The Christian–Jewish dialogue has been thriving in the last few decades, gaining public and scholarly attention. In most cases, this dialogue has taken place among representatives of more open-minded flanks of Christianity and Judaism, and has involved participants who have a religious attitude typically termed “liberal”. In this context, “liberal” indicates that both parties are united by a similar political and cultural vision. Dialogue seems to be an outcome of the weakening of radical voices, who allegedly regard interfaith relations with hostility, and to the growth of moderate religious approaches, which enables pragmatic interfaith discussions. Jewish-Christian dialogue, in other words, is judged to be a phenomenon pertaining to the secular liberal setting of the postwar Western world, and is carried out through 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 discourse. As the studies discussed at the workshop suggest, several dialogical initiatives do not adhere to liberal criteria, which assume a rational agreement about the purpose of religious commitment and its contribution to a diverse society. One can find dialogical inclinations in settings that do not adhere to the liberal criteria. 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 that stem from different landscapes and their unique concerns. These nonwestern initiatives are grounded in alternative religious grammars and are oriented toward differing political agendas, which often explicitly reject the liberal criteria.

To overcome a narrow approach to religious dialogue, our workshop will focus on two topics. First, there will be an empirical examination of a variety of projects implemented in contexts that are not normally deemed amenable to the dialogical logic (narrowly understood). Shedding light on such initiatives, often neglected by the liberal framework of dialogue, contributes to the understanding of the Christian–Jewish dialogue. Second, a critical inquiry of the various dialogical initiatives enables us to analyze the logic behind the concept of dialogue itself. The workshop attempts to formulate a grammar befitting of this dialogical multiplicity. This theoretical language will account for phenomena that up until now have been narrowly understood through the liberal grammar of dialogue.