dialogue has been thriving in the last few decades, gaining both public and scholarly attention. In most cases, this dialogue has taken place between representatives of more tolerant groups in both Christianity and Judaism. It has involved participants who have a “liberal” religious attitude , in the sense that both parties are united by a similar political and cultural vision that transcends their differences. Dialogue seems to be an outcome of the weakening of radical voices, who oppose relations with another religion, and 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 secular-liberal phenomenon of the post-war era in the Western world, and is articulated through a modern, tempered 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 dialogue. As the studies discussed at the workshop suggest, several dialogical initiatives do not adhere to liberal criteria, which assume a rational agreement about the place of religious commitment and its contribution to a diverse society. In fact, one can find the impulse for dialogue in surprisingly illiberal settings. Second, the liberal narrative of Jewish-Christian dialogue focuses mainly on the geographical and political settings of Europe and North America; it omits other forms of dialogue from other places and their unique concerns. These non-western initiatives are grounded on alternative religious grammars and are oriented towards other political agendas, which often explicitly reject the liberal program.

In order to overcome a narrow approach to religious dialogue, our workshop focuses on two topics. First, an empirical examination of a variety of projects that have been performed in contexts that are normally not deemed amenable to the liberal paradigm of dialogue. Shedding light on such initiatives, often neglected by the liberal framework, contributes to the understanding of Jewish-Christian dialogue in its variety. Second, a critical inquiry of the variety of outreach initiatives enables us to interrogate the logic behind the very concept of dialogue. The workshop attempts to formulate a grammar applicable to all varieties of dialogue , and to rethink, with a theoretical language befitting this multiplicity, phenomena that have hitherto been narrowly understood through the liberal grammar of dialogue.