Algebra/Topology Seminar

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What Is... the Whitehead Group?

Thursday, April 12, 2018
1:15 p.m. in ES-143

Abstract. Given a group G (finite or infinite, abelian or not), its Whitehead group $Wh(G)$ is an abelian group defined using only elementary linear algebra. Remarkably, as I will review, Whitehead groups play a major role in the classification of high-dimensional manifolds. But, unfortunately, Whitehead groups are hard to compute. I will survey what is known and what is conjectured to be true about the structure of Whitehead groups, and then present some recent results.