The Christian-Jewish dialogue has been thriving in the last few decades, garnering both public and scholarly attention. In most cases, this dialogue has taken place between representatives of more receptive factions of both Christianity and Judaism. The participants typically have a “liberal” religious attitude, in the sense that both parties are united by a similar political and cultural vision that transcends the differences between them. Dialogue seems to be a result of the diminution of radical voices with an alleged hostile regard for relations with other religions, and to the growth of moderate religious approaches, which enables rational and pragmatic inter-faith discussions. Christian-Jewish dialogue, in other words, is judged to be a phenomenon pertaining to the secular/liberal setting of the postwar Western world and is realized by means of a modernized and moderated universal religious language.

However, this common understanding of the nature and scope of Christian-Jewish dialogue is limited in two respects. First, it does not encompass 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 position 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 Christian-Jewish dialogue focuses mainly on the geographical and political settings of Europe and North America; it omits other types of dialogue that stem from other landscapes and their unique concerns. These non-western initiatives are grounded in alternative religious grammars and are oriented towards sets of political agendas which often explicitly reject the liberal program.

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