

Hello! I'm NickNorman on MTGO, and I've been a fan of Dredge since Faithless Looting was legal. I have several top 16 finishes in Modern Challenges with the deck, including a top 8 this month, and I recently won a local RCQ to qualify for Anaheim. I like to think I (sort of) know what I'm talking about, but feel free to reach out on Twitter ([@NickNorman](#)) if you have any questions.

[Here's a link to the decklist.](#)

Dredge by NickNorman

Report Deck Name

Tabletop MTGO
\$531.42 110.15 tix
7 Mythic, 28 Rare, 20 Uncommon, 20 Common

Format: Modern

Event: [Modern Challenge #12480077](#), 5th Place, 7-0

Deck Source: [magic.wizards.com](#)

Deck Date: Oct 2, 2022

Archetype: [Dredge](#)



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Stats

My Price

Tabletop

Arena

MTGO

Creatures (24)

4	Golgari Thug	1	♣
4	Narcomoeba	1	♠
2	Merchant of the Vale	2	♣
4	Prized Amalgam	1	♣
3	Silversmote Ghoul	2	♣
4	Stinkweed Imp	2	♣
3	Ox of Agonas	3	♣

Spells (19)

3	Darkblast	1	♣
4	Otherworldly Gaze	1	♠
4	Cathartic Reunion	1	♣
4	Thrilling Discovery	1	♣
4	Creeping Chill	3	♣

Lands (17)

3	Arid Mesa	\$ 49.29
1	Blood Crypt	\$ 19.99
2	Bloodstained Mire	\$ 77.94
4	Gemstone Caverns	\$ 167.36
2	Sacred Foundry	\$ 37.16
2	Scalding Tarn	\$ 49.98
2	Steam Vents	\$ 36.94
1	Stomping Ground	\$ 11.77

Sideboard (15)

3	Portable Hole	\$ 7.98
2	Ancient Grudge	\$ 0.50
1	Wear // Tear	\$ 1.62
4	Leyline of Sanctity	\$ 26.00
3	Leyline of the Void	\$ 23.28

75 Cards Total

Dredge is primarily a combo deck that relies on putting creatures into the graveyard, then bringing them back to build a board faster than you could cast them. Here's a brief rundown of the deck, followed by some tips and sideboard choices.



Your dredgers, the namesake of the deck. Almost always when one of these is in the graveyard you'll want to dredge it to your hand instead of taking a draw from your library.



Your payoffs. The reward for milling yourself, and the whole reason the deck exists. Milling Narcomoeba puts it into play, and triggers Prized Amalgam. Milling Creeping Chill drains your opponent for 3 life, and triggers Silversmote Ghoul, which can then trigger Prized Amalgam.



Your draw spells. You want to have a dredger in your hand or graveyard when you cast one, letting you dredge up to three times.



Ox of Agonas. Both an enabler and payoff, putting one in your graveyard should be your main goal as you dredge. By paying RR and exiling eight other cards, you not only get to discard your hand and draw three, but a 5/3 comes out of the graveyard, bringing back any Prized Amalgams as well. This card resolving usually wins the game.



The glue that holds the deck together. Otherworldly Gaze lets you put dredgers into the graveyard while setting up your draws, and you can cast it from your graveyard if you have nothing else to do. Haggle is another one-mana instant that lets you discard a card (ideally a dredger) to draw a card (ideally that same dredger). Some lists play Tome Scour here instead, which is absolutely fine.



Some notes on current-day Dredge: The deck used to play Life from the Loam and Conflagrate; after Ox of Agonas and Thrilling Discovery were printed lists moved away from green and toward going all-in on finding and casting Ox. Since Ox discards your hand, Conflagrate became worse, and without Conflagrate it's hard to play Life from the Loam. This gives you a little less reach compared to when you could cast a huge Fireball to finish off your opponent, but Creeping Chill helps with

draining your opponent and the benefits of more draw spells and power of Ox more than makes up for it. Some lists still play a Conflagrate, but the decks it was good against in the first place have seen much less play recently thanks to cards like Fury.



