

## CIRCULAR COORDINATES

## Why

We identified points in  $\mathbb{R}^2$  with elements of the plane in a natural way.<sup>1</sup>

## **Definition**

Let  $(x,y) \in \mathbb{R}^2$ . Then  $(r,\theta) \in \mathbb{R}^2$  is the polar form or circular form of (x,y) if

$$x = r\cos\theta$$
 and  $y = r\sin\theta$ .

In this case we call r and  $\theta$  the circular coordinates or polar coordinates.

Since sin and cos polar coordinates are not unique.

## Non-uniqueness

A difficulty with polar coordinates is that there are many elements of  $\mathbb{R}^2$  that correspond to the same point in the plane. For example, consider the points

$$(5, \pi/3), (5, -5\pi/3), (-5, 4\pi/3), (-5, -2\pi/3).$$

Each of these specifies the same point in  $\mathbb{R}^2$ .

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Future editions will expand on this in the genetic approach, and likely reference celestial motion.

