

# Scott Claessens

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<https://scottclaessens.github.io>

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## **EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

- 2018-2022 University of Auckland, PhD in Psychology  
– Thesis: “Testing the dual evolutionary foundations of political ideology using incentivized behavioural tasks” (supervised by Professor Quentin Atkinson)
- 2016-2017 Newcastle University, MRes Evolution and Human Behaviour (Distinction)  
– Thesis: “The benefits of being seen to be cooperative” (supervised by Dr. Gilbert Roberts)
- 2012-2015 University of Bristol, BSc in Psychology (First class honours)

## **RESEARCH POSITIONS**

- 2024-current Postdoctoral Research Associate, School of Psychology, University of Kent, UK  
– Running social psychology experiments in Qualtrics on Prolific
- 2022-2024 Postdoctoral Research Fellow, School of Psychology, University of Auckland, NZ  
– Conducted hierarchical Bayesian models and simulations in Stan and R
- 2017 Research Scholar, Department of Psychology, Arizona State University, US  
– Developed software in Python to run online behavioural economics experiments
- 2015-2016 Research Executive, Marketing Sciences, Winchester, UK  
– Produced large-scale quantitative market research for high-profile clients
- 2014 Research Intern, School of Psychological Science, University of Bristol, UK  
– Participated in pilot research, attended talks and symposia

## **TEACHING POSITIONS**

- 2023 Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow, School of Psychology, University of Auckland, NZ  
Undergraduate and postgraduate honours courses  
– Preparing and delivering lectures, facilitating group discussions, essay and exam marking
- 2022 Academic Mentor – Capstone: Communicating Psychology  
Undergraduate course at University of Auckland, NZ  
– Mentoring student groups, group discussions, group presentation marking
- 2019-2021 Graduate Teaching Assistant – Evolution, Behaviour and Cognition  
Undergraduate course at University of Auckland, NZ  
– Tutorial preparation, tutoring, coursework and examination marking, guest lecturing
- 2019-2020 Graduate Teaching Assistant – Evolution and Human Behaviour  
Postgraduate honours course at University of Auckland, NZ  
– Facilitating group discussions, presentation and examination marking
- 2017 Teaching Assistant – Introduction to Evolutionary Psychology  
Undergraduate course at Arizona State University, US  
– Facilitating group discussions, creating in-class quizzes, marking quizzes
- 2016-2017 Private Tutor in Psychology, Newcastle, UK  
– One-on-one tutoring and mentoring, detailed essay feedback

## SERVICE

2018-2020 Co-organised [Evolution Research @ Auckland](#) seminar series, University of Auckland  
– Seminar scheduling and organisation, social media

## AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

2022 Human Behavior and Evolution Society Postdoctoral Competition Award  
2018-2022 University of Auckland Doctoral Academic Scholarship

## RESEARCH SKILLS

Programming (R, Python, Javascript, SPSS)	Survey creation with <i>Qualtrics</i>
Bayesian multilevel modelling with <i>brms</i>	Behavioural economic games with <i>oTree</i>
Structural equation modelling with <i>lavaan</i>	Open science (e.g. preregistration)
Reproducible analytic pipelines with <i>targets</i>	High performance computing
Agent-based modelling with <i>NetLogo</i>	Project version control with <i>Git</i>
Bayesian phylogenetic modelling with <i>Stan</i>	Open source software with <i>GitHub</i>

## CODE SAMPLES

<https://github.com/ScottClaessens/crossNationalCorrelations>

<https://github.com/ScottClaessens/phyloParrot>

<https://github.com/ScottClaessens/covidMaskWearing>

<https://github.com/ScottClaessens/phyloAuthority>

<https://github.com/ScottClaessens/religionWellbeing>

## RESEARCH INTERESTS

The evolution of cooperation; behavioural economics; cultural evolution; evolution and human behaviour; cross-cultural psychology; political/moral psychology; open and reproducible science

## RESEARCH

### JOURNAL ARTICLES:

Guevara Beltran, D., Ayers, J. D., **Claessens, S.**, Alcock, J., Baciú, C., Cronk, L., ... & Aktipis, A. (2024). Shared fate was associated with sustained cooperation during the COVID-19 pandemic. *PLoS ONE*, 19(9), e0307829. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0307829>

**Claessens, S.**, Sibley, C. G., Chaudhuri, A., & Atkinson, Q. D. (2023). Prosocial phenotype predicts political views on hierarchy and redistribution 18 months later. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, 19485506241306869. <https://doi.org/10.1177/19485506241306869>

