

DEPARTMENT OF MATHEMATICS/HISTORY & PHILISOPHY OF SCIENCE

SPECIAL SEMINAR

Title:

The Oberwolfach Research Institute for Mathematics, the early years

Abstract:

The Oberwolfach Research Institute for Mathematics (Mathematisches Forschungsinstitut Oberwolfach/MFO) was founded in late 1944 by the Freiburg mathematician Wilhelm Süss (1895-1958) as „National Institute for Mathematics“. In the 1950s and 1960s the MFO developed into an increasingly international conference centre. The aim of the project is to analyse the history of the MFO as it institutionally changed from National Institute for Mathematics with a wide, but standard range of responsibilities to an international social infrastructure for research completely new in the framework of German academia. The project focusses on the evolvement of the institutional identity of the MFO between 1944 and the early 1960s, namely the development and importance of the MFO's scientific programme (workshops, team work, Bourbaki) and the instruments of research employed (library, workshops) as well as the corresponding strategies to safeguard the MFO's existence (for instance under the wings of the Max-Planck-Society). In particular, three aspects will be key to the project, namely the analyses of the historical processes of (1) the development and shaping of the MFO's workshop activities, (2) the (complex) institutional safeguarding of the MFO, and (3) the role the MFO played for the re-internationalisation of mathematics in Germany. Thus the project opens a window on topics of more general relevance in the history of science such as the complexity of science funding and the re-internationalisation of the sciences in the early years of the Federal Republic of Germany.



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Date: Wed., September 26, 2018

Time: 4:00 pm

Location: 117 Hayes-Healy Bldg.