

# Colin Holbrook, PhD

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Associate Professor  
Department of Cognitive and Information Sciences  
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## Education

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|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2010 | PhD, Cognitive Science<br>Queen's University, Belfast, Institute of Cognition and Culture |
| 2000 | B.A., Cognitive Science<br>B.A., Religious Studies<br>University of California, Berkeley  |

## Research Interests

Threat-assessment, Emotion, Evolutionary Psychology, Human-Robot Interaction

## Awards or Grants

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|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2023 | Defense University Research Instrumentation Program: <i>Instrumentation Enabling Investigation of Relation-based Trust in Anthropomorphic Robots</i> , \$539,978.  |
| 2020 | Air Force Office of Scientific Research: <i>Trust in Machine Agents Under Realistic Threat</i> , \$815,011.                                                        |
| 2017 | Defense University Research Instrumentation Program: <i>Configurable Anthropomorphic Robot to Assess Threat-modulation of Trust in Machine Agents</i> , \$141,481. |
| 2015 | Air Force Office of Scientific Research: <i>Group Bias and the Attribution of Mental Properties to Allies, Antagonists, and Automata</i> , \$360,000.              |
| 2014 | UCLA Chancellor's Award for Postdoctoral Research, \$5,000.                                                                                                        |
| 2012 | UCLA Clinical and Translational Science Institute Transdisciplinary Seed Grant: <i>Reducing Group Prejudice with Neuromodulation</i> , \$25,000.                   |
| 2006 | Overseas Research Student Award, \$110,000.                                                                                                                        |

## Publications

Holbrook, C., Krishnamurthy, U., Maglio, P., & Wagner, A. R. (2024). Physical anthropomorphism (but not gender presentation) influences trust in household robots. *Computers in Human Behavior: Artificial Humans*, 3. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chbah.2024.100114>

- Holbrook, C., Holman, D., Clingo, J. & Wagner, A. R. (2024). Overtrust in AI recommendations about whether or not to kill: Evidence from two human-robot interaction studies. *Scientific Reports*, 14, 19751. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-024-69771-z>
- Dayer, A., Aswamenakul, C., Turner, M. A., Nicolay, S., Shurik, K., & Holbrook, C. (2024). Intuitive moral bias favors the religiously faithful: Evidence from two societies. *Scientific Reports*, 14, 18291. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-024-67960-4>
- Samore, T., Fessler, D. M. T., Sparks, A. M., Holbrook, C. ... Wang, X. (2024). Accordance and conflict between religious and scientific precautions against COVID-19 in 27 societies. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 1-20. [http://colinholbrook.com/Samore\\_et\\_al\\_Religion\\_COVID\\_RBB\\_2024.pdf](http://colinholbrook.com/Samore_et_al_Religion_COVID_RBB_2024.pdf)
- Lobato, E. & Holbrook, C. (2024). Prejudice is epistemically unwarranted belief. *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 38(3), e4216. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/acp.4216>
- Yin, Y., Nayyar, M., Holman, D., Lucas, G., Holbrook, C., & Wagner, A. (2024, June 24). Validation and evacuee modeling of virtual robot-guided emergency evacuation experiments. *PsyArXiv*. <https://osf.io/preprints/psyarxiv/mr78s>
- Moser, C., Holbrook, C., Ellks, R., & Jones, A. (2024, June 24). Possessing potential weapons (still) heightens anger perception: Replicating and extending a test of Error Management Theory. *PsyArXiv*. <https://osf.io/preprints/psyarxiv/jsurq>
- Holbrook, C., Holman, D., Wagner, A. R., Marghetis, T., Lucas, G., Sheeran, B., Surendran, V., Armagost, J., Spazak, S., Andor, K., & Yin, Y. (2023). Investigating human-robot overtrust during crises. In P. K. Murukannaiah, T. Hirzle (Eds.) *Proceedings of the Workshops at the Second International Conference on Hybrid Human-Artificial Intelligence* (164-168) (CEUR-WS.org). <https://osf.io/preprints/psyarxiv/3p5qe>
- Holbrook, C., Fessler, D. M., Sparks, A. M., Johnson, D. L., Samore, T., & Reed, L. I. (2023). Coalitionality shapes moral elevation: Evidence from the U.S. Black Lives Matter protest and counter-protest movements. *Royal Society Open Science*, 10, 220990. <https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rsos.220990>
- Samore, T., Fessler, D. M., Sparks, A. M., Holbrook, C., Aaroe, L., Baeza, C. G., ... Wang, X. (2023). Greater traditionalism predicts COVID-19 precautionary behaviors across 27 societies. *Scientific Reports*. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-023-29655-0>
- Sheeran, B. P., Wagner, A. R., Holbrook, C., & Holman, D. (2023, January 23-27). *Robot guided emergency evacuation from a simulated space station* [Paper presentation]. AIAA SciTech 2023 Forum, National Harbor, MD. doi.org/10.2514/6.2023-0156 [http://colinholbrook.com/Sheeran\\_et\\_al\\_ISS\\_Robot\\_Evac\\_AIAA\\_2023.pdf](http://colinholbrook.com/Sheeran_et_al_ISS_Robot_Evac_AIAA_2023.pdf)
- \*Fessler, D. M. T., \*Merrill, W., Holbrook, C., & Ackerman, J. (2023). Beware the foe who feels no pain: Associations between relative formidability and pain sensitivity in three U.S. online studies. *Evolution & Human Behavior*, 44(1), 1-10.

