The Christian-Jewish dialogue has been thriving over the last few decades, gaining both public and scholarly attention. In most cases, this dialogue has taken place between representatives of more progressive streams of Christianity and Judaism, and involved participants who have a religious attitude typically termed “liberal”, with both parties united by a similar political and cultural vision that transcends the differences between them. The dialogue seems to be an outcome of the weakening of radical voices, who tend to regard relations with other religions with hostility, and 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 carried out through the 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 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 assumes there is 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 Christian-Jewis dialogue focuses mainly on the geographical and political settings of Europe and North America, and omits additional types of dialogue that stem 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 rejects 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 taken place in contexts that are 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 and its variety. Second, a critical inquiry of the 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 the dialogical variety, and to think anew, with a theoretical language befitting of this multiplicity, about phenomena that up until now have been narrowly understood through the liberal grammar of dialogue.