I play four Gemstone Caverns in the main. This helps the deck both with speed and mana consistency, but by no means do you have to mulligan to find one. Most lists play a few in the sideboard for when the deck is on the draw in games two or three. Because of the maindeck Caverns, I also want to maximize one-mana instants so I can cast something on my opponent's turn one. I play two Haggle // Merchant of the Vale instead of two Tome Scour (like other lists do). This makes nine total turn-one instants together with Darkblast and Otherworldly Gaze.



There are two options when choosing the other lands for Dredge, fetch and shock lands or a “rainbow” manabase made up of City of Brass, Mana Confluence and/or Gemstone Mine. The second choice lets you more easily cast your spells with every type of mana, at the cost of more life, while the fetches and shocks essentially force you into having only three or four colors at once, meaning that black spells (like your creatures) and green spells (Ancient Grudge) might be harder to cast. The benefit is that fetch lands help fill the graveyard, which lets you cast Ox of Agonas by exiling those lands instead of payoff creatures, or even a turn earlier than you could have. I like the fetch and shock mana base, but either is fine.

This deck mulligans well, and mulligans a lot. You essentially need two lands and a way to put a dredger in the graveyard to start “going off.” Otherworldly Gaze helps a ton - it can find your second land, put dredgers and payoffs in the graveyard, and set up a Reunion or Discovery to draw next turn. I’ve won plenty of games on mulligans to four, and quite a few on mulligans to three. You have to realize which hands can win you the game and which ones can’t.

Ideally, an opening hand has two lands, a draw spell, and a dredger. This lets you draw three on turn two, and with only four cards. The best case would also include a one-mana spell to put a dredger in the graveyard too. This is still just five cards - if your seven doesn’t have a way to do this, throw it back.

If you’re playing this version with Gemstone Caverns in your deck, *a/ways* go second. You can function with just two lands, but they have to both create red mana at the very least.

One last note: Dredge has some bad matchups and some good matchups. Sometimes you just play against BR and Amulet Titan all day and can’t win, and sometimes you beat UR Murktide three matches in a row. That’s modern, and that’s Dredge.

The general hierarchy of “what to do” on your turn, starting from when you have two mana:

- 1) If you have an Ox in your graveyard and at least eight other cards, 95% of the time it’s correct to cast it. Once in a while you might only have eight or nine other cards and a lot of them are Amalgams and Ghouls you don’t want to exile; if you have a draw spell in your hand it might be better to lose out on the 5/3 this turn in exchange for the chance of getting those creatures back.
- 2) The next best thing you can do is still draw three with either Cathartic Reunion or Thrilling Discovery. Sometimes one is better than the other depending on if you need a dredger in the graveyard for the next turn or more cards in your hand to cast Reunion later, but it’s usually better to play Discovery first for the life gain.

- 3) In the rare case you have a Haggle in your hand that you didn't play on turn one, it's the next best thing you can do, assuming you have a dredger in your hand or graveyard.
- 4) If you don't have a way to draw three or dredge at all, it's probably best to cast an Otherworldly Gaze to try to set one up and put more dredgers and payoffs in the graveyard. It's normally best to do it on your turn, especially if you already have a Ghoul in the graveyard, since if you hit a Creeping Chill you'll only get any Ghouls back if it's your turn. The one big exception is against Ragavan, since you'll want to put something you don't need in your graveyard (usually a land) on top if it's going to trigger. You can also get lucky and hit Narcomoeba to block, and if it's early you might be able to bait a counter so something better can resolve the next turn.
- 5) If you can't cast an Ox, Discovery, Reunion, Gaze, or Haggle, your last resort is to hardcast a creature. A few notes:
 - Silversmote Ghoul has a relevant ability if you have black mana available.
 - Stinkweed Imp has "deathtouch," which can get overlooked. It's also your only evasive creature besides Narcomoeba.
 - When Golgari Thug dies, you *have* to put a creature from your graveyard on top of your library. If there are no other creatures, it'll see itself as the only target and you'll essentially Time Walk yourself. Never cast Thug with no other creatures in the yard.

