

William P. McClanahan III

Post-doctoral researcher with an interest in research combining psychological insight, criminological theory, and public policy, with a focus on criminal behavior and decision-making. A meticulous planner, organizer, and innovative researcher who is committed to producing high impact results through quality, objectivity, and effective evaluation.

Professional Appointments

06/2021-Present

Postdoc

Max Planck Institute for the Study of Crime, Security & Law, Germany

Research focus: My postdoc research harnesses the power of virtual reality and an ecologically valid sample to assess criminal decision-making. Convicted burglars are invited to explore a neighborhood, select a target to burglarize, and commit a burglary in VR and to go about it just as they would in the real world. The VR system tracks all their behavior in real time, such as where they look, how they walk around, which target they select, where they enter houses, and how they go about committing a burglary once inside the target. The results of our studies have provided us with an unprecedented level of detail regarding burglary behavior. Currently, my project looks at how various physical cues (or Easter Eggs as we call them) such as cars, neighborhood watch signs, and security alarms influence burglary decision-making.

Additional responsibilities: Member of the Virtual Crime Lab. Responsibilities include: providing critical feedback to individual as well as collaborative work; assisting in the design of coherent, clear, and effective data collection protocols, measurements, and methodologies; maintaining ethical compliance; collecting, managing, and analyzing data; and presenting findings and current investigations to other members, policy makers, and external stakeholders.

Education

10/2017-02/2021

PhD, Psychology, University of Cambridge

Research focus: Combining individual differences with situational influences to better understand criminal behavior and decision-making to inform policy. PhD research includes designing, implementing, and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data from large-scale online surveys as well as using innovative methodologies such as Virtual Reality alongside advanced statistical analyses to contribute to the theory and measurement of criminal behavior and decision-making.

10/2016 – 07/2017

MPhil, Social and Developmental Psychology, University of Cambridge

Final Grade: Distinction

Research focus: Using a large-scale national survey dataset, I examined individual youth differences alongside situational factors, namely family and peers, to predict criminal behavior. MPhil research also included preliminary collaboration with numerous high-schools in the state of Virginia and the Department of Juvenile Justice to gain access to ecologically valid samples for further testing.

08/2011 – 12/2014

BS, Psychology, with Second Major in Criminal Justice, Roanoke College, Virginia

Final Grade: 3.8 Magna cum laude

Awards

Boak Fund (awarded twice – 2019)

Clare Hall, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, United Kingdom

The Boak Fund provides support for students of Clare Hall to pursue outstanding research and educational opportunities. The awards are competitive and approved on a case-by-case basis focusing on academic merit and research potential. I was awarded the Boak Fund on two separate occasions, with the first award being granted to carry out primary research using novel virtual reality methodology and the second of which being granted to present original research at a leading academic conference, Society for Personality and Social Psychology (2020).

Grindley Fund (2020)

School of Biological Sciences, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom

The Grindley Fund provides grants for researchers within the School of Biological Sciences that focus on behavior.

Publications and Conferences

McClanahan, W.P., van der Linden, S., & Ruggeri, K. (2019). [Decision-making style mediates the relationship between trait self-control and self-reported criminal behaviour](#). *Personality and Individual Differences*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2019.109537>

- [Presented at SPSP, 2020 – New Orleans, Louisiana](#)

Roozenbeek, J., Maertens, R., McClanahan, W.P., & van der Linden, S. (2020). [Disentangling item and testing effects in inoculation research on online misinformation: Solomon revisited](#). *Education and Psychological Measurement*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013164420940378>

McClanahan, W.P., van der Linden, S. (2020). [An uncalculated risk: Ego-depletion reduces the influence of perceived risk but not state affect on criminal choice](#). *Psychology, Law, and Crime*. DOI: 10.1080/1068316X.2020.1837129

Saleh, N., Roozenbeek, J., Makki, F., McClanahan, W.P., & van der Linden, S. (2021). [Active inoculation boosts resistance against extremist persuasion techniques – A novel approach towards the prevention of violent extremism](#). *Behavioural Public Policy*, 1-24. doi:10.1017/bpp.2020.60

Basol, M. Roozenbeek, J. Uneal, F. Berriche, M. McClanahan, W.P., & van der Linden, S. (2021). Towards psychological herd immunity: Cross-cultural evidence for two prebunking interventions against COVID-19 misinformation. *Big Data & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517211013868>

Teaching Experience

01/2019 – 06/2020

Undergraduate Supervisor, Department of Psychology, University of Cambridge

Operating within the collegiate system of the university, I provide academic support to approximately 15 undergraduate students seeking a degree in psychological science. Main responsibilities include: assigning relevant materials to promote a comprehensive understanding of psychology; assigning and marking essays; as well as lecturing in both one-to-one as well as small group settings.

