work. Also, I believe it will help me in my aspirations to apply for more challenging positions inside my company. But I also see it as a springboard for a more radical change in my career in the future, maybe to pursue a PhD and become an academic.

Studying for an MA is not easy; but if you have some money to spare and like challenges, be sure that CREES is an excellent place to expand your knowledge on Russia, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. My advice is to think carefully; why do you want to take a postgraduate course? Can you really afford it? Is this the right moment for you? What is your long term goal? If you eventually decide to come, be sure you will be given freedom to pursue your particular area of interest within the field and will receive all the support you need.