## A&M professor provides ducation, controversy eacher raises questions on issues

By Denise Thompson Reporter

hen lecture classes and stanized tests make you question the h of college, a man sitting in a ered corner office in Blocker ling could provide answers

maybe raise more questions. is ability to raise and answer tions on an array of subjects has ed make Larry Hickman, assoprofessor of philosophy and anities, one of the most controal figures at Texas A&M.

got interested in philosophy be-I was thinking about the hisof ideas and how we came to be at all," Hickman, 45, said. "Be-I went to college, I read books bhilosophy, but I had no idea anybody could do it for a living. ink I decided to study philosobecause I just kept reading. It's ing how one's mind will change just reads books.'

ckman's life was drastically nged by reading, he said. While nding Hardin-Simmons Univerto earn a bachelor's degree in hology, he minored in religious ies and hoped to become a Bap-

oday, after obtaining a doctorate hilosophy from the University of Hickman questions the nds Christianity is based upon readily discusses his agnostic be-

What changed my mind is that I a lot of books," he said, "and nore I read, the more I realized ifestyle I was involved with was arrow for my needs.

found the Bible no more proves xsistence of God than do the s of Mark Twain. I found myejecting more and more what Christians believe essential to ga Christian — that there is one onal God. I believe that the huproblem has got to be solved by

sides being well-read in Greek, eval, and modern subjects, man has written and edited and rking on several books.

1981, he published a book on medieval logic. He edited two ooks for the technology and an values class, and currently is ing on a visual media textbook released in Fall 1989.

e did not teach in Fall 1987 bee he was writing a book on the of John Dewey, for which he reed a grant from the National Enment for the Humanities.

. Herman J. Saatkamp, head of philosophy and humanities denent, said he thinks the work man is doing on Dewey is excel-

think the work he is doing will onsidered classical," he said. "I when it is finished, it will come considered excellent material.' ckman will not teach classes this because he is writing a book it the ethics of embryo research. teach courses in ethics and the sophy of ethics in technology, his is just a special case," he said. To what extent is it ethical to embryos left over from the ss of in vitro fertilization that ld be destroyed and use them in rimentation? It's not just some-I'm interested in, but it's someg I feel needs to be looked at and ained more closely.

ickman said ethics and technolare part of every class he tea-He teaches classes on technoland human values, social and cal philosophy, the philosophy nedia, and the introduction to sophy honors course

ost students agree that his teais unique

arl Pallmeyer, a 1986 A&M journ graduate, took introduction tant. losophy and philosophy of meom Ĥickman.

hen I first got in a class with Hickman, I was just knocked he said. "I just didn't realize there were so many different of thinking. He really opened



Larry Hickman

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 dis-cussion and debate in the class-

Although teaching is what he says he enjoys, becoming faculty adviser Gay Student Services was a job Hickman did not want, but accepted because no one else wanted to be as-

"I found the Bible no more proves the exsistence 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

sociated with the organization, he

"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 impor-

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 organizaves and got me to think about tion, it opened so many doors for us and gave us all of our recognition

"To start a class, he would usually because we finally had a sponsor,"

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

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

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 fee-

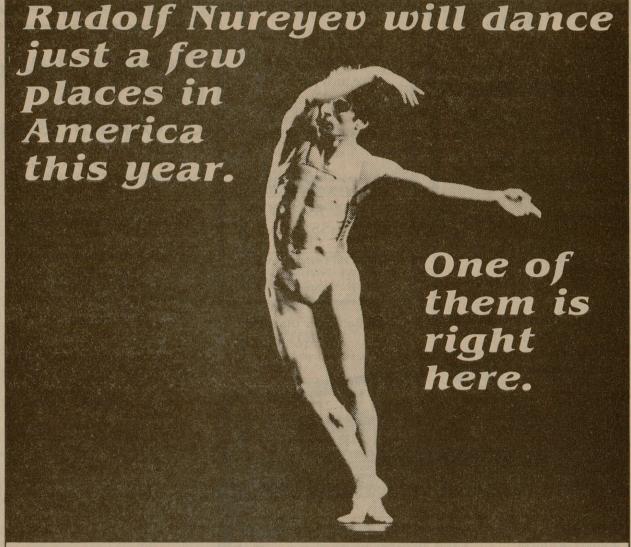
For students who are interested in classical films, Hickman will sponsor a film series in the spring called Alternative Cinema.

"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 foriegn films and the kinds of films that don't really get a chance to

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



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