Are You Free to Make Your Choice?
The Dynamics of Reactance and Cognitive Structure

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3-4PM, Burton Hall, Room 210 (New Location!!)

Dr. Bessarabova will discuss her recent research, examining the effects of freedom-limiting communication on cognitive structures at three points in time using Galileo spatial-linkage modeling as a theoretical framework. Her research advances the theory of psychological reactance by investigating (a) the effects of threat to freedom on cognitive concepts targeted by the message and, more importantly, cognitive concepts that are related to the message topic but were not discussed in the message; (b) the effectiveness of restoration postscripts (defined as the suggestion that an individual still has freedom to make a decision) at reducing reactance; and (c) the effects of threat to freedom and restoration over time. Her findings highlight the importance of perceived freedom on persuasive campaigns, interpersonal influence, and attitude change.