The Christian-Jewish dialogue has thrived in the last few decades, gaining public and scholarly attention. In most cases, this dialogue has occurred between representatives of more open sections of Christianity and Judaism and involved participants whose religious attitude is typically termed “liberal.” As such, both parties are united by a similar political and cultural vision transcending their differences. Dialogue seems to be an outcome of the weakening of radical voices, who allegedly regard relations with another religion with hostility, as well as to the growth of moderate religious approaches, which enables rational and pragmatic inter-faith discussions. Jewish-Christian dialogue, in other words, is judged to be a phenomenon in the secular/liberal setting of the post-war Western world and is carried out utilizing a modernized and moderate 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, 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 dialogical inclinations in surprisingly illiberal settings. Second, the liberal narrative of the Jewish-Christian dialogue focuses mainly on Europe and North America's geographical and political settings; it omits other types of dialogue that stem from different landscapes and their unique concerns. These non-western initiatives are based on alternative religious grammar and are oriented toward other sets of political agendas, which often explicitly reject the liberal program.

Our workshop shall focus on two topics to overcome a narrow approach to religious dialogue. The first is an empirical examination of various projects performed in contexts that are usually not deemed amenable to dialogical logic (narrowly understood). Shedding light on such initiatives, often neglected by the liberal framework of dialogue, contributes in and of itself to understanding the Christian-Jewish dialogue in its variety. The second topic is a critical inquiry into the various dialogical initiatives that 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 this diversity, even phenomena that up until now have been narrowly understood through the liberal grammar of dialogue.