Shamanism is perhaps the most ancient form of religion known. Shamans typically have the psychic ability to see, communicate, and establish relationships with animal spirits when hunting. In other cases, shamans may use their psychic powers to heal the sick and bring the community into harmony with the natural world. Where shamans practice soul-flight in order to contact spirit helpers, trance rituals construct the shaman as a celestial traveler with alien contacts.

The Semelai, an indigenous people of Malaysia, have soul-flight shamans. Dr. Rosemary Gianno, Professor of Anthropology at Keene State College, has been studying Semelai culture since 1980. In this lecture, she will present and discuss a cosmological map sketched by a Semelai shaman that brings together distinct narratives of sickness and death, while establishing the shaman's authority as a healer and cosmologist.

Individuals with disabilities are encouraged to attend all University of Iowa sponsored events. If you are a person with a disability who requires a reasonable accommodation in order to participate in this program, please contact the Anthropology office in advance at 319-335-0522.