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Holbrook, C., Yoon, L., Fessler, D.M.T., Moser, C., Jimenez Delgado, S., & Kim, H. (2022). Moral parochialism and causal appraisal of transgressive harm in Seoul and Los Angeles. *Scientific Reports*, 12, 14227. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-022-18521-0>

Wagner, A. R., Holbrook, C., Holman, D., Sheeran, B., Surendran, V., Armagost, J., Spazak, S., & Yin, Y. (2022, November 17-19). *Using virtual reality to simulate human-robot emergency evacuation scenarios* [Paper presentation]. AAAI AI-HRI Fall Symposium Series 2022, Arlington, VA. arXiv:2210.08414

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Holbrook, C., Iacoboni, M., Gordon, C., Proksch, S., Makhfi, H., & Balasubramaniam, R. (2021). Posterior medial frontal cortex regulates sympathy: A TMS study. *Social Neuroscience*, 16(6), 595-606. [http://colinholbrook.com/Holbrook\\_et\\_al\\_TMS\\_PMFC\\_Sympathy\\_SN\\_2021.pdf](http://colinholbrook.com/Holbrook_et_al_TMS_PMFC_Sympathy_SN_2021.pdf)

Kupfer, T.R., Fessler, D.M.T., Lal, V., Wu, B., Hwang, T., Alas, S., Samore, T., Sparks, A.M., Sakhamuru, T., & Holbrook, C. (2021). The skin crawls, the stomach turns: Ectoparasites and pathogens elicit distinct defensive responses in humans. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 288: 20210376.

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- Holbrook, C.,\* Pollack, J.,\* Zerbe, J., & Hahn-Holbrook, J. (2020). Perceived supernatural support enhances battle confidence: A knife combat field study. *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 10(1), 6-17. (“\*”equal authorship.)  
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- Sparks, A.M., Fessler, D.M.T., & Holbrook, C. (2019). Elevation, an emotion for prosocial contagion, is experienced more strongly by those with greater expectations of the cooperativeness of others. *Public Library of Science ONE*.  
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- Tabatabaieian, S., Holbrook, C., & Jennings, C.D. (2019). A re-examination of the interrelationships between attention, eye behavior, and creative thought. In A.K. Goel, C.M. Seifert, & C. Freksa (Eds.) *Proceedings of the 41st Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society* (p. 3590). Montreal, QB: Cognitive Science Society.
- Fessler, D.M.T., Sparks, A.M., Samore, T., & Holbrook, C. (2019). Does observing reciprocity or exploitation affect elevation, a mechanism driving prosociality? *Evolutionary Human Sciences*, 1, E3. doi:10.1017/ehs.2019.3  
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- Pollack, J.,\* Holbrook, C.,\* Fessler, D.M.T., Sparks, A. M., & Zerbe, J.G. (2018). May God guide our guns: Visualized supernatural aid heightens team confidence in a paintball battle simulation. *Human Nature*. doi:10.1007/s12110-018-9320-8  
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- Fessler, D.M.T., & Holbrook, C. (2013). Baumard et al.'s moral markets lack market dynamics [Commentary]. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 36, 89-90.  
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- Holbrook, C., Fessler, D.M.T., & Gervais, M. (2013). Revenge without redundancy: Functional outcomes do not require discrete adaptations for vengeance or forgiveness [Commentary]. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 36, 22-23.  
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- Fessler, D.M.T., Holbrook, C., & Snyder, J.K. (2012). Weapons make the man (larger): Relative formidability influences perceived size and strength. *Public Library of Science ONE*, 7(4): e32751.  
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- Hahn-Holbrook, J.\*, Holbrook, C.\*, & Haselton, M. (2011). Parental precaution: Adaptive ends and neurobiological means. *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*, 35, 1052-1066.  
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- Sousa, P., Holbrook, C., & Piazza, J. (2009). The morality of harm. *Cognition*, 113, 80-92.  
<http://colinholbrook.com/TheMoralityofHarm.pdf>



