

French professor brings experiences of homeland, love of learning to class

By Melissa Naumann
Reporter

Leaning back in his armchair and glancing around his study, he asks, "So, what do you think of this wallpaper?"

Everything there reflects Dr. Olivier Naudeau's classical French background and his love of order. Naudeau's books are arranged chronologically and by subject, and a painting of Nantes, the city in west France where he grew up, hangs on the wall.

This study where he works, writes and reads is the heart of his academic and professional pursuits. He teaches French but, with a Ph.D. in philology, he also studies French manuscripts of the 12th and 13th centuries and the Renaissance.

"Beware of faculty members who talk about their publications all the time."
— Olivier Naudeau,
French professor

"This is a passion for me to reconstruct these languages," he said. "It is an exacting process and is highly disciplined."

Although Texas A&M does not have a philology department, Naudeau does have a forum for his interests: his students.

"Those things are not lost," he said. "They are always injected into the class."

Indeed, his classes cover everything from French poetry and Picaso's cubism to a word-of-the-day. Each day, he presents an offbeat, but useful French word such as "un cafard" for cockroach and the French for redneck: "une nuque rouge."

Anne Gwin, a junior French major from Beaumont, was a fan of the "mots du jour."

"In addition to the reading novels, he gave us current slang," Gwin said. "It really added something to the course."

Naudeau, however, never strays from the academic goals of the class.

"Often I find that relating personal experiences in class is distracting," he said. "The text is the only that all of the students have in common with the instructor and each other and we should adhere to it."

This kind of self-discipline is second nature for Naudeau. In the French secondary schools, his studies were mainly classical with seven years of Latin and five years of Greek. After World War II, the desire to travel consumed many young Europeans and Naudeau was no exception.

"We had a desire to experience this relativity that we saw," he said. "I caught the 'virus du voyage'."

He went to Rhode Island and Massachusetts for one year where he completely immersed himself in the English language.

He returned home to the French army and served for a year and a half as an interpreter between the French and the Americans in Indochina during the French involvement in the Vietnam War.

Changing direction once again, he came back to the United States and attended Harvard, the Boston School of Fine Arts, Columbia and, finally, the University of Cincinnati where he earned his degree in philology in 1970.

He taught at the University of Cincinnati and Emory University in

Atlanta before coming to Texas A&M in 1974.

Since then, Naudeau has seen three University presidents, three deans and two department heads come and go. He insists that the A&M students today are much brighter than they once were.

"There has been a tremendous change in the quality of students," he said. "It's an opening. The students here today are more open to the world. They want to travel and break out of their circle."

As an example, he offered a story about three of his students who went to Boston and called him long-distance.

"I had told them that I bussed tables in a restaurant there and that I painted and put up the restaurant's sign," he said. "They wanted to see this place and, in their journey, they called me to find out where it was."

Naudeau believes his job is to spark students' interests in French.

"If you do not interest them in languages in those critical years, they will not go on," he said. "I see that as my responsibility. This is what builds a program. If students are motivated in the 201 and 202 class levels, then they'll continue."

Naudeau's addition of humanities to the curriculum enlightens his students and gives them an extra education they might not have had.

Carolyn Baugh, a junior French major from Houston, took her third class with Naudeau last fall.

"The things he teaches should be in a liberal arts major," she said. "We need to know things like that. It gives me the feeling that our background isn't enough."

Gwin also has the same idea.

"The French culture that he gave us — I guess you'd call it the intellectual life — made me think about things beyond grammar," she said. "It was incredibly stimulating, but unnerving. I worried that he would find out that I wasn't as intelligent as he thought."

Gwin said that even though his knowledge in certain areas surpasses that of his students, he maintains a feeling of equality with them.

"He treats everyone as though they were as smart as he is," she said. "He really is interested in our opinions."

Naudeau's greatest strength, he believes, is his relationship with his students.

"I don't know if there's a why or a how," he said. "There's just a chemistry."

Despite his intellectual class procedure and strong student relationships, most of his students are not aware of his highly successful publications. Naudeau tends to be leery of colleagues who are overly interested in their publications.

"Beware of faculty members who talk about their publications all the time," he said.

Indeed, he is one who should. His first book, "La Pensee de Montaigne et la composition des Essais", published in 1972, has sold 1,200 copies which is almost three times as many copies as most academic publications sell. Another book "La Passion de Sainte Catherine d'Alexandrie par Aumeric" is also successful.

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Most of his books and articles are published and sold in Europe where philology is more widely studied but he does have a number of articles at Duke and Berkeley.

In addition to his enriching academic and professional life, his family life is also a source of personal pride. His wife Gloria also teaches French and is the head of the Language Department at A&M Consolidated High School. They also have historical interests in common: he is a philologist and is fascinated by old languages and she has a master's degree in medieval history.

His son, Eric, is a junior at Stephen F. Austin University and is interested in his French background. Each summer, he spends several months in France visiting friends and relatives and keeping his cultural ties strong.

Madeleine, Naudeau's daughter, studies physics at the University of Texas. She is on the dean's list and

will study abroad in the spring.

"My daughter, Madeleine, is 'la grosse tete', the brain of the family," Naudeau said.

