

**Date:** May 25, 2026

**Speaker:** Dr. Guy Laban, Industrial Engineering & Management Dept, BGU

**Time:** 10:10-11:00

**Location:** Nano Building 51, seminar room 015

**Title:** Sharing our emotions with robots: why do we do it, and how does it make us feel?

**Abstract:**

Advances in conversational AI are expanding the social capabilities of embodied systems and raising new questions for robotics about how people relate to robots as social and emotional partners. In this talk, I will draw on my research on social robots and other artificial agents to discuss why people share emotions with these systems, how such interactions develop over time, and what people may gain from them. I will present a series of studies on dialogue, self-disclosure, and emotion regulation in repeated interactions with robots, showing how users gradually adapt to these systems, become more open and expressive, and can experience emotional benefits through the interaction. I will also reflect on what these findings mean for the design of socially interactive robots, especially in contexts where they may play supportive roles in everyday life. Finally, I will address the ethical questions that emerge when robots become part of people's emotional worlds, including trust, dependency, and emotional influence.

**Bio:**

Guy Laban is a Senior Lecturer (Assistant Professor) in the Department of Industrial Engineering and Management at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, where he directs LabaLab, the Language, Affect, and Behaviour in AI Lab. He is also a member of the School of Brain Science and Cognition at BGU and a steering committee board member of the Azrieli National Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment Research. His research sits at the intersection of human-robot interaction, affective computing, and conversational AI, with a focus on how people communicate socially and emotionally with artificial agents, including social robots. He studies how these systems can better understand humans, support meaningful interaction, and shape emotional well-being and social dynamics. Previously, he was a Research Associate in the Department of Computer Science and Technology at the University of Cambridge, and he completed his PhD in Neuroscience and Psychology at the University of Glasgow as part of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie ENTWINE network. His work has received several awards, including the 2024 ISRE Dissertation Award (2nd Runner-Up), the Wiseman Prize, the 2025 KROS Interdisciplinary Research Award in Social Human-Robot Interaction, and the 2026 BGU High Impact Research Award. He is also an Associate Editor for ACM Transactions on Human-Robot Interaction and a member of the editorial board of ACM Transactions on Interactive Intelligent Systems.