Christian-Jewish dialogue has been thriving in recent decades, gaining both public and scholarly attention. In most cases, this dialogue has taken place between representatives of the more open currents of both Christianity and Judaism and involved participants with a religious attitude typically termed “liberal,” in the sense that both parties are united by a similar political and cultural vision that transcends their differences. This dialogue seems to be an outcome of the weakening of radical voices, which allegedly regard relations with other religions with hostility, and of the growth of moderate religious approaches, which enable rational and pragmatic inter-faith discussions. Jewish-Christian dialogue, in other words, is judged to be a phenomenon pertaining to the secular/liberal context of the postwar West and is carried out through the means of a modernized and moderated universal religious language.

However, this common understanding of the nature and scope of Jewish-Christian dialogue is limited in two respects. First, it does not cover the entire range of dialogical phenomena. As the studies discussed at the workshop suggest, several dialogical initiatives do not adhere to liberal criteria, which assume a rational agreement regarding the place of religious commitment and its contribution to a diverse society. In fact, one can find dialogical inclinations in surprisingly illiberal settings. Second, the liberal narrative of the Jewish-Christian dialogue focuses mainly on the geographical and political settings of Europe and North America; it omits other types of dialogue stemming from other landscapes and their unique concerns. These non-Western initiatives are grounded on alternative religious grammars and are oriented towards other sets of political agendas, which often explicitly reject the liberal program.

To overcome a narrow approach to religious dialogue, our workshop will focus on two topics. First, an empirical examination will be conducted on a variety of projects that have been performed in contexts not normally deemed amenable to the logic of dialogic (narrowly understood). Shedding light on such initiatives, which are often neglected by the liberal framework of dialogue, inherently contributes to the understanding of the Christian-Jewish dialogue in its variety. Second, a critical inquiry into the variety of dialogical initiatives will enable us to interrogate the logic behind the concept of dialogue itself. The workshop attempts to formulate a grammar suitable for dialogical variety and to think anew with a theoretical language appropriate to this multiplicity, even phenomena that up until now have been narrowly understood through the liberal grammar of dialogue.