## Professional Experience

- 2021–present *Associate Professor of Cognitive and Information Sciences*, University of California, Merced.
- 2017–2021 *Assistant Professor of Cognitive and Information Sciences*, University of California, Merced.
- 2015–2017 *Research Scientist*, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Los Angeles.
- 2010–2015 *Postdoctoral Research Fellow*, Center for Behavior, Evolution and Culture, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Los Angeles.  
Mentor: Dr. Daniel M. T. Fessler.
- 2006–2010 *PhD Candidate*, Institute of Cognition & Culture, Queen’s University, Belfast.

## Professional Service

*Ad Hoc Reviewer*: Nature; Trends in Cognitive Sciences; Cognitive Science; Cognition; Transactions on Intelligent Interactive Systems; Psychological Science; Cognition and Emotion; Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience; Journal of Personality and Social Psychology; Biological Psychology; Biology Letters; Evolution and Human Behavior; Human Nature; Perspectives on Psychological Science; Social Cognition; European Journal of Social Psychology; Aggressive Behavior; Journal of Cognition and Culture; Journal of Theoretical Social Psychology; Personality and Individual Differences; Evolutionary Psychology; Journal of Applied Social Psychology; Social Behavior and Personality; Neuroscience Letters; Public Library of Science; Scientific Reports; Technology in Society

*Doctoral Student Committee Member*:

- Dr. Jeffrey K. Snyder, UCLA, 2010-2012
- Dr. Jordan Clark, UN Reno, 2017-2020
- Dr. Umesh Krishnamurthy, UC Merced, 2018-2021
- Dr. Theo Samore, UCLA, 2017-2024
- Joshua Clingo, UC Merced, 2021-present
- Helia Hosseinpour, UC Merced, 2021-2023
- Zoe Griffith, UC Merced, 2021-present

*Doctoral Student Advisor (UC Merced)*:

- Kaylee Davis, 2023-present
- Joshua Clingo (co-advisor with Dr. Carolyn Jennings), 2020-2021
- Dr. Emilio Lobato (co-advisor with Dr. Daniel Hicks beginning 2021), 2018-2024
- Dr. Shadab Tabatabaiean (co-advisor with Dr. Carolyn Jennings) 2018-2020

*Vice Graduate Chair, Department of Cognitive and Information Sciences* (UC Merced, 2022-present)

*Primary organizer, Cognitive Science for the Common Good* (UC Merced, 2017-2024)

*Member, Cognitive and Information Sciences Communications Committee* (UC Merced, 2017-present)

*Member, Cognitive and Information Sciences Community Committee* (UC Merced, 2020-present)

