

## What is an Online Course?

Far beyond the atmosphere of Earth, satellites are constantly scanning our planet-tracking weather, monitoring pollution, creating maps, and gathering information that helps scientists predict storms, monitor forest fires, and study the holes in the ozone layer. <http://www.oms.edu/visit/earth/eyesonearth/observing.cfm>

The Hubble telescope provides a different way for scientists to view the universe. <http://hubblesite.org/>

These are examples of using computer based learning. Similarly, the online computer based mathematics courses at Phoenix College are our way of providing students with a different mode for learning math. You may be asking yourself; "What are online classes exactly and how do they work?" To help answer this question you need to understand that the content within an online course and the on-campus course does not differ in any way. The main difference is how the content is presented to you.

In a classroom environment the class that you sign up for will meet at a specific time. The instructor is in the room with you and provides you with a lecture. Students who have questions or comments can raise their hands and add to the discussion. If you need to talk to the instructor, you can meet them after class or visit them during their office hours. This all occurs **synchronously** - meaning at a certain time.

However, in an online setting, students can access the course when they have time. There is no set schedule to meet with the instructor. The class meets **asynchronously** - meaning not at the same time. Instead of raising your hand, you post to a discussion board or chat room. Instead of talking with your instructor after class you can send them an e-mail. The only part of an on-line course that is synchronous is when you meet with your instructor for virtual office hours.

Most students agree that an online course is more convenient but they also say that learning online requires *more* time, self discipline, dedication, and time-management skills than traditional classroom learning. This website will help you decide if online learning is for you.

Online courses begin with detailed instructions about the layout of the course, features of the course management software, MyMathLab, required materials and coursework.

## **What type of learner must I be to successfully complete an Online course?**

In order to be successful, students enrolled in online courses should be motivated and have good organizational skills. In particular, students need to avoid procrastination by setting up and maintaining a weekly study schedule to stay on top of assignments.

In addition, students should take advantage of virtual office hours, discussion forums, chat rooms and email to communicate regularly with their instructors and classmates. Students also need to make effective use of various course materials and the learning tools available through the college's flexible-learning programs.

## **An Online course is an excellent choice if:**

- Time is a factor. Online courses provide an excellent method of course delivery unbound by time or location allowing for accessibility to instruction at anytime from anywhere.
- You are an adult learner with a busy life. The ability to access a course from a home computer via the Internet, 24 hours a day, seven days a week is a tremendous incentive for this group to reach their academic and career goals.
- You are interested in experiencing student-centered teaching approaches and interactive learning online.
- You are motivated to learn. The unique nature of the web offers new ways to improve student learning through presentation and interaction with the course material.

## What technical issues should I be aware of for an Online course?

- Students must have the proper computer hardware and connections to the Internet to permit this type of course delivery. Note: Internet access is available at several locations on campus. If you are not on campus then internet access can be found at public libraries, retail establishments and many workplaces.
- PC computers are the preferred platform. Apple's Macintosh computers *do not* support this program - unless using VirtualPC.
- You must be connected to the Internet by an Internet Service Provider (ISP) that offers a high speed, reliable, direct connection to the Internet.
- *Internet Explorer* is the *only* browser compatible with this program. Internet Explorer may be downloaded at no cost from **Microsoft's web site**.
- You must have a personal e-mail account.
- Students in these courses should have some experience and familiarity navigating and using the Internet as an information and communication resource. Downloading and attaching files to an e-mail, word processing and basic fundamentals of using a computer as a communication and productivity tool are necessary skills for achieving success in a hybrid course. Hybrid instructors assume that students are experienced with the basics of operating and working on a Windows-based system.

## Will I find myself totally working alone on this class?

No. You will be working closely with the instructor and the students in your class, just as you would in a traditional classroom using the following tools: discussion boards, forums, e-mail and chat rooms.

It is essential that you maintain good organizational and time-management skills in an online course in order to be successful.

## Online Sections

Course	Section	Room	Days	Time
MAT120	3134	PCWEBCT	Online	Online

For more information about Online MAT 120 contact Mr. Cornell  
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