

Christopher R. Lawton

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Georgia Institute of Technology

Campus Location

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Teaching Interests

Early American history, especially between the late colonial period and the end of the 19th century, as well as the history of Georgia, the U.S. South, African American history before 1865, public history and digital humanities, film and history, American art history, and history through visual and material culture.

Research Interests

19th-century southern history, the historical landscapes of Georgia, cultural history, public history/humanities, history and K-12 education, slavery and freedom, and the complex overlay of history, place, and memory.

Education

2011 Ph.D., History, University of Georgia [18th- and 19th-century American History]
2000 M.A., Art History, University of Georgia [19th-century American Art]
1994 B.A., Art History, Rutgers University

Recent Scholarly/Creative Output [2020-present]

- Book
 - *Seen/Unseen: Hidden Lives in a Community of Enslaved Georgians*, with Laura E. Nelson and Randy L. Reid (University of Georgia Press, 2021). Recipient of Georgia Archives 2022 Award for Excellence in Documenting Georgia History; Shortlisted for American Library Association's Best Historical Materials; Honorable Mention for Georgia Writers Association's Georgia Author of the Year.
- Other Publications
 - *Seenunseenbook.com*, with Laura E. Nelson and Randy L. Reid (2023-present). This digital humanities project is still in development, but currently contains nearly 800 searchable primary source documents, approximately 90 student-authored biographies of enslaved Georgians, and lesson plans by K12 teachers.
 - "'No Place is too Small': Implications for John Inscoe's Approach to South and Self," *Journal of the Georgia Association of Historians* (winter 2025).
 - "Humanities education in the US rural south: Design, development and practice," with Katie Walters and TJ Kopcha, *Journal of Applied Instructional Design* (December 2021).
 - "Digital, Experiential, and Embodied: Reckoning with the Past in Putnam County, Georgia," with TJ Kopcha, Katie Walters, and Ceren Ocak, *ILCEA: Revue de l'Institut des langues et cultures d'Europe, Amerique, Afrique, Asie et Australie* (winter 2020).
 - "History Comes Alive": Implications for Teacher Professional Development on Place-Based Local History," with Katie Walters and TJ Kopcha, in D.C. Gibson & M.N. Ochoa, eds., *Research Highlights in Technology and Teacher Education 2020* (AACE, 2020).
- Public-Facing Work
 - "Downwind from Hiroshima," *Lost in the Stacks* (podcast) with Charlie Bennett (GT Library), Dr. Satomi Suzuki-Chenoweth (GT Modern Languages), and Dr. Robert Jacobs (Emeritus, Hiroshima Peace Institute, Hiroshima City University), February 2026.
 - "Reclaiming Ebo Landing," co-curated with Melanie Pavich, a monthlong public history/art exhibition and one-night hip hop/jazz/ring shout/dance performance at the Historic Ritz Theater, Brunswick GA, funded by a Re:Generation Grant from Monument Lab (Mellon Foundation), March 2025. [Planning underway to reprise at the Morton Theater in Athens, GA, fall 2026.]

- Grants
 - “Reclaiming Ebo Landing” (with Co-PI Melanie Pavich, Mercer University), Monument Lab (Mellon Foundation), 2024-present.
 - “Expanding GA Tech student projects connected to a community of enslaved Georgians,” Georgia Tech DILAC Grant, 2024.
 - Georgia portion of “Enslaved: Peoples of Historical Slave Trade” (subaward from Michigan State University; with Laura Nelson and Rand Reid), National Endowment for the Humanities, 2024-2025.
 - “Advancing Equity in Research-Practice Partnerships” (with Elizabeth Delancy, Albany State University, and community partners), Spencer Foundation and William T. Grant Foundation, 2022.
 - “Untelling the Past to Reimagine the Future: Transforming K-12 Education and Supporting the Transition to Higher Education in the Rural U.S. South” (with TJ Kopcha, University of Georgia; Melanie Hatch, Albany State University; Elizabeth Delancy, Albany State University), Spencer Foundation, 2021-2023.
 - “An American Literary Landscape: Life, History, and Memory in Putnam County, Georgia,” (with Nicholas Allen, University of Georgia) National Endowment for the Humanities, 2018-2023.
- Talks
 - “Naming the Names: Digital Public History as a Process for Confronting Archival Silences around American Slavery,” with Randy Reid. Georgia Association of Historians Conference, Georgia College and State University (February 2025)
 - “Writing the Lives of Enslaved Georgians: Reckoning with the Past through Student-Authored Public History.” Center for Public History, Queens University Belfast, Northern Ireland (September 2024)
 - “Reclaiming the Past: Teaching Georgia’s Hard History.” Invited talk for the education division of the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, Atlanta, GA (June 2023)
 - “Un-telling the Past to Reimagine the Future: Public History and Public Education in the Rural U.S. South.” Panel organizer and chair, National Humanities Conference, Los Angeles, CA (November 2022)
 - “Navigating ‘Divisive Concepts’: Reckoning with Hard History in Public Education & Public Humanities.” Roundtable organizer and chair, National Humanities Conference, Los Angeles, CA (November 2022)
 - “Public History and Public Education in the Rural U.S. South.” 6th World Conference of the International Federation for Public History, Freie University, Berlin, Germany (August 2022).
 - “Putnam County: Experiential Learning Beyond the Classroom.” Invited talk for the Georgia Charter System Foundation (November 2021)
 - “Social Justice Education in the US Rural South: Research and Practice,” with Katherine Walters and TJ Kopcha. Given as the 2020 McJulien Lecture, Association for Educational Communications and Technology International Conference (November 2020)