**Claessens, S.**, Kyritsis, T., & Atkinson, Q. D. (2023). Cross-national analyses require additional controls to account for the non-independence of nations. *Nature Communications*. 14(1), 5776. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-023-41486-1>

Heiman, S. L., **Claessens, S.**, Ayers, J. D., Guevara Beltrán, D., Van Horn, A., Hirt, E. R., ... & Todd, P. M. (2023). Descriptive norms caused increases in mask wearing during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Scientific Reports*, 13(1), 11856. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-38593-w>

**Claessens, S.**, Sibley, C. G., Chaudhuri, A., & Atkinson, Q. D. (2023). Cooperative and conformist behavioural preferences predict the dual dimensions of political ideology. *Scientific Reports*, 13(1), 4886. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-31721-6>

Sheehan, O., Watts, J., Gray, R. D., Bulbulia, J., **Claessens, S.**, Ringen, E. J., & Atkinson, Q. D. (2023). Coevolution of religious and political authority in Austronesian societies. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 7(1), 38-45. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-022-01471-y>

**Claessens, S.**, & Kyritsis, T. (2022). Partner choice does not predict prosociality across countries. *Evolutionary Human Sciences*, 4, e54. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ehs.2022.51>

Atkinson, Q. D., **Claessens, S.**, Fischer, K., Forsyth, G. L., Kyritsis, T., Wiebels, K., & Moreau, D. (2022). Being specific about generalisability. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 13(3), 284-286. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599X.2022.2070251>

**Claessens, S.**, Kelly, D., Sibley, C. G., Chaudhuri, A., & Atkinson, Q. D. (2022). Cooperative phenotype predicts climate change belief and pro-environmental behaviour. *Scientific Reports*, 12(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-16937-2>

Hoogeveen, S., Sarafoglou, A., Aczel, B., Aditya, Y., Alayan, A. J., Allen, P. J., ... & Nilsson, G. (2022). A many-analysts approach to the relation between religiosity and well-being. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 13(3), 237-283. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599X.2022.2070255>

Krems, J. A., **Claessens, S.**, Fales, M. R., Campenni, M., Haselton, M. G., & Aktipis, A. (2021). An agent-based model of the female rivalry hypothesis for concealed ovulation in humans. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 5, 726-735. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-020-01038-9>

**Claessens, S.**, Ayers, J. D., Cronk, L., & Aktipis, A. (2020). Need-based transfer systems are more vulnerable to cheating when resources are hidden. *Evolution and Human Behaviour*, 42(2), 104-112. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evolhumbehav.2020.08.004>

**Claessens, S.**, Kyritsis, T., & Atkinson, Q. D. (2020). Revised analysis shows relational mobility predicts sacrificial behavior in Footbridge but not Switch or Loop trolley problems. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 117(24), 13203-13204. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2005012117>

**Claessens, S.**, Fischer, K., Chaudhuri, A., Sibley, C. G., & Atkinson, Q. D. (2020). The dual evolutionary foundations of political ideology. *Nature Human Behaviour*, 4, 336-345. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-020-0850-9>

Neilands, P., **Claessens, S.**, Ren, I., Hassall, R., Bastos, A. P., & Taylor, A. H. (2020). Contagious yawning is not a signal of empathy: no evidence of familiarity, gender or prosociality biases in dogs. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, 287(1920), 20192236. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rspb.2019.2236>

## BOOK CHAPTERS:

**Claessens, S.**, Chaudhuri, A., Sibley, C. G. & Atkinson, Q. D. (2022). The evolutionary basis of political ideology. In C. G. Sibley & D. Osbourne (Eds.), *Cambridge Handbook of Political Psychology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108779104>

## PRE-PRINTS:

**Claessens, S.**, Kyritsis, T., & Atkinson, Q. D. (2024). Controls for non-independence should reflect the data-generating process. *PsyArXiv*. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/7vj69>

Syropoulos, S., Crimston, C. R., Markowitz, E., Milfont, T. L., Law, K. F., **Claessens, S.**, ... & Rottman, J. (2024). Cross-cultural insights into moral expansiveness: Selective valuation of nature versus humans. *PsyArXiv*. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/3z5aj>

**Claessens, S.**, Atkinson, Q. D., & Raihani, N. (2024). Why do people punish? Evidence for a range of strategic concerns. *PsyArXiv*. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/ys6rm>

