

Cthulhu

A Deck
Building Game



Investigator Handbook

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Letter From The Faculty

Investigators,

We would like to sincerely thank you for agreeing to take on the heavy task of looking into the strange and horrific events that have beset our town. Based on the evidence that we've received from your predecessors, it can no longer be denied that the Elder Gods have awakened from their eons long slumber.

In an effort to preserve your life and sanity, this short handbook has been prepared by the faculty here at Miskatonic University. Contained within these pages is everything we have been able to discover so far concerning these events. It is our sincerest hope that this treatise will help prevent further... mishaps.

Please note, our future looks dire and time is short. We understand that only you and a handful of your fellow Investigators stand between these powerful, ancient beings and the rest of humanity. Remember to keep your wits about you as you will surely encounter forces and events that will be beyond any human comprehension or control. Good luck and godspeed.

Sincerely,

Dr. Henry Armitage
Chief Librarian
Miskatonic University



Ages 14 to Cthulhu



45 ~ 120 Minutes



1 to 6 Players

Objective

Using your Moxie, work together with your fellow Investigators to research cards at Miskatonic University. Utilizing the results of your research, banish the Elder Gods to prevent them from spreading their vile influence across Arkham and then the world!

If you manage to banish all the awakened Elder Gods, you will have won the day... even, perhaps, with a bit of your sanity still intact.

However, if you and your fellow Investigators either die or lose your grip on reality, well then... we're all doomed, aren't we?

Components

- ★ 1 Investigator Handbook *which you are now holding*
- ★ 1 Card Trays
- ★ 10 Logbooks
- ★ 12 Elder Gods Cards
- ★ 21 Investigator Cards
- ★ 11 Unique Minions *101 total*
- ★ 43 Unique Mythos Cards *103 total*
- ★ 69 Unique Library Cards *180 total*
- ★ 60 Starter Cards
- ★ 10 Card Dividers
- ★ 24 Health/Sanity Pointers

Setup

1. Each player receives an Investigator Card either by choice or random dealing. Place a Health Slide Pointer at the top and a Sanity Slide Pointer at the bottom over each stat's maximum value. Return any remaining Investigators to the game box.



Your Investigator card is your character in the game. You are now the Investigator. Included on the card is your backstory, details about your special ability, and what happens to you after death.

2. Give each Investigator a Starter Deck consisting of 7 Sleuth cards and 3 Stagger cards. Shuffle these cards together to form your Personal Library deck and place it facedown in front of you. Return any remaining Starter cards to the gamebox.

- 3. Shuffle the Elder God, Library, and Mythos decks separately. Place each deck facedown in easy reach of all Investigators.
- 4. Before your first game, separate the Minions by type and organize them in the game box with the provided dividers. They remain in the box and will be summoned/spawned into play from there.
- 5. Reveal the top 5 cards of the Library deck and place them face-up in clear view of all Investigators. This is the Public Library of Miskatonic University where you will be doing all your research.
- 6. Choose a difficulty level according to the following chart:

Investigators		1	2	3	4	5	6
Normal	ELDER GODS	1	1	1	2	2	2
	MYTHOS CARDS	1	1	1	1	1	1
Cthulhu Mode	ELDER GODS	2	2	2	3	3	3
	MYTHOS CARDS	2	2	2	3	3	3

This chart determines, based on the number of Investigators, how many Elder Gods you will face and the number of Mythos cards the Elder Gods will inflict on you each round.

7. From the Elder God deck, draw the number of Elder Gods from the chart and place them face-up in order from lowest to highest. The Elder God's Health number indicates their placement (see Symbols). Give each Elder God a Log Book to track their Health. Place Slide Pointers on the Elder God's maximum health.
8. Choose an Investigator to go first.

*A comment on chaos
Know this going in: there are cards and card combinations that will appear to break the game. These cards are rare and part of the chaos wrought by Cthulhu and his fellow Elder Gods. Cards/combos like this will come up at unexpected times to either save or ruin the day. Have fun!*

A Few Symbols



This symbol indicates a Firearm. Some Investigators, Library, or other cards may use this symbol in reference to each other.



This symbol indicates a Bladed Weapon. Some Investigators, Library, or other cards may use this symbol in reference to each other.



This circle with a number inside can be found in the top right corner of Library, Elder God, and Minion cards.



