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This is the first textbook treatment of work leading to the landmark 1979 Kazhdan-Lusztig Conjecture on characters of simple highest weight modules for a semisimple Lie algebra \mathfrak{g} over \mathbb{C} . The setting is the module category \mathcal{O} introduced by Bernstein-Gelfand-Gelfand, which includes all highest weight modules for \mathfrak{g} such as Verma modules and finite dimensional simple modules. Analogues of this category have become influential in many areas of representation theory. Part I can be used as a text for independent study or for a mid-level one semester graduate course; it includes exercises and examples. The main prerequisite is familiarity with the structure theory of \mathfrak{g} . Basic techniques in category \mathcal{O} such as BGG Reciprocity and Jantzen's translation functors are developed, culminating in an overview of the proof of the Kazhdan-Lusztig Conjecture (due to Beilinson-Bernstein and Brylinski-Kashiwara). The full proof however is beyond the scope of this book, requiring deep geometric methods: D -modules and perverse sheaves on the flag variety. Part II introduces closely related topics important in current research: parabolic category \mathcal{O} , projective functors, tilting modules, twisting and completion functors, and Koszul duality theorem of Beilinson-Ginzburg-Soergel.