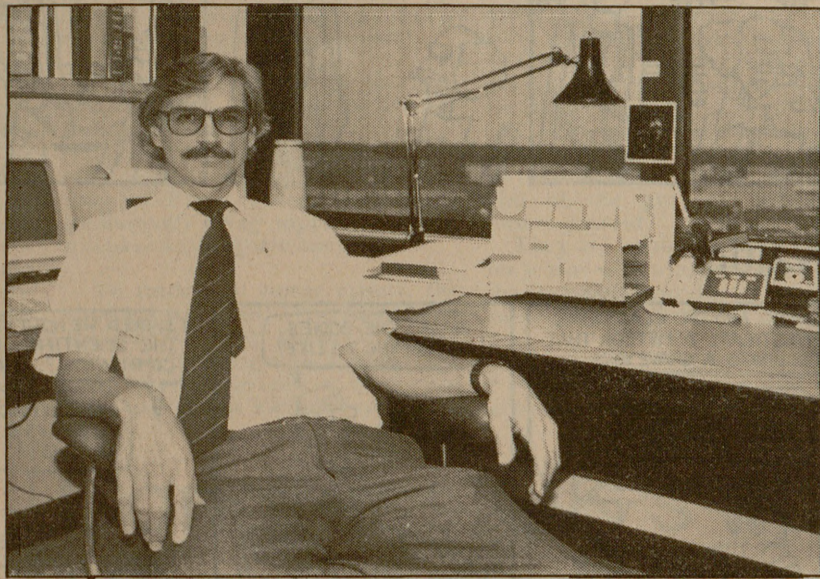


# A&M professor provides education, controversy Teacher raises questions on issues

By Denise Thompson  
Reporter



Larry Hickman

Photo by Mike C. Mulvey

"To start a class, he would usually bring in a *New York Times* and start talking about how something the government was doing today was related to something Aristotle or another philosopher said or did. He knew how to relate modern issues to past philosophies."

Alan Sembera, a senior journalism major, said Hickman made his social and political philosophy class different from any other class he had taken.

"A lot of times there would be a student in class who disagreed with most of Dr. Hickman's views," he said. "Instead of stifling or ignoring the student's views, Dr. Hickman would give the student every opportunity to give different views and opinions in order to stimulate discussion and debate in the classroom."

Although teaching is what he enjoys, becoming faculty adviser for Gay Student Services was a job Hickman did not want, but accepted because no one else wanted to be associated with the organization, he said.

*"I found the Bible no more proves the existence of God than do the works of Mark Twain. I found myself rejecting more and more what most Christians believe essential to being a Christian — that there is one personal God. I believe that the human problem has got to be solved by humans."*

— Larry Hickman

"I support them because they're getting a raw deal," he said. "They do not have full rights as do the other students on campus. Before the Supreme Court battle, they could not be a student organization, they could not get student funding, and they could not get a room in the MSC like the 27 Christian organizations on campus."

Hickman said acknowledgment of homosexuality is not important because people in the organization don't promote homosexuality, they argue for the rights of people to be homosexual. For this reason, he said his sexual preference is not important.

Eduardo Casas, a 1987 psychology graduate and president of the A&M chapter of GSS, said Hickman helped the organization gain recognition by giving it faculty support.

"When he joined the organization, it opened so many doors for us and gave us all of our recognition

because we finally had a sponsor," he said.

"What Dr. Hickman does is give his input on how different decisions will affect the organization and how people will perceive our actions. He explains legal matters, and he gives us lots of constructive criticism and lots of good ideas, but he allows us to make our own decisions."

Hickman also is involved in the American Civil Liberties Union. Although he doesn't participate in any local activities, he said he is a member because of what the organization represents.

"The ACLU has been accused of being a communist organization, but it's not," he said. "If it did support communism, I wouldn't be involved with it. It takes stands with which I am utterly in opposition, but I support them because the ACLU is the best protector and best friend that the underdog in the United States has."

Hickman did serve as adviser for the student art films society, but he did not re-file an application so the club could be recognized as a student organization, because the students who started it graduated.

Pallmeyer was president of the art films society for a semester. He said Hickman had a way of making people see more than just the images on the screen.

