**Assignment for the Redpath Museum (10%)**

**Due by April 20th**

**Part One** – You need to read one of the articles below very carefully in order to identify the main ideas and insights.

Alberti, Samuel J. M. M. "Objects and the Museum." *Isis* 96 (2005): 559-571.

Kohlstedt, Sally Gregory. “Thoughts in Things” Modernity, History, and North American Museums." *Isis* 96 (2005): 586-601.

Forgan, Sophie. "Building the Museum: Knowledge, Conflict and the Power of Place." *Isis* 96 (2005): 572-585

**Part Two** –Write a paper that shows both your mastery of the material in the article and your reflections on how the ideas and insights in this article relate to what you saw at the museum. Below are guidelines for each essay.

Alberti's main thesis is that objects can be described as if they have "biographies". Your task is to look for information about the "biographies" of the objects in the Redpath. Some objects are accompanied by very little information about their creation/growth, entry into the museum, etc., while others have much more. Write a paper in which you compare the "biographical" information available about specific objects or collections.

Kohlstedt traces the development of the "modern museum" and when we look at the Redpath we can see that it reflects this movement and its goals of preservation, research, and education. However, Kohlstedt points out that relationships between museum directors, patrons, donors, collectors, staff in the field and in the museum, and the audience were complex and varying changing levels of power and influence. Discuss Kohlstedt's observations in relation to what you see at the Redpath.

Forgan addresses how competing interests shape the museum both physically in terms of architecture and what the museum means in its urban context. What connections can you make between Forgan's essay and what you observe at the Redpath?

Any time you refer to the text you should include a parenthetical citation. Use MLA style.

Marks will be assigned for accuracy in identifying important concepts and for making original connections between the article and the museum. Papers are to be typed, proof-read and approximately 3-4 pages long. Remember that this is to be your own original work.

If you have a proposal for a topic which differs from the above, you are welcome to discuss it with me.

**Visiting the Redpath Museum**

We will be visiting the Redpath Museum on Friday and Sunday. Meet Meredith and Andre in the museum Plan on about 60 minutes to see what there is to see. Bring your phone or a pencil and something to take notes on. You can take photographs *if the flash is turned off.*

You are responsible for getting there. The museum is on the McGill campus in downtown Montreal. Maps and directions are available on the Internet. If you are driving you are encouraged to carpool. If you are taking the bus, you will take the 211/221/411 and then will transfer to the Green Line at Lionel-Groulx and take the metro to McGill Metro station. The McGill Campus is north of Sherbrooke Street. If you enter through the main gates on Sherbrooke Street and walk up the road, the museum will be on your left. (Parking can be tricky. Something to try is looking for spaces on streets east of the campus, such as Redpath or de la Montagne, between Sherbrooke and Docteur Penfield.)

NOTE: Anniversary event for Vimy Ridge that day and construction on Sherboooke will make driving in the area difficult. Seriously consider parking farther out and taking public transportation if you are driving.

The Museum's website is: <http://www.mcgill.ca/redpath/visiting/>

**Some things to keep in mind…**The Museum is also a teaching and research institution; laboratories, storage areas and offices are not open to the public. Because the Museum is a small and sensitive area that supports teaching and research as well as public education, we have drawn up a set of guidelines to allow all our multifarious activities to flourish side by side.

**Visitors, please remember:**

Visitors should not run through the galleries or speak loudly.

1. Cell phones, iPods, or other electronic devices should be turned off inside the Museum.
2. Food and beverages are not allowed in the Museum. They attract insects that can damage specimens and other Museum materials.
3. Visitors may use Museum chairs but should return them to where they were stacked. Please do not block aisles, stairs or doorways.
4. Visitors must not touch ANY specimens on exhibit unless labelled with a “Please touch” sign.
5. Visitors must not lean on the glass exhibit cases. They are very old and can easily break.
6. Visitors are not allowed to photograph any museum exhibits or architecture with a flash bulb.
7. Visitors should keep personal items with them at all times, since the Museum is not responsible for loss or theft.
8. Coat racks are provided on the ground floor. Toilets are in the basement. Litter bins are available on each floor.

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Marks will be assigned for accuracy in identifying important concepts and for making original connections between the article and the museum. Papers are to be typed, proof-read and approximately 4 pages long. Remember that this is to be your own original work.

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