Library - this is the cost in Moxie required to Research this card from the Public Library of Miskatonic University. This is not the amount of Moxie gained when activating a Library card.



Elder God - this is the amount of Health for the Elder God. Investigators must do this much damage over the course of several Rounds in order to defeat and banish the Elder God from play.




Minion - this is the amount of Health for the Minion. Investigators must do this much damage over the course of several Rounds in order to defeat and banish the Minion from play.



On various types of cards you will see the Investigator Count symbol. This symbol is equal to the number of Investigators in the game, **including any dead Investigators.**

Important!

With this symbol there is the **Minimum of 1** rule.

Example: Hastur summons  - 3 Incorporeal Daemons. There are only 2 Investigators, so Hastur will summon the minimum of 1 Daemon.

Investigators *Your persona within the game*

Investigators are all that stand between an unsuspecting world and the cosmic horrors that threaten to consume it.

Health - How much physical punishment an investigator can take before they physically die.

Backstory - A short explanation of how the Investigator first came into contact with the supernatural.



Sanity - How much mental strain an investigator can endure before they are driven completely and irrevocably into madness.

Special Ability - Each Investigator possesses a special skill to help them combat the horrors they face. A description of this skill, and rules for its use, are found here.

After Death - When fighting the Elder Gods, death and insanity are very real possibilities. However, even after an Investigator succumbs, they still have some influence left.

Card Types

Starter Cards

Sleuth Cards provide Moxie. *At the start of the game these are the only source of Moxie you have*

Stagger Cards provide no direct benefit to your investigator.

You should pay attention to where you are going, you have no time to waste!

Library

Library cards are your only weapon and defense against the onslaught of the Elder Gods



There are 4 types of Library cards. Some Investigators are better at using certain types. You'll want to work together to make sure the right Investigator gets the right cards.

Actions: Something physical that an Investigator does to further their cause.

Equipment: These are physical items that can be used to battle the Mythos and aid in Research.

Spells: Magic almost always has a cost. Spells typically have positive and negative effects.

Locations: These are always in effect for all Investigators once played. Locations stay active even at the end of each round

The Encroaching Darkness

Elder Gods - Your ancient and inhuman foes. These aeons-old beings command powers and intelligence beyond human comprehension. Their desires and motivations are just as unfathomable.

"Health"

Name
Elder God
Action



Name



Mythos - The presence of the Elder Gods warps and twists reality, causing horrifying phenomena to manifest as they encroach further into our reality.

Effect

Minions - The servants of the Great Old Ones. While most are just as inhuman as their masters, many a foolish would be sorcerer, or madman, can be counted among them.



Health

Summoning Minions

When you are directed to summon a particular Minion, search the Minion deck for the the summoned Minion and put it into play.

Name

Minion Actions

Logbooks

Logbooks are used to track your progress towards defeating a particular Minion or Elder God.

They also serve as a handy play sequence reference

Tens column

Ones column

0	0
10	1
20	2
30	3
40	4
50	5
60	6
70	7
80	8
90	9

Phase Order Reference

Gameplay

The game plays out over a series of Rounds until either you and the other Investigators defeat the Elder Gods, or they defeat you. Each Round consists of the following Phases:

1. Planning Phase
2. Combat Phase
3. Clean Up Phase

Planning Phase

Its time for you and your cohorts to prepare for the battle to come. Your sole resource in this game is **Moxie**. Moxie is used both as currency to research cards for your Personal Library AND as damage to defeat the Elder Gods and their Minions. In this Phase you must use your Moxie wisely to learn what you can do to deal damage to your enemies.

On their turn, each Investigator must perform the following actions in order. Investigator turns may be taken in any order.

1. **Draw** 5 cards from your Personal Library deck. You may show your cards to your fellow Investigators.

If at any time you run out of cards in your Personal Library, simply reshuffle your Personal Discard pile to make a new facedown Personal Library.

2. **Preparation:** Play cards from your hand face-up onto the table in front of you. These cards are now activated and immediately provide you with the benefits, or possible disadvantages, on the bottom of the card.

3. **Research:** Cards are available in the Public Library at Miskatonic University to aid you in the fight to come. Use any Moxie gained from the cards you activated during Preparation to research new cards from the Public Library.

- a. Place the new cards researched directly into your hand, and then discard any activated cards you used into your Personal Discard pile. If an activated card has an ability that lasts beyond the Planning Phase, it may stay in play.