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Each instance of drawing a card while resolving a spell happens on its own. This means you can choose to dredge for the first draw, see what you hit, then draw a card or dredge a card that just entered the graveyard. Also, triggers from cards entering the graveyard go on the stack but don't resolve until you're done drawing all your cards - this means if you hit a Narcomoeba with the first dredge, and an Amalgam with the second or third dredge, the Amalgam sees the Narcomoeba and triggers.

If you have an Amalgam and a Ghoul in the graveyard and you gain three life during your turn, the Ghoul will come back at the beginning of your end step. The Amalgam sees the Ghoul enter, and will come back at the beginning of the next end step, so it comes back at the end of your opponent's turn. This is huge if your opponent wasn't expecting an extra creature or two, and another reason you should try to dredge on your turn.

In an extremely corner-case scenario, if you're running out of cards but have a Darkblast in hand and a Thug on the battlefield, killing the Thug will put a creature on top of your library, buying you an extra turn before you deck out.

Sideboard

In general the sideboard is there to answer your opponent's graveyard hate. Part of playing this deck well is realizing what your opponent is playing, and what graveyard hate they likely have. You can always adapt after game two (assuming you win game one) and bring in different cards. One huge reminder: **don't over-sideboard**. I never bring in more than five or six cards, maximum, and if you really have no idea what your opponent might have to bring in against you,

it's better to keep your deck consistent than guess incorrectly and have dead cards in your hand or graveyard.



Mostly for two mana nonartifacts, like Sanctifier en-Vec, Rest in Peace, and Dauthi Voidwalker. It's also your only turn one, one-mana answer to a one-drop like Relic of Progenitus or Soul-Guide Lantern.

I've played Prismatic Ending here too, and both options have upsides and downsides. Either one is fine, but know that Ending will take your whole turn more often.



Dredge used to play more than two copies when artifact graveyard hate was more popular and Life from the Loam meant more green mana available, but Grudge is still decent against a fair share of decks. Obviously great against artifact-centric strategies, but quite a few decks rely on cards like Relic of Progenitus and Unlicensed Hearse as some of their only hate. Often you'll mill one or both copies and need green mana to cast it, so if you don't have a Gemstone Caverns remember to fetch for the Stomping Ground early.



Basically only here for Tear, as an answer to Leyline of the Void. No other card in the deck can answer it, and if your opponent has it in their opener it's very hard to win unless they mulliganed a lot to find it. The deck used to play Nature's Claim, but it's harder to make green mana now and the 4 life can matter when racing.



The deck's answer to Endurance. Against a lot of Endurance decks there isn't much else to bring in, so Leyline at least lets you fight back. Also very good against Burn for obvious reasons.



For Living End and the mirror. It's tempting to bring it in against other decks that use the graveyard, but you usually need other answers and don't want to bring in too many cards.

The (general) order of cuts when bringing in sideboard cards:

- 1 Silversmote Ghoul
- 1 dredger (either Darkblast or Golgari Thug, depending on which is better)
- 2 Haggle // Merchant of the Vale
- 1 Thrilling Discovery
- 1 Narcomoeba
- 1 Otherworldly Gaze

You can't dilute your dredgers, your enablers, or your payoffs too much.

Matchups

Know that these are all just *suggestions*. Adapt to what you see while you play and make sure you have the correct answers. The most common sideboard hate is Endurance (green decks), Sanctifier en-Vec (white decks), Unlicensed Hearse (mostly black, red, and blue decks, but it is colorless), Leyline of the Void (mostly cascade decks, but any deck can play it), and Relic of Progenitus (mostly colorless decks like Tron). If you have absolutely no idea what to bring in, or you're playing against a random brew or unpopular deck, Portable Hole covers the most bases.

Indomitable Creativity

This was more favorable before they started playing Turn the Earth, but it's still winnable. Darkblast can kill Dwarf tokens, and Archon isn't game over for us like it is for a lot of other decks.

They will probably have Turn the Earth, they might have Leyline of the Void. That's really it; they can't play any artifacts or creatures. There's nothing you can do about Turn the Earth other than play around it if you can.

-1 Silversmote Ghoul
-1 Golgari Thug
-1 Haggle // Merchant of the Vale

+3 Wear // Tear

Even if they don't play Leyline (or don't draw it), Tear at least hits Fable.

