

**HISTORY 2112**  
**COURSE OVERVIEW**  
**BUCKNER F. MELTON, JR.**

In 1865, the United States was still divided by a bloody war fought in part over an attempt to keep a large segment of its population enslaved. It was an underindustrialized nation, not particularly involved in world affairs. At the end of the war it almost completely dismantled its military. The national government was one of limited power, generally uninvolved in social welfare.

By the late twentieth century, the United States had become one of the richest, most powerful, most productive countries in history, heavily involved in shaping world affairs, and one of a relatively few countries dedicated to both personal liberty and equality of opportunity. The national government had become very powerful, using this power to engage in social welfare and wealth redistribution programs.

Within a span of 150 years, how and why did all of these changes occur? These are the main questions that this course will explore.