

# Lorcan McLaren

PhD Researcher in Quantitative & Computational Social Science

*Connected\_Politics Lab · UCD School of Politics & International Relations*

[lorcan.mclaren@ucdconnect.ie](mailto:lorcan.mclaren@ucdconnect.ie) | [lorcanmclaren.com](http://lorcanmclaren.com) | [GitHub](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

---

## Education

### University College Dublin

September 2023 – Present

*PhD Quantitative & Computational Social Science*

- **Thesis:** Taking the Green Pill – Moral Language, Emotion, and Persuasion in the Climate Crisis
- **Advisor:** Dr. James P. Cross

### University College Dublin

2021 – 2022

*MSc Politics & Data Science*

- **Thesis:** Polarising Rhetoric and Twitter Rage
- **Advisor:** Dr. James P. Cross

### Trinity College Dublin

2016 – 2020

*BA Computer Science, Linguistics & French*

- **Thesis:** Automatic Gaze Annotation and Conversational Dominance in the MULTISIMO Corpus
- **Advisor:** Dr. Carl Vogel

## Research Experience

### Connected\_Politics Lab, University College Dublin

November 2024 – Present

*Research Assistant*

### University College Dublin, with Swiss National Science Foundation

July 2023 – February 2024

*Research Assistant*

### Computational Linguistics Group, Trinity College Dublin

May – August 2020

*Research Assistant*

## Industry Experience

### Dataminr

2022 – 2023

*Data Analyst, R&D*

- Built ingests to exploit new data sources via APIs and web scraping
- Developed automated workflows for data extraction, transformation, and quality assurance in consultation with subject matter experts
- Built, maintained, and updated visualisation dashboards and tools to monitor data health
- Developed protocols to systematise processes for future work

*Editor, Domain Expert*

2021 – 2022

- Monitored streams of potentially newsworthy content from around the globe and alerted clients on breaking news
- Developed new techniques for discovering breaking news events using social media and other publicly available data
- Tracked misinformation related to COVID-19 and election integrity across multiple jurisdictions in a variety of languages

## Working Papers

**McLaren, L.**, Cross, J.P., Krakowska, Z., Rauner, R. and Schoonvelde, M. (2025) ‘Magic Words or Methodical Work? Challenging Conventional Wisdom in LLM-Based Political Text Annotation’.

**McLaren, L.** (2025) ‘When Climate Change Hits Home: Natural Disasters and Climate Rhetoric in the European Parliament’.

**McLaren, L.** (2024) ‘Here and Now or There and Then? The Psychological Distance of Climate Change in Parliamentary Speech’.

## Peer-Reviewed Publications

**McLaren, L.**, Koutsombogera, M. and Vogel, C. (2020) ‘A Heuristic Method for Automatic Gaze Detection in Constrained Multi-Modal Dialogue Corpora’, in *2020 11th IEEE International Conference on Cognitive Infocommunications*, pp. 55–60.

**McLaren, L.**, Koutsombogera, M. and Vogel, C. (2020) ‘Gaze, Dominance and Dialogue Role in the MULTISIMO Corpus’, in *2020 11th IEEE International Conference on Cognitive Infocommunications*, pp. 83–88.

## Presentations

**McLaren, L.** October 2024. Taking the green pill: Moral language, psychological distance and the climate crisis in the European Parliament. Oral presentation: PSAI general conference, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland.

**McLaren, L.** May 2024. Psychological distance and the climate crisis in the European Parliament. Oral presentation: COMPTEXT conference, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands.

**McLaren, L.** December 2023. Measuring, mapping, and assessing the impact of emotional appeals in European politics. Oral presentation: Connected\_Politics Lab, University College Dublin, Ireland.

## Teaching

---

Spring 2025, 2026	<b>AI and Large Language Models</b> , Postgraduate, Module Instructor
Autumn 2023, 2024	<b>Introduction to EU Politics</b> , Undergraduate, Teaching Assistant
Spring 2024	<b>Research Methods in Political Science</b> , Undergraduate, Teaching Assistant

---

## Scholarships & Grants

---

2025 – 2027	<b>Government of Ireland Scholarship</b> , Research Ireland	€68,000
2025	<b>PEC Travel Funding</b> , Political Studies Association of Ireland	€400
2024 – 2025	<b>Climate Fellowship</b> , UCD Earth Institute	€1,000
2023 – 2025	<b>SPIRE Research Committee Funding</b> , UCD School of Politics & International Relations	€3,000

---

2023 – 2027	<b>Iseult Honohan Scholarship,</b> UCD School of Politics & International Relations	€124,190
2020	<b>Erasmus Mundus Scholarship,</b> European Commission	€17,250

---

## Awards

---

2020	<b>Best Paper Award</b> , IEEE International Conference on Cognitive Infocommunications
------	--

---

## Service, Leadership & Professional Development

### Service & Leadership

---

2024 – 2026	<b>Convenor</b> , PSAI Computational Methods Specialist Group
2017 – 2018	<b>Student Convenor</b> , TCD School of Computer Science & Statistics
2016 – 2017	<b>Deputy Chair</b> , TCD Students' Union Lobby Group <b>Student Convenor</b> , TCD School of Linguistic, Speech & Communication Sciences

---

### Professional Memberships

Political Studies Association of Ireland · American Political Science Association · European Consortium for Political Research