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Professor survived by spouse, daughter

By Collin Eaton, Daily Texan Staff

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Government professor Melvin Hinich, who died Monday night, was sharp as a tack, had an unorthodox style of teaching, invented new ways to calculate votes and expressed a passion for teaching small bands of undergraduates — so say the friends and colleagues he leaves behind.

[DT Image](#)
Melvin Hinich | Government professor

Before a fall down a staircase took his life, Hinich was known as an expert in political science and for his dedication to teaching. Over the course of his life, he wrote seven books and published more than 200 articles on the subjects of political science, economics and statistical theory in engineering.

Gerald Rich's Thirsty Thursday takes a page out of Epic Meal Time's book to create the Meaty Mary.

Gary Freeman, chairman of the government department, said he delivered the news of Hinich's death to a class of his students, who were ready to turn in written assignments to the late government professor.

"The room was packed, everybody was there," he said. "They were all holding their writing assignments and they were disappointed that they couldn't turn it in."

Hinich is survived by his wife, Sonje, and his daughter, Amy Sara Leksana. He would have taught two sessions of politics and the economy this semester. Both were canceled but the department is trying to find classes that fit students' needs, Freeman said.

In 1963, Hinich earned a doctorate in statistics at Stanford University and began teaching at UT in 1982.

Brian Roberts, a government professor and Hinich's close friend, said the chance to interact with him on a regular basis was one of the most rewarding parts of his professional career.

"We will miss him sorely," Roberts said.

Lance Vandenbroek, a government graduate student, said he bumped into Hinich on occasion and can remember his sharpness.

"One of my comprehensive exam questions was actually on something that he developed, and I survived the question, but even to this day I probably couldn't explain it with fewer than 15 pages or two hours of talking," Vandenbroek said.

Tse-min Lin, an associate professor in the government department, said he was just a graduate student when Hinich inspired him with the breadth and depth of his work and was so proud to become his colleague.

"I still remember being a graduate student in Kansas when I first read an article written by him," Lin said. "It was so inspiring."

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