Bastos, A. P., **Claessens, S.**, Nelson, X. J., Welch, D., Atkinson, Q. D., & Taylor, A. H. (2023). Crowdsourcing and phylogenetic modelling reveal parrot tool use is not rare. *bioRxiv*. <https://doi.org/10.1101/2023.08.14.553302>

## **CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND GUEST LECTURES:**

**Claessens, S.** & Everett, J. A. C. (2025). Saving time but losing face: Negative perceptions of outsourcing to AI. Society for Personality and Social Psychology Annual Convention, Denver, Colorado, US, 20<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

**Claessens, S.**, Greenhill, S., Bouckaert, R., & Atkinson, Q. D. (2024). Inferring missing grammatical features for the world's languages. Conference presentation. 27<sup>th</sup> Annual New Zealand Phylogenomics Meeting, Waiheke Island, Auckland, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

**Claessens, S.** (2023). Parrot tool use is not rare. Conference presentation. Faculty of Science Research Fellow Symposium, University of Auckland, 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023.

**Claessens, S.** (2022). The non-independence of nations and why it matters. Conference presentation. 4<sup>th</sup> Cultural Evolution Society Conference, Aarhus, Denmark, 21<sup>st</sup> September 2022.

**Claessens, S.** (2022). The non-independence of nations and why it matters. Conference presentation. 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference of the Human Behavior and Evolution Society (Online), 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2022.

**Claessens, S.** (2021). The evolution of politics. Guest lecture. PSYCH317: Evolution, Behaviour and Cognition, School of Psychology, University of Auckland, 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021.

**Claessens, S.**, & Atkinson, Q. D. (2021). The dual evolutionary foundations of political ideology. Moral Molecules Conference (Online), 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

**Claessens, S.**, Sibley, C. G., Chaudhuri, A., & Atkinson, Q. D. (2019). Political gaming: using economic games to study the foundations of political ideology. Conference presentation. 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Australia New Zealand Workshop in Experimental Economics, University of Melbourne, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

**Claessens, S.** (2019). The dual evolutionary foundations of political ideology. Guest lecture. ECON271: Behavioural Economics, Business School, University of Auckland, 1<sup>st</sup> November 2019.

**Claessens, S.**, Sibley, C. G., Chaudhuri, A., & Atkinson, Q. D. (2019). Political gaming: using economic games to study the foundations of political ideology. Poster. University of Auckland Research Showcase, 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019.

**Claessens, S.** (2019). The evolutionary foundations of political ideology. Conference presentation. 16<sup>th</sup> Annual InHouse Convention, School of Psychology, University of Auckland, 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2019.

**Claessens, S.**, Ayers, J. D., Cronk, L., & Aktipis, A. (2018). Need-based transfer systems are more vulnerable to cheating when resources are hidden. Conference presentation. 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Australia New Zealand Workshop in Experimental Economics, University of Auckland, 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

## **THESES:**

**Claessens, S.** (2022). Testing the dual evolutionary foundations of political ideology using incentivised behavioural tasks. PhD thesis, University of Auckland.

**Claessens, S.** (2017). The benefits of being seen to be cooperative. Masters thesis, Newcastle University.

## **MEDIA COVERAGE**

**Sample of responses to Krems et al., 2021, Nature Human Behaviour, An agent-based model of the female rivalry hypothesis for concealed ovulation in humans**

[Radio interview with Scott Claessens](#), bFM, The Monday Wire with Zoë Larsen Cumming, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021.

[Radio interview with Scott Claessens](#), Radio New Zealand, Afternoons with Jesse Mulligan, 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

Chadwick, J. (2021). [Why ovulation is 'invisible' in humans: Prehistoric women evolved to hide their fertility status from other females 'to avoid conflict over mates'](#). *Daily Mail*. 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

**Sample of responses to Neilands et al., 2020, Proceedings of the Royal Society B, Contagious yawning is not a signal of empathy: no evidence of familiarity, gender or prosociality biases in dogs**

[Radio interview with Scott Claessens](#), bFM, Ready, Steady, Learn, 25<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

Scher, I. (2020). [A new study says human yawns are contagious to dogs but that may not mean what we think it means](#). *Insider*. 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

Martin, H. (2020). [Dogs' contagious yawning may not be a sign of empathy – study](#). *Stuff*. 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

## **ACADEMIC REFERENCES**

Professor Quentin Atkinson	<a href="mailto:q.atkinson@auckland.ac.nz">q.atkinson@auckland.ac.nz</a>	+64 9 373 7599
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