- b. Library cards may **not** be used to research other Library cards on the same turn in which they were added to your hand.

*Investigators may **not** pool their Moxie together to buy cards*

4. **Final Preparation:** You may now play any additional cards you have researched or drawn this turn to activate them. There are two items important to note here:

- a. **Moxie activated in the Planning Phase does NOT carry forward into the Combat Phase.** This means that when your turn in combat arrives, only Moxie you still have IN YOUR HAND may be played.
- b. Now is a good time to heal your Health and/or Sanity if needed. You may heal ONCE during ANY Phase of the game, but on your turn you may heal as much as you like... as long as you have the Moxie to pay for it.

All Investigators can heal 1 point of Health or Sanity by spending 2 points of Moxie. Cards used to heal are immediately discarded into your Personal Discard pile. You may not heal more than your maximum Health or Sanity.

After **each** Investigator finishes Final Preparations, they will refill the Public Library up to 5 cards.

After **ALL** Investigators have finished their Final Preparations, it's time to move onto the Combat Phase.

Planning Phase Example

Phil draws 5 cards from his Personal Library deck. He draws 2 Sleuth cards, 1 Stagger card, 1 Adrenaline card, and 1 Bless card.

During Preparation, Phil first decides to activate his Adrenaline card. He takes 1 Health damage, but in return he gets to discard his Stagger card to draw 2 more cards. Phil draws 2 more Sleuth cards.

Next, Phil activates his Bless card. This grants him 2 Moxie and it immediately kills a Zombie. Unfortunately, no Zombies have been summoned so the Minions are safe for now.

Moving onto Research, Phil spends the 2 Moxie from his Bless card to research a Dodge card from the Public Library. He puts the Dodge card directly into his hand. Phil decides to save the remaining Moxie in his hand for combat, so he finishes researching by discarding his activated Bless card into his Personal Discard pile.

In Final Preparation for combat, Phil activates his Dodge card that will negate the Health or Sanity damage from Minions this Round. Phil has a total of 4 Moxie in his hand for combat and he's feeling pretty confident!

Combat Phase

During the Combat Phase, the Elder Gods and the horrors they summon get to go before the Investigators will have the opportunity to fight back. This Phase proceeds in the following order:

1. Elder Gods

Each Combat Phase, the awakened Elder Gods will activate in order of their current health, from lowest to highest. They will then perform any special ability and/or summon any Minions as indicated on their card.

2. Mythos

These are the evil deeds the Elder Gods inflict to destroy the fabric of reality! Reveal the number of Mythos cards from the **Setup chart** (pg. 4). Execute the action and/or spawn a Minion as described on the card. Once completed, discard the Mythos card into the Mythos Discard pile.

Some Mythos cards are marked as **Permanent**. They will remain active for the rest of the game unless the Investigators can find a way to eliminate it.

When summoning or spawning a Minion, pull them from the game box and place them face-up in easy view of all Investigators. Place a Logbook next to it to track its Health. Place Slide Pointers on the Minion's maximum Health points.

3. Minions

Any Minions in play, either summoned/spawned this Round or previously, now take their actions. Like Elder Gods, Minions activate in order of their current Health, from lowest to highest.

There is no maximum number of Minions that can be in play. If you run out of cards for a specific Minion type, you will need to keep track of additional Minions using Logbooks.

An Elder God or Minion may not accumulate more than their maximum Health. Behemoth the Devourer is the exception to this rule.

Important! *If Investigators prepared well during the Planning Phase, they may have activated Library cards in play that can counter attacks from the Elder Gods and their summoned abominations. Remember to check your cards as the enemy attempts to devour you... mind, body, and soul!*

Death: *If an Investigator's Health or Sanity reaches zero, they are dead and defeated, but not completely out of the game! They do not draw any cards, but will instead perform the death ability on their Investigator card each turn.*

4. Investigators

Each Investigator, in any order, may once again activate cards from their hand. They may use the special abilities on their Library cards and/or they can total up their Moxie to do damage against the Elder Gods and/or their Minions. An Investigator may divide up their Moxie between multiple enemies in any way they choose.

Remember: Moxie activated in the Planning Phase does NOT carry forward into the combat Phase. Only Moxie in your hand at the start of combat may be activated now.