Reaching back a little farther into his family history, Naudeau is proud of Jean Gaspard Vence, an ancestor who fought in the War of Independence. Vence, a Frenchman, recruited American soldiers to attack British ships at the Battle of Savannah. He was recognized for his efforts by George Washington who inducted him into the Society of the Cincinnati. Membership was limited to officers of the Continental Army and became hereditary. Naudeau's family is still a member of this elite society.

Everything seems to come back to his study. The room itself is small but the ideas that come out of it and out of him are nothing less than grand. Then, when he takes them to the classroom, the students respond and, once again, he is successful.

vehicle and deflate the tires of another.

• Two gold bracelets, a cassette player, a jacket, a backpack, a calculator and a piece of carpet were stolen from various buildings on campus during the break.

• After receiving a report of a man removing items from the Soil and Crop Sciences Building, officers found a man possessing a Bunsen burner and several vials containing unknown substances.

• A radar detector, several cassette tapes, several items of clothing, a car battery, two purses and a cooler containing six soft drinks were stolen from various vehicles on campus.

• A student reported that someone sprayed the windows and tires of his pick-up. He also said there was a grocery cart chained to the back of his truck.

• While staking out a parking lot, an officer saw two teens shoot the window out of a pick-up. After arresting the teens, the officer found that they had a bottle of liquor. In addition to criminal mischief, they were charged with minor in possession, disorderly conduct and possession of a weapon on campus.

• There were five charges of driving while intoxicated. Two of the drivers were involved in collisions, one was suspected of being involved in a hit-and-run accident, another had stolen plates, and the other had half of a marijuana cigarette.

• After responding to a fire alarm, officers discovered that a homeowner had broken a window out of Dorm 10.

• A woman reported that she received a threatening phone call at her office.

• Another woman reported that she received obscene phone calls on her answering machine.

• A student reported that she was assaulted by a student while studying in the Commons lounge.

• A student reported that a man threatened him with a pair of scissors after an argument on the basketball court in the Read Building.

• Two students were caught after an officer saw them steal several cassette tapes from one

• Three wallets, 50 compact discs, several textbooks, a Liz Claiborne purse and a turtleneck shirt were reported stolen from various dorm rooms during finals week. Someone also tried to steal a video cassette recorder from Cain Hall.

• The same week, a student reported that he came out of his bathroom in Walton Hall and found two males going through his desk. The males told him they thought they were in a friend's room and left.

• Also during finals week, two students were seen trying to disable the lock on an entrance to Milner Hall. Upon questioning by an officer, the students said they had intended to enter the building later to gain access to a final exam.

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Phi Delta Theta Spring Rush '89

Rush Chairmen Landon Perry Marc Caldwell 696-6522	President John Jeffery 846-9658
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U2 Can Rattle and Hum w/Xit Date: January 19 Time: 8:00 p.m. Place: Lodge	Comedy Club ++ Date: January 26 Time: 8:00 p.m. Place: Lodge Date Optional
Barbecue at the Lodge* Date: January 21 Time: 2:00 p.m. Place: Lodge	Barn Dance w/ KKF* Date: January 28 Time: 8:00 p.m. Place: Lodge
Smoker + Date: January 24 Time: 6:00 p.m. Place: MSC Rm 201	An Added Attraction* Date: January 30 Time: 8:00 p.m. Place: Lodge

Lodge @ 803 Wellborn Rd. *invitation only + coat & tie

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\$100	IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME STUDY										\$100
\$100	Wanted: Symptomatic patients with physician diagnosed										\$100
\$100	Irritable Bowel Syndrome to participate in a short study.										\$100
\$100	\$100 incentive for those chosen to participate.										\$100
\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	
\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	
\$400	ASTHMA STUDY										\$400
\$400	Individuals who have regular asthma to participate in										\$400
\$400	an asthma study. \$400 incentive for those chosen to										\$400
\$400	participate.										\$400
\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	\$400	
\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	
\$100	FREE STREP THROAT TESTING										\$100
\$100	For individuals 12 years and older with sore throat willing										\$100
\$100	to participate in a study to treat strep throat. Diagnosed										\$100
\$100	strep throat welcome. \$100 incentive for those chosen to										\$100
\$100	participate.										\$100
\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$100	
\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	
\$40	SORE THROAT STUDY										\$40
\$40	Wanted: Individuals ages 18-70 with sore throat pain to participate										\$40
\$40	in a 90 minute study to compare currently available										\$40
\$40	over-the-counter pain relief medication. \$40 incentive to										\$40
\$40	those chosen to participate.										\$40
\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	\$40	
\$100	\$200	\$100	\$200	\$100	\$200	\$100	\$200	\$100	\$200	\$100	
\$100	CEDAR/WINTER ALLERGY STUDY										\$100
\$200	Looking for mountain cedar allergic individuals to participate										\$200
\$100	in a short allergy study. \$100-\$200 incentive for										\$100
\$200	those chosen to participate. Free skin testing available										\$200
\$100	to determine eligibility.										\$100
\$200											\$200
\$100	\$200	\$100	\$200	\$100	\$200	\$100	\$200	\$100	\$200	\$100	

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