

Christopher B. Ritchie

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Employment history

PENN STATE UNIVERSITY, College of Communications, University Park, Pa. Beginning Fall 2001 semester to present. Assistant teaching professor, teaching courses in Beginning News Reporting and Writing (COMM 260W), Advanced Feature Writing (COMM 462), News Copy Editing (COMM 467) and News Media Ethics (COMM 409).

- Promoted to senior lecturer in May 2006, after starting as a part-time adjunct and rising to full-time staff position starting in Fall 2002 semester. (Rank renamed “assistant teaching professor” in October 2017.)
- Named COMM 260W coordinator in Fall 2009, serving as department liaison with all adjunct and staff teaching the course. We often see at least a dozen sections of the course each semester
- Awarded Dean’s Excellence Award for Teaching in Spring 2010.
- During Summer 2012, revised total content of online version of COMM 409 offered through Penn State’s World Campus, incorporating new textbook and learning assessments.
- Completely overhauled COMM 260W during 2014-2015 to meet department objectives, converting course from a twice-weekly lecture to a hybrid of weekly online learning modules accompanied by twice-weekly writing labs. Conversion involved writing course content that numbered approximately 80,000 words (the size of an average book) and developed a system that could function across multiple sections of COMM 260W taught by a dozen or so different individuals. Once launched in Fall 2015, COMM 260W required constant monitoring of the course content, the technology behind the content delivery and the people tasked with carrying out the revisions in the new lab format. The "people" side of the equation entailed a series of instructional workshops prior to the course launch and regular meetings to address concerns that arose throughout the semester.
- Named co-director of the university’s Dow Jones Newspaper Fund Multiplatform Editing Residency Program in May 2017. Program provides Dow Jones interns with intensive training before they head to summer internships at newsrooms around the country. Position requires curriculum development, hiring of instructors and other logistics concerns. Also promote Dow Jones News Fund internship program at Penn State. *In December 2017, Dow Jones eliminated Penn State as a training site.
- Have also served as: staff instructor in Dow Jones Newspaper Fund copy editing “boot camp” residency at Penn State and the university’s summer Institute for High School Journalists; faculty adviser to former campus chapter of Society of Professional Journalists; and member of college’s Scholarship Review Committee.
- Member – Society of Professional Journalist and volunteer contest judge for SPJ’s national Mark of Excellence and New England Press Association’s regional newspaper competitions.

TIMES LEADER, seven-day morning newspaper in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., one of only about a half-dozen U.S. cities with separately-owned, competing dailies.

- **Development Editor** (August 1996-June 30, 2001) One of two managing editors responsible for daily operations of the newsroom, overseeing staff of 80 full-timers, plus several dozen stringers. Direct report to editor in chief and member of newspaper’s editorial board. Primarily responsible for recruitment, staff development, long-term projects and budgeting newsprint use. Interim editorial page editor.
- **Assistant managing editor/features** (August 1994-summer 1996) Supervise 12-person staff, responsible for production of seven different feature sections each week; daily entertainment, television

and community news pages; weekly TV Book; and special sections. (Also responsible for daily business pages and Sunday Money section until the creation of three-person business department in 1995).

- **Features editor** (July 1989-August 1994) Supervise eight-person staff; responsible for weekly feature sections and daily entertainment/TV pages.
- **Night assistant city editor** (December 1987-July 1989) Edit staff stories and direct coverage of breaking news on deadline.
- **Continued as part-time** as copy editor to augment university classroom experience until 2012.

THE MIDDLESEX NEWS, suburban Boston daily in Framingham, Mass.

- **Rewrite desk chief** (April 1987-December 1987) Supervise three-person rewrite (copy) desk, editing all staff-written stories on deadline.
- **Layout editor** (October 1986-April 1987) Design three zoned local news sections nightly.

DELAWARE STATE NEWS, state capital daily in Dover, Del.

Features editor (February 1985-October 1986) Supervise three-person staff, responsible for six weekly feature sections plus fill-in city editor.

OCEANA, weekly newspaper in highly-competitive resort market of Ocean City, Md.

Managing editor (September 1982-February 1985) Supervise staff/stringers; report, write and edit news, features and reviews.

Publishing and Academia

- **Author of** “It Comes from Within: The Frank Pettit Story,” a biography of a Lionel toy train innovator (1999) and “The O Gauge Primer,” a how-to book for model railroaders (revised and expanded 2000 edition). Myron J. Biggar Group, publisher.
- **Published freelance** magazine articles and photography in *Susquehanna Life* magazine, *O Gauge Railroading*, *Classic Toy Trains*, *Trains*, *LGB Telegram* and other train-related publications.
- **Adjunct journalism** instructor, Wilkes University, Wilkes-Barre, Pa. 1996-97.
- **Guest lecturer** of the Knight Foundation’s Newspaper-in-Residence Program. Penn State University, main campus, fall 1999.

Miscellany

- **Bachelor’s degree**, Shippensburg (Pa.) State College, 1981. Communications/journalism major, with English minor.
- **An “obsession”** (my wife’s word) with trains of all sizes.
- **Developed a host of "hands-on skills"** through a lifetime of model railroading.
- **Once managed** a store that sold nothing but kites.
- **Completed** two 26-mile marathons; dedicated daily distance runner.
- **Earned Eagle** rank, the highest in the Boy Scouts of America.

Personal statement

My achievements throughout my career are not necessarily the result of specialized training or advanced education. Instead, I possess the ability to quickly size up a situation, figure out what needs to be done to achieve the stated goals, and then bring the necessary focus and dedication to make those goals a reality. Please know that I would apply those same traits to whatever challenges await as I embark on my new career path.