After they have attacked enemies, the Investigator should:

- a. Check if they dropped any enemies to Zero Health.
If so, that enemy is defeated and banished to their respective Discard pile.
- b. Check if all Elder Gods have been defeated. If yes, then any Minions flee and the Investigators win!
- c. Discard activated cards into their Personal Discard pile.

Combat Phase Example

This example game is being played by Brad and Westley at the Normal Level. The intrepid Investigators are in their 2nd Round and are battling Shub-Niggurath.

Shub-Niggurath goes first. It summons the **Minimum of 1** Thousand Young Minion. Just for kicks, whenever the Investigators take Health damage, Shub-Niggurath will heal that same amount.

Now, the Mythos is executed and a Cult Ritual begins. 1 cultist is spawned to join the 1 Thousand Young already in play.

The Minions will now come out to play. The cultist goes first, with a Health of 5. Each Investigator takes the **Minimum of 1** Health damage, and neither of them have a way to negate it. Of course, this means Shub-Niggurath will heal 2 Health from the damage it took last Round. Next, the Thousand Young goes, with a Health of 6. The Thousand Young calls forth another Mythos card! Out comes the Banshee's Wail, dealing 2 Sanity damage to each Investigator.

Brad and Westley finally have a chance to fight back. They decide to give the cultist the ol' 1-2 punch to minimize Shub-Niggurath's healing. Westley goes first and deals 3 damage to the cultist, and then Brad goes and deals 2 damage to the cultist as well.

The cultist is banished to the Minion Discard pile. Shub-Niggurath is still going strong, and there's that nasty Thousand Young to deal with. The game continues!

Clean Up Phase

Once all Investigators have completed Combat:

- ✧ Discard ALL remaining cards in your hand into your Personal Discard pile.
- ✧ Discard ALL activated cards into your Personal Discard pile.
- ✧ Investigators may decide together to discard any unwanted cards from the Public Library of Miskatonic University.
- ✧ Refill the Public Library of Miskatonic University up to five face-up cards.

After the Clean Up Phase, the Round ends. Start a new Round with the Planning Phase. Continue playing subsequent Rounds until either all the Elder Gods are banished or all Investigators are dead.

Remember, the fate of humanity is in your hands!

Rule Clarifications

Destroy Cards

When directed to Destroy a card, the card is completely removed from play for the current game. Return Destroyed cards to the game box.

Multiply Then Add/Subtract

When you have cards that combine to gain Moxie you should always multiply and then add or subtract the values.

Nullified Cards

The card or action that is nullified doesn't happen and is discarded.

Rules Resolution

If there is a rule interpretation that is not covered here or at the game's website FAQ, boil the decision down to two choices and flip a coin to let the Mythos decide.

Special Ability

An Investigator cannot ever deactivate his or her special ability unless directed to do so by a Mythos card.

Ties

The players choose the order of resolution in the case of ties.

Card Clarifications

Beh'moth the Devourer

The Beh'moth starts with 10 Health. Minions activate in order of their health from lowest to highest. If there is another Minion in play when the Beh'moth activates, he eats them.

For example, if one Minion had a health of 4 and the Beh'moth eats that Minion, the Beh'moth's health is now 14. He can eat multiple Minions in this fashion, adding their health to his, in one round.

If the Investigators have not reduced the Beh'moth's Health to below his initial Health of 10 and there are no Minions available for him to eat, then in the next round, when the Beh'moth activates, he will turn on the Investigator with the highest health. That Investigator will take damage calculated by the Beh'moth's current Health minus 10.

Continuing the above example, the Investigator would take 4 damage.

If the Beh'moth's Health is less than 10 when he activates with no Minions to eat, he will do NO damage to the Investigators.

You can use the Beh'moth to your advantage but be careful, if he ever runs out of food he can very easily kill an Investigator. If an Investigator is killed by the Beh'moth, the amount of health the Investigator had before they died is added to the Beh'moth's health.

Mystic Binding

Mystic Binding lets you take control of a Minion so they fight for you against the Elder God. As soon as you play the Mystic Binding card, place it on a currently active Minion of your choice.

Your Minion activates when the Minions normally activate. When resolving how the Minion fights for you, in the text of the Minion you capture replace the word "Investigator" with "Elder God." No matter if the Minion does Health or Sanity damage, treat it as Health damage against the Elder God.

The first time you would take damage after playing Mystic Binding, it instead kills your controlled Minion.

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