UR Murktide

One of Dredge's best matchups, and what you're hoping you get to play against a lot. Their answers don't line up well with your threats at all, and they usually don't have more than two pieces of graveyard hate. You can fight through counters since you'll dredge every turn and put creatures into play, and in the worst case scenarios Stinkweed Imp can trade with Murktide Regent. Plus, Darkblast kills Ragavan and Dragon's Rage Channeler.

-1 Silversmote Ghoul
-1 Golgari Thug
-1 Haggle // Merchant of the Vale
-1 Thrilling Discovery

+2 Ancient Grudge
+2 Portable Hole

Don't go overboard. Odds are they'll only have Unlicensed Hearse as an answer, which won't come down until turn two at the earliest. If they tap out for it you can kill it, and if they don't have it or wait to play it you get to dredge and create a board of creatures.

Hammer

Not a great matchup for us. They're usually a turn or two faster and can fight through a board stall with Inkmoth Nexus or Shadowspear. The key to having a chance at winning is to keep a fast hand and not worry about playing around cards like Spell Pierce. Waiting a turn to run out a Reunion or Discovery is as bad as it getting countered, especially since they can just win the game out of nowhere.

-1 Silversmote Ghoul
-1 Darkblast
-2 Haggle // Merchant of the Vale
-1 Thrilling Discovery

+2 Ancient Grudge
+3 Portable Hole

There are a lot of different two-mana problems they can have, from the obvious Sanctifier en-Vec to Drannith Magistrate and even Rest in Peace. Grudge is mostly there to hit a Hammer if you would die to it or a Shadowspear so you can still race. Wear // Tear is a consideration, but it would mostly just be there to hit Urza's Saga, and you should be able to win (or come close) in the two turns they'd have to wait to find a Relic of Progenitus or a Hammer to win.

BR

Easily the deck's worst matchup. It plays four Dauthi Voidwalker which wins the game on its own, and even after bringing in answers they can just get discarded with Thoughtseize, Inquisition of Kozilek or Grief. The "scam" version is probably a better matchup since you can beat a Grief or Fury for "free" on turn one.

- 1 Silversmote Ghoul
- 1 Darkblast (Midrange) -1 Golgari Thug (Scam)
- 2 Haggle // Merchant of the Vale
- 1 Thrilling Discovery

- +2 Ancient Grudge
- +3 Portable Hole

Try to build a board before Voidwalker comes down, or at least get payoffs in the graveyard. You can still bring back Amalgam with an Ox cast with Escape. They'll usually play a couple Unlicensed Hearse, too.

Omnath Piles

A good matchup for the most part, and probably better now after the Yorion ban since trimming 20 cards means fewer (or no) Endurance. Watch out for Hallowed Moonlight though; if you're not under a ton of pressure and your opponent has two mana open it might be smart to wait, or at least try to do something at instant speed on their turn. Something to remember against Solitude: If your opponent exiles one of your creatures on your turn and you gain at least three life, Silversmote Ghoul will trigger.

- 1 Silversmote Ghoul
- 1 Darkblast
- 1 Haggle // Merchant of the Vale
- +3 Leyline of Sanctity

Prepare for Endurance, even if they don't have it. Obviously if you see Relic or some other non-Endurance answer, bring in the appropriate counter.

Rhinos

Really dependent on how much graveyard hate they play and actually see. Usually Leyline of the Void and/or Endurance.

-1 Silversmote Ghoul
-1 Darkblast
-1 Haggle // Merchant of the Vale

+3 Wear // Tear

Leyline of the Void seems more common, so I sideboard in Wear // Tear. If you see Endurance, you can definitely bring in Leyline of Sanctity, but know that they can still have Leyline of the Void. Paying attention and looking at all the cards while they're cascading can help.

Burn

Easily your best matchup. You essentially can't lose game one thanks to Creeping Chill, and all the graveyard hate Burn is likely to play costs two mana.

