My presentation on “Nietzsche’s Anti-Semitism” will deal with the following seventeen points:

1) Nietzsche’s reputation as an anti-Semite underwent several changes from the 1880s until the present, but only after World War II was there a significant attempt to purge him from any traces of Judeophobia. (Chapter One)

2) Although commonly held responsible for Nietzsche’s reputation as an anti-Semite during the Third Reich, Nietzsche’s sister Elisabeth in fact consistently maintained Nietzsche was not an anti-Semite. Her manipulation of his letters and writings did nothing to lend Nietzsche an anti-Semitic profile. (Chapter One)

3) We find scant evidence that Nietzsche was exposed to anti-Jewish sentiments in his childhood and youth. Neither his letters nor his juvenilia contain statements we would associate with negative attitudes towards Jews and Judaism. (Chapter Two)

4) The first indication we have for Nietzsche’s anti-Jewish thought comes when he transfers from the University of Bonn to the University of Leipzig in 1865. In the Saxon city he encountered Jewish traders who frequented the fairs; he and his fellow philology students expressed stereotypical attitudes toward these Jewish merchants and generally exhibited a “cultural” racism common even in educated Germans of the late nineteenth century. (Chapter Two)

5) Nietzsche was thus not infected with anti-Jewish thought by Richard Wagner, whom he met first in November of 1868; the association with Wagner, Cosima, and other Wagnerians validated and intensified anti-Jewish sentiments he already harbored. (Chapters Three and Four)

6) Nietzsche learned from his association with Wagner and from the aftermath of the republication of “Judaism in Music” in 1869 that Jews held tremendous power in the cultural sphere, that they represented a unified group that would take concerted action against their enemies, and that they could cause considerable difficulties for even someone as eminent as Wagner. (Chapter Three)

7) A pivotal moment in Nietzsche’s public attitude toward Jews and Judaism came when he sent the Wagners a copy of a lecture he delivered in February of 1870. Nietzsche openly attacked Jewish control of the press and was rebuked by the Wagners for expressing himself so directly. As a consequence direct references to Jews disappear almost entirely from Nietzsche’s published writings during his association with Wagner. He resorts to a “cultural code” that expresses anti-Jewish ideas while avoiding specific reference to Jewry. (Chapter Three)

8) Nietzsche’s break with Wagner had nothing to do with Wagner’s anti-Semitism; indeed, Nietzsche knew about and participated in anti-Jewish sentiments as a Wagnerian in the early 1870s. (Chapter Four)

9) Nietzsche’s association with Jewish admirers – notably Paul Rée, Sigfried Lipiner, and Joseph Paneth – during the later 1870s and early 1880s does not indicate a growing tolerance for Jews. At various points in these relationships we can detect either anti-Jewish stereotypes that Nietzsche continued to harbor, or calculated attempts on Nietzsche’s part to curry favor with Jews, whom he still felt to be powerful in the cultural sphere. (Chapter Four)

10) Although Nietzsche’s occasional public pronouncements about Jews became more favorable during his so-called aphoristic period, his letters and his notebooks contain remarks that continue to indicate anti-Jewish bias. His “favorable” remarks often amount
to a validation of existing stereotypes with a positive re-evaluation of something formerly considered negative. (Chapter Four)

11) Anti-Semitism meant something different for Nietzsche and his contemporaries than it does for us today. It refers not merely to anti-Jewish attitudes and to hatred of the Jews, but to a specific political movement that arose around 1880 and to which Nietzsche had several personal ties. (Chapter Five)

12) Nietzsche could thus fervently oppose the political anti-Semitic movement of the 1880s for a number of personal and philosophical reasons, and still not relinquish long-held anti-Jewish sentiments. (Chapter Five)

13) The three most pronounced confrontations Nietzsche had with German anti-Semitism – with his publisher Ernst Schmeitzner, his sister and brother-in-law, and the publisher and agitator Theodor Fritsch – indicate that initially he did not take much notice of anti-Semitism and did not comment negatively about it; but from about 1884 onward, perhaps recognizing that the anti-Semites were in part responsible for his lack of popularity and for various personal misfortunes, he became vehemently opposed to anti-Semitism. (Chapter Five)

14) There is evidence that Nietzsche and some of his contemporaries recognized the seriousness of the Jewish Question and the necessity for coming to a resolution to this pressing social issue, but that they simultaneously regarded the solutions of the anti-Semitic movement to be both too crude and ultimately inefficacious. (Chapter Five)

15) Nietzsche’s introduction of the Jews in *The Genealogy of Morals* as the originators of a slave morality that has now gained hegemony throughout Europe uses questionable racist notions: Jews are opposed to Aryans and fair-haired peoples; they insinuate themselves into powerful positions through shrewdness since they lack physical strength; they oppose things “noble” with a value system that debases humanity. (Chapter Six)

16) Nietzsche’s presentation of Jewish history in *The Antichrist* continues the narrative he started in the *Genealogy*, but here the Jews do not even believe in the values they propagate: they preserve their integrity as a people by ushering in a regime of decadence for everyone else. Nietzsche follows scholarly materials closely in much of his writing about historical Judaism in 1888, but in this accusation of duplicity he departs from his sources. (Chapter Six)

17) Nietzsche’s uncritical adoption of the “Law Book of Manu” demonstrates an important instance where Nietzsche buys into anti-Semitic ethnography, linguistics, and history, even while maintaining his opposition to contemporary anti-Semitism. (Chapter Six)