Christian-Jewish dialogue has been thriving in recent decades, gaining both public and scholarly attention. In most cases, this dialogue has been taking place between representatives of Christian and Jewish groups with a more open mind and involved participants with a more “liberal” attitude as it is typically referred to. Such parties are united by a similar political and cultural vision that transcends the differences between them. Dialogue seems to result from attenuating those radical voices that allegedly have a hostile perception of relations with other religions and promoting moderate religious approaches that enable rational and pragmatic inter-faith discussions. Thus, Jewish-Christian dialogue is deemed to be a phenomenon pertaining to the secular/liberal setting of the Western postwar world and is carried out by means of 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. Firstly, it does not cover the entire range of dialogical phenomena. As studies discussed at the workshop suggest, several dialogical initiatives do not adhere to liberal criteria that assume a rational agreement regarding the place of religious devotion and its contribution to a diverse society. In fact, one can find dialogical inclinations in surprisingly illiberal settings. Secondly, the liberal narrative of the Jewish-Christian dialogue focuses mainly on geographical and political settings in Europe and North America while omitting other types of dialogue from other environments and their unique concerns. These non-Western initiatives are grounded on alternative religious grammars and oriented towards other sets of political agendas, which often explicitly reject the liberal program.

In order to overcome a narrow approach to religious dialogue, our workshop shall focus on two topics: Firstly, it will provide an empirical examination of a variety of projects that have been performed in contexts that are normally not deemed amenable to dialogical logic in a narrow sense. Shedding light on such initiatives, often neglected by the liberal framework of dialogue, contributes in and of itself to understanding the diversity within Christian-Jewish dialogue. Secondly, it will focus on a critical inquiry into the diversity of dialogical initiatives, which enables us to question the logic behind the very concept of dialogue itself. The workshop attempts to formulate a grammar suitable to dialogical diversity, and to rethink, based on a theoretical language befitting this multiplicity, even phenomena that, up until now, have been narrowly understood through the liberal grammar of dialogue.