-1 Silversmote Ghoul
-1 Darkblast
-2 Haggle // Merchant of the Vale
-1 Cathartic Reunion
-1 Narcomoeba

+3 Portable Hole
+3 Leyline of Sanctity

If you start with a Leyline in play, you can almost just cast your creatures from your hand and win. They'll normally have Sanctifier en-Vec, but you can even dredge before that to find a creature or gain some life.

Amulet Titan

Not a great matchup, and usually just a race. Their fast hands almost always beat your fast hands, but you still have a chance.

- 1 Silversmote Ghoul
- 1 Darkblast
- 2 Haggles // Merchant of the Vale
- 1 Thrilling Discovery

- +3 Leyline of Sanctity
- +2 Ancient Grudge

Endurance is their main graveyard hate. Some lists play a Tormod's Crypt of Relic of Progenitus to find off Urza's Saga, and Ancient Grudge can always (and usually should) hit an Amulet of Vigor early.

Yawgmoth

It looks a little rough on paper, but Darkblast does a lot killing mana dorks and Grist tokens.

- 1 Silversmote Ghoul
- 1 Golgari Thug
- 2 Haggles // Merchant of the Vale

- +4 Leyline of Sanctity

Leyline is very important here, and unless your hand is super powerful (usually some combination of Darkblast and two draw spells) it's worth it to try to find protection from Endurance. They have lots of ways to tutor for it, including Chord of Calling at instant speed. Some lists might play a Scavenging Ooze, which can be a problem, so add a few Portable Hole if you do see it.

Grinding Station

Similar to UR Murktide, except they can win out of nowhere. No counter spells in the main, so go as fast as you can since you don't have a way to interact with the combo in game one.

- 1 Silversmote Ghoul
- 1 Golgari Thug
- 2 Haggles // Merchant of the Vale
- 1 Thrilling Discovery

- +3 Leyline of the Void
- +2 Ancient Grudge

They have answers to your Leyline, but it'll buy you time to build a board and start attacking. Their graveyard hate is usually only a Tormod's Crypt or some other one-mana artifact, but Grudge can also hit Grinding Station which is important.

UW Control

Usually a decent matchup. They'll counter a lot of what you cast, but you get to dredge every turn and can just hard-cast creatures that they have to answer. Sometimes it's worth not running a draw spell or Ox into an obvious counter so you don't let them use their mana on your turn.

- 1 Silversmote Ghoul
- 1 Darkblast
- 1 Haggle // Merchant of the Vale
- 1 Thrilling Discovery

- +2 Portable Hole
- +2 Wear // Tear

They could have pretty much any graveyard hate you can think of. I prepare for Rest in Peace, but watch out for Hallowed Moonlight, Unlicensed Hearse, and one-cost artifacts.

Living End

A unique matchup that often comes down to how many Creeping Chill you have left in your deck. Ideally you dredge and put an Ox in your graveyard before turn three, so if your opponent cascades their Living End will bring it back and you get to instantly rebuild your board. Always calculate how much more damage you need to deal to win with the rest of your Creeping Chill triggers, since they don't have a way to answer them.

- 1 Silversmote Ghoul
- 1 Darkblast
- 2 Haggle // Merchant of the Vale
- 1 Thrilling Discovery
- 1 Otherworldly Gaze

- +3 Leyline of the Void
- +3 Wear // Tear

They'll have their own Leyline of the Void, and you need an answer to it. Your own Leyline won't stop them forever, but it should give you enough time to attack for at least 8 damage.

Tron

You're usually a little faster than they are, especially if they don't have Tron assembled by turn three. Ugin is the one card you care about the most, since it can wipe your board as early as turn four. It exiles, too, so it's pretty tough to come back.

- 1 Silversmote Ghoul
- 1 Darkblast
- 2 Haggle // Merchant of the Vale
- 1 Thrilling Discovery

- +2 Ancient Grudge
- +3 Portable Hole

The usual graveyard hate cards are Relic of Progenitus and Tormod's Crypt. If they lead with Relic, know that if you have two mana that turn you can cast Reunion or Discovery and the most they can do is exile one card since it costs one to activate Relic. Eldrazi Tron is a little more favorable, mostly because there's a smaller chance of Ugin on turn four. If you have the option, it's usually best to take care of an Expedition Map if they play one on their first turn.