

HNRS 2000: Why War?

One hundred years ago, in 1914, the nations of Europe went to war in a conflict that destroyed their civilization. From prosperity and cultural and intellectual vitality in 1900, through the horrors of trench warfare and poison gas, to devastation and a peace settlement that left Germany bitter and resentful, Europeans and indeed the whole world struggled to understand what had happened. The First World War was to be “the war to end all wars,” yet the Second World War began twenty years later, and human conflicts continue to plague our world. Using the First World War as a focus, we’ll explore the subject of war by addressing questions such as:

Why do humans go to war?

Is war ever justified?

Are there any “good” wars?

When do wars “end” for the wounded, the widows, and the refugees?

What does “peace” mean for the losers?

