The Christian-Jewish dialogue has been thriving during the last few decades, gaining both public and scholarly attention. In general, this dialogue has taken place between the representatives of more open-minded factions within Christianity and Judaism. It has involved participants with religious attitudes that would typically be called “liberal”, meaning that both parties are united by a similar political and cultural vision that emphasizes the possibility of transcending their differences. The proliferation of interfaith dialogue seems to be an outcome of the weakening of radical voices, who allegedly regard the possibility of such dialogue with hostility. It is also related to the increased popularity of moderate religious approaches, which emphasize the value of rational and pragmatic inter-faith discussion. Jewish-Christian dialogue, in other words, is judged to be a phenomenon pertaining to the secular/liberal setting of the post-war Western world that is carried out by 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, there are several dialogical initiatives that do not adhere to liberal criteria, which usually/generally assume a rational agreement about 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 project of of interfaith dialogue focuses mainly on the geographical and political settings of Europe and North America; it omits other types of dialogue that stem from other regions and ignores their unique concerns. These non-Western initiatives are grounded in alternative religious grammars and are oriented towards other sets of political (and religious?)goals, which often explicitly reject the liberal program.

In order to overcome a narrow approach to religious dialogue, our workshop will focus on two topics. First, an empirical examination of a variety of projects that have been performed in contexts that are not normally deemed amenable to the dialogical logic (narrowly understood). Shedding light on such initiatives, which are often neglected by the liberal framework of dialogue, contributes to the understanding of the variety contained within the Christian-Jewish dialogue. Second, a critical inquiry into a variety of dialogical initiatives enables us to interrogate the logic behind the very concept of dialogue itself. The workshop attempts to formulate a grammar suitable for discussing the varieties of dialogue , and to enable us to think anew with a theoretical language befitting this multiplicity. It will attempt to broaden our understanding of phenomena that have been narrowly understood through the liberal grammar of dialogue.