



SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
Psychiatry

## CAROLINA SEMINAR ON PHILOSOPHY, ETHICS AND MENTAL HEALTH

*Presented by Philosophy and Psychiatry Research Group  
Sponsored by Carolina Seminars*

**"Survivor Guilt"** with Jordan MacKenzie, PhD  
Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

**Wednesday, April 13, 2022 at 6:00pm**

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We often feel survivor guilt when the very circumstances that harm others leave us unscathed. Although survivor guilt is both commonplace and intelligible, it raises a puzzle when placed against the backdrop of the standard philosophical account of guilt, according to which guilt represents the subject as morally blameworthy. The standard account implies that survivor guilt is systematically irrational, as people are not blameworthy simply for having fared better than others. In this paper, Michael Zhao (Notre Dame) and I offer a rival account of guilt that allows us to explain, as well as justify, cases of survivor guilt. Survivor guilt, we claim, arises when a subject takes herself to have violated either a requirement not to give rise to unjust disparities, or an obligation of solidarity toward those with whom she identifies.