Christian-Jewish 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 the more open flanks of both Christianity and Judaism, and has involved participants with a religious attitude typically termed “liberal”, in the sense that both parties are united by a similar political and cultural vision that transcends the differences between them. The dialogue appears to be an outcome of the weakening of radical voices, which allegedly regard relations with another religion with hostility, 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 phenomenon pertaining to the secular and liberal setting of the postwar Western world, and is carried out through a modernized, moderated and 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 presuppose 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 Jewish-Christian dialogue focuses mainly on the geographical and political settings of Europe and North America, while omitting other types of dialogue that stem from other landscapes and their unique concerns. These non-Western initiatives are grounded on alternative religious grammars and are oriented towards other sets of political agendas that often explicitly reject the liberal agenda.

In order to overcome a narrow approach to religious dialogue, our workshop shall focus on two topics. The first is an empirical examination of a variety of projects that have been carried out in contexts not normally deemed amenable to dialogical logic; that is to say, narrowly understood. Shedding light on such initiatives, which are often neglected by the liberal framework of dialogue, contributes in and of itself to the understanding of Christian-Jewish dialogue in its variety. The second is a critical inquiry into the variety of dialogical initiatives, which enables us to interrogate the logic behind the very concept of dialogue itself. This workshop attempts to formulate a grammar suitable for dialogical variety and even to rethink, with a theoretical language befitting this multiplicity, phenomena that have heretofore been narrowly understood through the liberal grammar of dialogue.