

Features

Sociology professor describes women's prison

By
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and
Carrie Town

"There is no such thing as a friend or confidant in prison," said Dr. Tom Arcaro, assistant professor of sociology.

Arcaro taught classes at Ohio Reformatory for Women for a year and a half before coming to Elon in the fall of 1985. He taught sociology, human behavior, psychology and sociology of the family to classes of typically eight to 15 students.

About half of the students were in the prison for homicide. Others were in for prostitution, drugs or writing bad checks.

"I had to deal with a lot of stereotypes," Arcaro said. "The women were incredibly frustrated. I could empathize with them because I was not part of the prison system. If the prosecutors knew some of what they (women) told me, things would be different," he said. "It was an intense experience; incredible stuff goes on in there (prison)," he concluded.

Prison life is one of the topics in Arcaro's favorite class, Social Problems. "I can approach topics such as militarism and nuclear war. Students come out of the class knowing more and being better able to watch a newscast with more understanding. I also learn a great deal about my students and what's going on in other classes," said Arcaro.



HUGGING DADDY: Bevin Arcaro sits on her dad's (Dr. Arcaro) lap as he talks about his hobbies.

Photo by Carrie Town

Arcaro said small classes are better for faculty and students. "I would like to lower the student/faculty ratio; especially in upper division classes," said Arcaro. "It would make better sense to have smaller classes."

Arcaro is a sports enthusiast. "I plan to spend winter term playing basketball in the gym

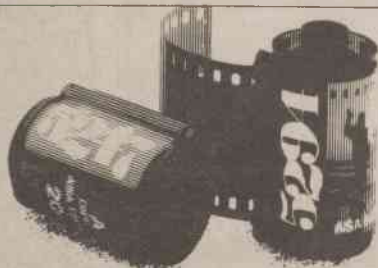
everyday," said Arcaro. His other hobbies include glass blowing and fishing.

Arcaro learned the art of glass blowing while he taught at Columbus College of Art Design in Ohio. Arcaro enjoys fishing, but "I only like to fish when I catch them," he said.

Arcaro serves as the advisor to Alpha Sigma Alpha sorority. "I have learned a lot about the Greek system and met some neat people I wouldn't have met otherwise," he said. "I get to hang out with the girls. It's a great experience. I am there to provide a source of support and to advise."

Arcaro, his wife Cameron and their two children hosted several international students and their faculty advisor, Dottie Souders, for Thanksgiving. "They couldn't go home, obviously, for the holiday," he said.

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