"I went to those films religiously," he said. "One of the greatest things Dr. Hickman did for me is to develop my interest in films."

"Most people look at movies and think they're fun or entertaining, but he taught me how to see the importance in understanding the way a scene is shot. He taught me that film can really be a transmission of feelings."

For students who are interested in classical films, Hickman will sponsor a film series in the spring called Alternative Cinema.

"Unfortunately, it is possible to go to college and come out without being film literate," he said. "The series will try to take up the slack that is present on the campus because there isn't a good classical film series."

"I'll go back into the history of cinema and show some German expressionists and Russian constructivists. There are some films that one would need to know to be considered film literate, and I'll try to cover those films. I'll pay special attention to foreign films and the kinds of films that don't really get a chance to be seen."

Although he supports organizations and holds views considered liberal, especially at a conservative university like A&M, Hickman says he enjoys teaching here because it gives him a chance to influence students.

"It wouldn't be much fun teaching to a group of people who already knew everything I had to say," he said. "What I am trying to do in terms of teaching at a conservative college is to get people to think about who they are and what they are doing."

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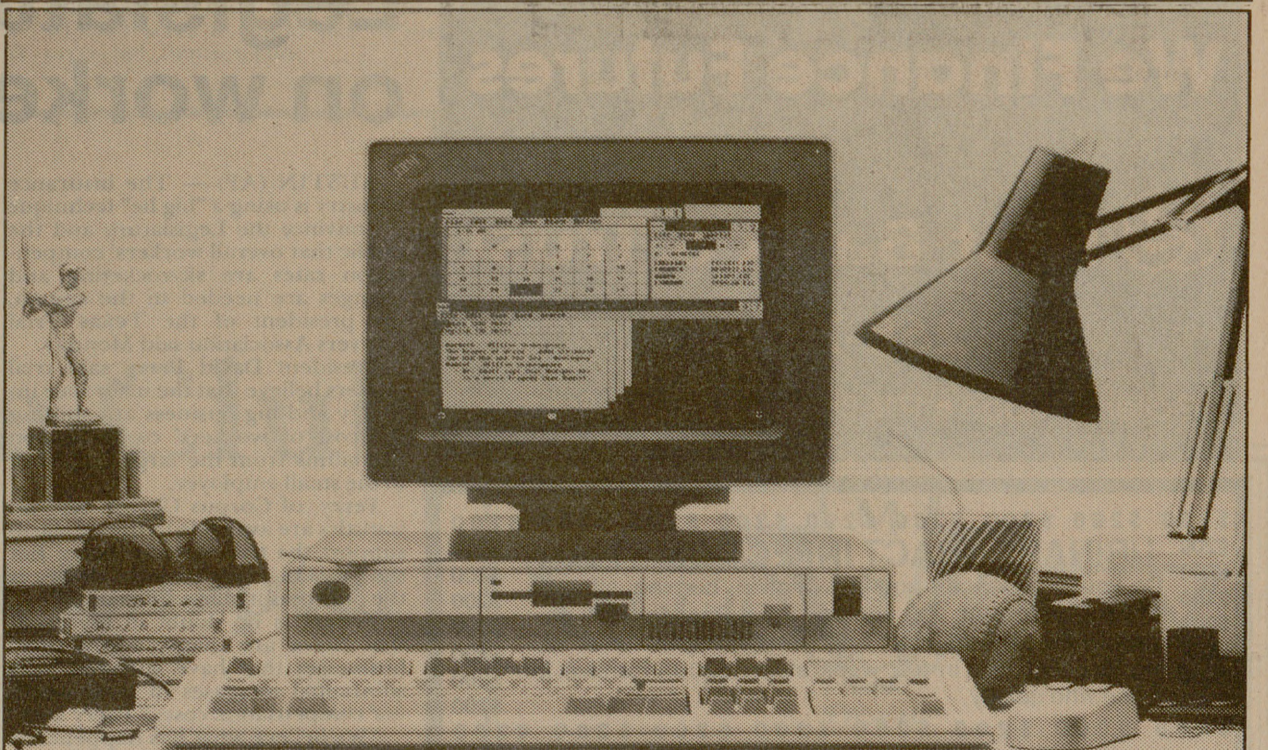
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