

WINTERHORN as WORKSHOP

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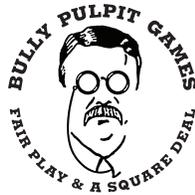
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WHAT IS THIS?

WINTERHORN is a live-action game about how governments degrade and destroy activist groups. It involves themes of suppression of dissent, surveillance, violence, and abuse of power

This document is an alternate set of rules for use in a classroom or casual workshop environment. It replaces the normal rules of the game. The cards are still required. See our website for more information.

<https://bullypulpitgames.com/games/winterhorn>

QUICK FACTS

Duration: One hour

Number of Participants: Any number

Number of Facilitators: One, who is also an ordinary participant.

Workload: Light, some printing in advance, and facilitation during play.

Possible Locations: Private space—a classroom, conference room, or private home.

Equipment: Tables, chairs, pens and paper. Optionally: Masking tape and poster board, a whiteboard, or a wall you can stick things on.

INTRODUCTION

WINTERHORN is designed as a live action roleplaying game — there are eight characters, and they all have their own relationships, agendas, and responsibilities. Playing in this way can be great fun, and the game’s underlying lessons emerge even as you chew the scenery together. We recommend this mode of play if you have the time, head count, and interest.

The alternate rules presented here work in a more abstract mode, for when you have too many participants, if your group isn’t completely comfortable with roleplaying, or if your time is limited. Playing this way means participating in what amounts to an intellectual exercise without any of the roleplaying trappings. This may be ideal for a classroom workshop or casual meetup.

SETTING UP THE GAME

MATERIALS

REMOVE THESE THINGS

- All the character and player role cards. You won’t need them.

PRINT THESE THINGS

The following items from the document packet:

- These rules, the initial status report, notes on how working groups operate and the final report document. In a classroom setting, consider asking the students to review the initial status report and notes on how working groups operate in advance.
- You won’t need the “INFORMER” samizdat or any of the other ephemera, memos, blank sheets, folder tabs, etc.

BRING THESE THINGS

- Markers and pens in several colors and note paper.
- The program cards. Use the 36 red-bordered cards for your first game. See “Subsequent Sessions” below for details about the other colors.
- Optionally: A large piece of paper or poster board, or a whiteboard, to serve as the case board.
- Optionally: The photograph cards, to represent the members of **WINTERHORN** on the table or case board.

SPACE

SPACE AND MATERIAL SETUP

- Play in a room that can comfortably hold all the participants.
- Have the Initial status report on display and notes on how working groups operate available for review. For a big group, consider reading them out loud and providing multiple copies.
- Put the program cards in twelve stacks, one for each program, with A on top, then B, then C on the bottom of each. Put unused cards away to avoid any confusion.
- Place the Final Report document nearby.
- Optionally: Set up the case board in a central location, with the photograph cards and tape nearby. Using the case board is encouraged but adds extra time to the game.

SUBSEQUENT SESSIONS

ALTERNATE PROGRAM CARDS

- If you want to replay the game with the same participants you can use the alternate program cards (the six purple-bordered and six yellow-bordered cards) to replace some of the red-bordered program cards and add some surprises.
- Simply swap the yellow and purple for red cards, but do not use more than 36 total cards and do not use all the alternates at once.

WELCOME TO IWG-203

Facilitator: Please read the following text aloud (aside from these notes) and facilitate discussion as necessary.

INTRODUCTION

We have been assigned to an Investigative Working Group assembled by the Ministry of State Security. IWG 203's purpose is to contain, degrade and destroy a radical group code named WINTERHORN. We will decide on a course of action collectively and bring the state's many resources to bear in the most covert way possible. The state must not be implicated in our operations. Our goal is to get the members of WINTERHORN to turn on and destroy each other. All of our programs hinge on our ability to understand WINTERHORN's members, learn their motivations and secrets, and use this information to create fear and paranoia.

WORKING GROUP GUIDELINES

Within the working group every member has equal authority. No one is "in charge".

Our task is largely analytical and we have whole teams that will execute our general plans using their discretion. The **NOTES ON HOW WORKING GROUPS OPERATE** and **INITIAL STATUS REPORT ON WINTERHORN** handouts are full of useful information to share.

THE FLOW OF PLAY

We'll play in three phases, and each phase ends when we've reached consensus about how we're going after WINTERHORN by choosing seven different programs we want to initiate or continue. Programs range from intense surveillance to direct violence. A phase should take no longer than 10 minutes but can be much shorter if there is general agreement.

Each phase represents a few weeks of real time. After the third phase we'll receive our final report and learn how successful we were.

If a card mentions a specific person, consider this background information, and has no direct effect on the game. Similarly, if a card asks someone to "Make the Call" to superiors, this indicates something is not going entirely well. Consider your future actions as a group very carefully. It has no direct effect.

Facilitator: If you decide to use the case board, take a moment to point it out and explain its use. It is a place to consolidate, share, and process information as it is discovered. The Initial Status Report is full of useful information for the case board.

TAKING CARE

Facilitator: Adjust this section for your situation, always keeping in mind that people are more important than the game, even in a classroom setting.

This is a game that will address suppression of dissent, surveillance, violence, and abuse of power. Does everybody still want to play? If not it is totally OK to leave now.

The game will take about an hour. Does anyone have any questions or concerns?

Does anyone have any physical limitations? If so we'll accommodate them.

Shall we take a bathroom break before we begin?

Remember that during this game the door is always open. Players are more important than the game and you can leave at any time, temporarily or permanently.

Facilitator: For those who need to leave the game, consider asking them to read and respond to the "12 Techniques" handout instead.

FACILITATING THE GAME

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

As the facilitator, you will need to start by showing players how to engage with the game. The best way to do this is to lead by example, reviewing the program cards and starting discussion yourself.

You'll also need to keep an eye on the time — roughly 10 minutes for each phase, with time left for the debrief at the end.

DEALING WITH PROBLEMS IN PLAY

Like most activities, WINTERHORN works best with engagement. If you have players who aren't participating, remind them that the door is always open.

If instead the entire group is unfocused, confused, or just not having fun, consider cutting to the debrief phase early.

DEBRIEF

Facilitator: Please read this aloud and facilitate, adjusting as needed for your situation.

THANK EVERYONE

Thank you for playing!

YOU CAN GO IF YOU WANT

Debrief isn't mandatory, but is highly recommended. Unless you feel like it would be harmful to you, please consider staying. You can still leave at any time.

GATHER

Gather together in a circle, ideally away from any central work space used in the game. Try to encourage brevity and keep the debrief to around 15 minutes.

TALK ABOUT FEELINGS

Start a discussion about how the game made you feel.

TALK ABOUT REAL LIFE

If everyone is comfortable, move on to discussing the ways in which the game maps to real life. The "12 Techniques" handout includes some focused questions that may also be useful. Some questions to guide this discussion:

- Why did we choose the programs we did? Did our choices have a general theme? Did we categorically reject any possible paths? Did time pressure or the sunk cost fallacy come into play?
- Did we get excited and celebrate the Working Group's "victories"? Did we get into the mindset of a group determined to destroy WINTERHORN? If so, what does this say about actual government agents?
- Would any of these techniques work particularly well against groups we care about? Can we identify holes or weaknesses in their organizational structure, culture, or methods of interaction? What would harden them?
- Would any of these techniques backfire if used against groups we care about? Why?