

# Lorcan McLaren

PhD Researcher in Quantitative & Computational Social Science  
*Connected\_Politics Lab · UCD School of Politics & International Relations*

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## Education

**University College Dublin** since September 2023

*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** since November 2024

*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

### Conferences & Workshops

- 2026 EU Climate Politics and Policy Workshop, Dublin; European Consortium for Political Research Joint Sessions of Workshops, Innsbruck; European Political Science Society Conference, Belfast; European Consortium for Political Research General Conference, Krakow
- 2025 COMPTTEXT Conference, Vienna; European Consortium for Political Research Joint Sessions of Workshops, Prague; Una Europa PhD Summer School on Artificial Intelligence and Creativity, Paris; Political Studies Association of Ireland Annual Conference, Galway
- 2024 COMPTTEXT Conference, Amsterdam; Political Studies Association of Ireland Annual Conference, Dublin; SPIRe PhD Workshop, Dublin; Political Studies Association of Ireland Postgraduate Conference, Dublin

## Teaching

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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

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## Scholarships & Grants

*Total funding attracted: €213,840*

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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
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## Service, Leadership & Professional Development

### Service & Leadership

since 2024	<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 · European Political Science Society