The Jewish-Christian 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 open flanks of both Judaism and Christianity, involving participants with more liberal religious attitudes who believe that both parties are united by a similar political and cultural vision that transcends the differences between them. This dialogue seems to be an outcome of the weakening of more radical voices who allegedly regard relations with adherents to another religion with hostility and of the growth of moderate religious approaches that enable rational and pragmatic inter-faith discussions. Jewish-Christian dialogue, in other words, is typically understood to be a phenomenon pertaining to the secular, liberal setting of the post-war Western world, and is conducted via 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. 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 inter-faith dialogue in surprisingly illiberal settings. Second, the liberal narrative of the Jewish-Christian dialogue focuses mainly on the geographical and political settings of Europe and North America; it omits other instances of dialogue that stem from other landscapes with their own unique concerns. These non-western initiatives are grounded in alternative religious grammars and are oriented toward political agendas that often explicitly reject the liberal program.

To overcome a narrow approach to religious dialogue, our workshop will focus on two topics. First, we will conduct an empirical examination of a variety of projects that have been performed in contexts that are normally not deemed amenable to the dialogical process. Shedding light on such initiatives, which are often neglected within the liberal framework of dialogue, contributes in and of itself to our understanding of the variety of Jewish-Christian dialogue. Second, a critical inquiry of the variety of dialogical initiatives will enable us to interrogate the logic behind the very concept of dialogue itself. We will attempt to formulate a grammar suitable for dialogical variety and use this theoretical language to rethink phenomena that,until now, have only been narrowly understood through the liberal grammar of dialogue.