The Christian-Jewish dialogue has thrived in the last few decades, gaining both public and scholarly attention. This dialogue has generally taken place between the more open, or “liberal,” flanks of Christianity and Judaism, which are united by a similar political and cultural vision. Such dialogue has resulted from the weakening of radical voices that maintain a hostile view of other religions, as well as the growth of moderate approaches that enable rational and pragmatic interfaith discussions. Jewish-Christian dialogue is therefore judged in the secular/liberal context of the postwar Western world and carried out through a modernized and moderated universal religious language.

However, this understanding of Jewish-Christian dialogue is limited in two respects. First, it does not cover the range of dialogical phenomena. Studies suggest that dialogical initiatives do not all accept the liberal assumption of rational agreement about the role of religious commitment in 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 European and North American geography and politics, omitting the unique concerns of other areas. Non-western initiatives may be grounded on alternative religious grammars and oriented towards political agendas that explicitly reject the liberal program.

In order to expand our approach to religious dialogue, this workshop will first empirically examine projects performed in contexts not normally deemed amenable to the narrowly-understood dialogical logic. Such initiatives, often neglected by the liberal framework, contribute to the understanding of the Christian-Jewish dialogue. We will then interrogate the logic behind the concept of dialogue through critical inquiry of a variety of dialogical initiatives. The workshop attempts to formulate a theoretical language suitable for the dialogical variety that until now has been narrowly understood through a liberal grammar.