08/2013 – 12/2014

Subject Tutor Manager, Tutor, & Peer Mentor in Psychology, Roanoke College, Virginia

Mentored and tutored approximately 10 undergraduates in psychology admitted to the university on a conditional basis and worked in partnership with other managers to establish, schedule, and monitor a 'study hall' for students to use. Main responsibilities included: maintaining a working knowledge of teaching techniques to relay appropriate knowledge to students in an effective manner and providing academic as well as lifestyle support to help first year students transition into the university. Through dedicated service and reflective listening, all undergraduates successfully completed their first year of undergraduate studies and were removed from conditional status.

Professional Experience

01/2019 – 04/2019

Member of student consultant team working for Romsey Mill (RM), Cambridge, United Kingdom

In a team of four PhD candidates I worked on a project brief from RM to evaluate the program's efficacy of positively influencing the lives of at-risk youth. In collaboration with another team member I conducted two interviews acting as concept mapping sessions with the program directors at RM. Additionally, I designed, implemented, and analyzed an online survey with members of the organization to determine the perceived overall importance of factors raised in the concept mapping sessions. As a team, we then developed a study recommendation and I delegated appropriate tasks to each member based on their unique background as well as skill set. The project culminated in a final report (available upon request) and presentation of our

recommendations to RM in an open format setting that allowed for clarification and feedback. Feedback from RM indicated that the program was adapting the recommendations and requested future partnership.

1/2014 – 12/2014 Undergrad Research Assistant to Dr. Buchholz, Social Psychology, Roanoke College

Collaborated with Dr. Buccholz and other lab members to conduct a study assessing the longevity of helping behavior as a function of empathy. Main responsibilities include: reviewing literature to find a validated empathy measure; designing and implementing an experimental procedure to assess real-world helping behavior as a function of empathy over three time points; and analyzing, summarizing, and presenting data for report and dissemination of information to Roanoke College for future use.

01/2013- 06/2013

Juvenile Probation Officer (Intern and Independent Researcher), 23rd District Court CSU, Salem Virginia

Intern to the intake officer as well as two juvenile probation officers. Main responsibilities included: assisting in ongoing juvenile probation and monitoring; conducting social histories and drug tests to inform the court's decision-making processes; maintaining a caseload of clientele and making executive decisions to promote their well-being and the safety of the community.

The independent research carried out centered on the establishment of an evidence based, theoretically driven risk assessment. Main responsibilities included: synthesizing existing risk assessment literature; developing validated items for the risk assessment; as well as implementing the assessment within an ecological valid sample of juvenile offenders and analyzing the resulting data. The result of the project aided in the determination of a proper level of Evidence Based Practice intervention for each juvenile client. In total, I accrued approximately 200 hours between the office, the courtroom, schools, homes, and employment locations of juveniles.

Memberships and Interests

Numerous National (United States) Academic Society memberships granted for academic and community achievement during early education (2010-2014):

Senior Scholar in the Criminal Justice Major (Completed the Criminal Justice major with the highest GPA of all graduating seniors)

Sigma Alpha Phi (National Society of Leadership and Success)

Psi Chi Membership (National Honor Society in Psychology)

Alpha Phi Sigma (National Honor Society in Criminal Justice)

Alpha Chi (National College Honor Society)

Most Valuable Cougar (Award for academic excellence, character, and service to the community)

Clare Hall Boat Club, University of Cambridge

Men's Captain (2017-2018); Coach and Fitness Instructor (2017-2019); Fundraising Officer (2019-Present)

Captained the 2017/2018 Clare Hall First Men's Boat to their first Blade's victory since 2007. Main responsibilities included: designing, scheduling, and ensuring the safety of all members during both land and water training sessions; crew selection for races; and the organization of social events. I monitored individual as well as crew progress and adjusted training regimens accordingly to ensure long-term goal achievement. Fundraising responsibilities include launching a new funding campaign, meeting and negotiating with potential sponsors, developing a prospectus for current and future club use, and providing consistent communication between all relevant parties.

External Courses and Training

2020 Psychology as a Robust Science, University of Cambridge

2020 Structural Equation Modeling, University of Cambridge

2019 Data Protection Training, University of Cambridge

2019 Behavior Change By Design, University of Cambridge

2018 Doing Multivariate Analysis, Social Science Research Methods Program, University of Cambridge

2018 Further Topics in Multivariate Analysis, SSRMC, University of Cambridge

- 2018 How to Publish your Research Effectively, CULs, University of Cambridge
- 2018 Creating Impact with your research – A Teaching Session, Cambridge Research Office, University of Cambridge
- 2016 Research Ethics, Social Science Research Methods Program, University of Cambridge

Software

Proficient in STATA; Jamovi; SPSS; R (basics); Qualtrics; Steam; Wonda VR; HTC Vive; Unity (foundational); Zotero; Microsoft Office; G Suite; Microsoft Outlook; Windows; Skype; Twitter.

Reviewing and Services

Peer-reviewed manuscripts for:

- Psychology, Public Policy, and Law
- Journal of Environmental Psychology

References are available on request