## Teaching Experience

Spring, 2024	UC Merced, Instructor: <i>The Cognitive Science of the Emotions</i> (U)
Fall, 2023	UC Merced, Instructor: <i>The Cognitive Science of Religion</i> (U)
Spring, 2023	UC Merced, Instructor: <i>Mind, Technology and Society</i> (G)
Fall, 2022	UC Merced, Instructor: <i>The Cognitive Science of Religion</i> (U)
Spring, 2022	UC Merced, Instructor: <i>The Cognitive Science of the Emotions</i> (G)
Spring, 2022	UC Merced, Instructor: <i>The Cognitive Science of the Emotions</i> (U)
Fall, 2021	UC Merced, Instructor: <i>The Cognitive Science of Religion</i> (U)
Spring, 2021	UC Merced, Instructor: <i>The Cognitive Science of the Emotions</i> (G)
Fall, 2020	UC Merced, Instructor: <i>The Cognitive Science of Religion</i> (U)
Spring, 2020	UC Merced, Instructor: <i>The Cognitive Science of the Emotions</i> (G)
Spring, 2020	UC Merced, Instructor: <i>The Cognitive Science of the Emotions</i> (U)
Fall, 2019	UC Merced, Instructor: <i>The Cognitive Science of Religion</i> (G)
Spring 2019	UC Merced, Instructor: <i>Mind, Technology and Society</i> (G)
Spring 2019	UC Merced, Instructor: <i>The Cognitive Science of the Emotions</i> (U)
Fall, 2018	UC Merced, Instructor: <i>The Cognitive Science of Religion</i> (G)
Spring, 2018	UC Merced, Instructor: <i>The Cognitive Science of the Emotions</i> (U)
Spring, 2018	UC Merced, Instructor: <i>The Cognitive Science of the Emotions</i> (G)
Winter, 2017	Chapman University, Instructor: <i>Motivation and Emotion</i> (U)
Winter, 2016	Chapman University, Instructor: <i>Motivation and Emotion</i> (U)
Summer, 2014	Chapman University, Instructor: <i>Motivation and Emotion</i> (U)
Fall, 2013	Chapman University, Instructor: <i>Motivation and Emotion</i> (U)

- **U = Undergraduate course G = Graduate seminar**

## Invited Presentations

Holbrook, C. (2023, May). *Robot anthropomorphism and trust under realistic threat*. Presentation for the Association for Psychological Science, Washington D.C.

Holbrook, C. (2022, April). *Not hard-wired: Emotion adaptations are contextually sensitive to situation, self, and society*. Invited presentation for the Society for Affective Science.

Holbrook, C. (2020, September). *Political attitudes predict COVID-19 precaution and misinformation*. Invited presentation for the Department of Psychological Sciences, University of California, Merced.

Holbrook, C. (2019, November). *Size, strength and status estimates implicitly index racial bias*. Invited presentation for the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts, University of California, Merced.

Holbrook, C. (2019, November). *Size, strength and status estimates implicitly index racial bias*. Invited presentation for the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts, University of California, Merced.

Holbrook, C. (2017, February). *Social cognition under threat*. Invited presentation for the Department of Psychology, Western University, London, Ontario, Canada.

- Holbrook, C. (2016, November). *Reason under peril*. Invited presentation for the Department of Psychology, CUNY-Hunter College, New York.
- Holbrook, C. (2016, March). *God and group prejudice in the threatened brain*. Invited presentation for the Department of Psychology, Chapman University, Orange.
- Holbrook, C. (2015, December). *When foes loom large: Representations of relative formidability and social cognition*. Invited presentation for the Research Center for Group Dynamics, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
- Holbrook, C. (2015, December). *Serial homology and social judgment under threat*. Invited presentation for the Department of Psychology, University of Warwick, Coventry, England.
- Holbrook, C. (2015, January). *Reason's shadow: Threat adaptations shape concepts of social prestige and displays of ideological zeal*. Invited presentation for the Department of Psychology, University of California, Santa Barbara.
- Holbrook, C. (2014, December). *Conceptual mediators of threat assessment and judgment bias*. Invited presentation for the Department of Psychology, University of Toronto.
- Holbrook, C. (2012, June). *Worldview defense and unconscious alarm*. Invited presentation for the European Science Foundation Expert Meeting on the Motivational Foundations of Worldview Defense. University of Salzburg, Austria.
- Holbrook, C. (2012, May). *Why thoughts of death or isolation magnify group prejudice*. Invited presentation for the Center for Behavior, Evolution, and Culture. University of California, Los Angeles.
- Holbrook, C. (2011, October). *Selection or serendipity? Reframing apparent psychological adaptations for terror, uncertainty or coalition management as evolutionary by-products*. Invited presentation for the Department of Psychology, University of California, Los Angeles.
- Holbrook, C., & Hahn-Holbrook, J. (2009, May). *Relationships with God and altruistic violence*. Invited presentation for the Psychology and Religion Research Group, Cambridge University, UK.

## Professional Development

Member: UCLA Experimental Biological Anthropology Lab, 2010-2017.  
Participant: AHRC Culture and the Mind Project, 2010-2014.

