

Beyond Indian Boarding Schools:

Discourses about Historical Trauma and Natives as Victims

Dr. K. Tsianina Lomawaima

School of Social Transformation, Arizona State University

Tuesday, December 1st

Moore Hall, Room 3340

- **12:30–1:00pm** = Refreshments & Informal Conversation
- **1:00–2:00pm** = Talk
- **2:00–3:00pm** = Students' Informal Conversation with Speaker

Federal and mission boarding schools for Native Americans in the United States, and residential schools for First Nations peoples in Canada, have long – and justly – been critiqued for their assimilationist goals, strict to abusive (to lethal) disciplinary practices, education for subservience, and the fundamental violence of removing Indigenous children from their parents, families, and communities. Many individual and social ills are attributed to alumni experiences within the boarding/residential schools, as well as their legacies among descendant generations. Recent research on epigenetic transmission of the impacts of trauma raise critical questions. Why are boarding schools, in Ojibwe scholar Brenda Child's term, such a powerful metaphor for colonial genocide? What are the implications of that powerful freight of meaning in understanding historical trauma? Why are different terms and concepts being applied to different people – for example, "historical trauma" for the Indigenous and "racial battle fatigue" for African Americans in the U.S.? What claims does epigenetic research make, and what claims can it support? What are the consequences of the current rush to embrace the assumptions of epigenetic research?



K. Tsianina Lomawaima (Mvskoke/Creek) is Professor of Justice & Social Inquiry & Distinguished Scholar of Indigenous Education in the Center for Indian Education, School of Social Transformation, at Arizona State University. Professor Lomawaima earned her graduate degrees in anthropology from Stanford University, where she was a Ford Fellow & a Dorothy Danforth Compton Fellow. An interdisciplinary scholar whose work straddles Indigenous Studies, anthropology, education, ethnohistory, history, legal analysis, & political science, Lomawaima focuses on the early 20th century, examining the "footprint" of federal Indian policy & practice in Indian Country. Research on the federal off-reservation boarding school system is rooted in the experiences of her father, Curtis Thorpe Carr, who at age 9 arrived at Chillico Indian Agricultural School in Oklahoma. Her recent work focuses on early 20th century debates over the status of Native individuals & nations, & the ways U.S. citizenship has been constructed to hierarchically privilege and/or dispossess different classes of subjects. Dr. Lomawaima is the past president of the American Society for Ethnohistory and cofounding member of the Native American & Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA). Her award-winning books include *"To Remain an Indian": Lessons for Democracy from a Century of Native American Education* (with T.L. McCarty) & *They Called it Prairie Light: The Story of Chillico Indian School*.

Please RSVP by November 25th to Christina Jacobson at jacobson@gseis.ucla.edu