## Professional Affiliations

Society of Experimental Social Psychology; Human Behavior and Evolution Society

## Selected Press Coverage

- Plain, C. (2024, August 9). Belief in God has been overwhelmingly linked with this specific behavior. *The Debrief*. Retrieved from: <https://thedebrief.org/belief-in-god-has-been-overwhelmingly-linked-with-this-specific-behavior/>
- Dolan, E. W. (2023, May 26). Study on Black Lives Matter protests provides insight into the link between coalitional affiliation and moral elevation. *PsyPost*. Retrieved from: <https://www.psypost.org/study-on-black-lives-matter-protests-provides-insight-into-the-link-between-coalitional-affiliation-and-moral-elevation/>
- Imbler, S. (2021, July 27). Ever feel your skin crawling? Maybe you can thank evolution. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/27/science/skin-crawling-itching-parasites.html>
- Wu, K. J. (2021, July 27). Do not read this at lunch: Scientists teased out a new dimension of disgust by showing people gross videos of rotting meat, bugs, and other very unappetizing prospects. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2021/07/what-defines-disgust/619580/>
- Coffey, R. (2021, July 8). Social scientists discover a dangerous truth about American politics hidden in new COVID-19 data. *Forbes*. Retrieved from: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/rebeccacoffey/2021/07/08/social-scientists-discover-a-dangerous-truth-about-american-politics-hidden-in-new-covid-19-data/?sh=7b3ea0b4490f>
- Brownstein, R. (2021, July 6). America's partisan fireworks will be hard for anyone to put out. *CNN*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cnn.com/2021/07/05/politics/america-partisan-divisions-widen/index.html>
- Lopes, R. (2020, June 22). Colin Holbrook: Threat, And Human-Robot Interaction (Part 1). *The Dissenter*. [Science Podcast Interview.] Retrieved from: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIocAsPszzc&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XIocAsPszzc&feature=emb_logo)
- Edsall, T. (2020, May 20). When the mask you're wearing "Tastes Like Socialism". *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/20/opinion/coronavirus-trump-partisanship.html>
- Free, C. (2019, October 30). Would you help a stranger? UCLA to study why people are kind or not. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2019/10/30/would-you-help-stranger-ucla-study-why-people-are-kind-or-not/>
- Gjersoe, N. (2017, May 26). Negativity bias: Why conservatives are more swayed by threats than liberals. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/science/head-quarters/2017/may/26/negativity-bias-why-conservatives-are-more-swayed-by-threats-than-liberals>

- Singal, J. (2017, February 3). Are conservatives more scared of stuff than liberals? *New York Magazine*. Retrieved from: <https://www.thecut.com/2017/02/are-conservatives-more-scared-of-stuff-than-liberals.html>
- Healy, M. (2017, February 2). Why conservatives are more likely than liberals to believe false information about threats. *The Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from: <http://www.latimes.com/science/sciencenow/la-sci-sn-conservative-believe-false-threats-20170202-story.html>
- Khazan, O. (2017, February 2). Why fake news targeted Trump supporters. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/02/why-fake-news-targeted-trump-supporters/515433/>
- Horton, H. (2015, October 16). Scientists find you can reduce peoples' belief in God by directing magnetic energy into the brain. *The Telegraph*. Retrieved from: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/11935492/scientists-reduce-belief-god-hostility-immigrants-magnets.html>
- Newsday. (2015, October 15). Can magnets change your beliefs? *BBC World Service*. Retrieved from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p0358ndn>
- Howard, J. (2015, October 8). New study confirms depressing truth about names and racial bias. *Huffington Post*. Retrieved from: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/black-sounding-names-study\\_561697a5e4b0dbb8000d687f](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/black-sounding-names-study_561697a5e4b0dbb8000d687f)
- Olney, W. (2015, October 7). Can a person's name influence racial bias? *National Public Radio*. Retrieved from: <http://www.kcrw.com/people/colin-holbrook>
- Mohan, G. (2014, October 9). Men and violence: Sizing up how men size up one another. *The Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved from: <http://www.latimes.com/science/la-sci-cl-evolution-fessler-20141009-story.html>
- Bohannon, J. (2014, August 26). Synchronized marching boosts confidence. *Science*. Retrieved from: <http://news.sciencemag.org/biology/2014/08/synchronized-marching-boosts-confidence>